



2.0 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.1 Location and Description of the Subject Site

IRES Residential Properties LTD. is seeking permission for residential development on a 2.02 ha site on lands located in the north-western part of the Sandyford Business District. The site, known as “RB Central” at Rockbrook Estate, Sandyford Business District, Dublin 18 is bound to the north and west by Blackthorn Drive and to the east and south by Ballymoss Road and Carmanhall Road, respectively and is approximately 7 km south-east of Dublin City Centre, in the southern suburbs. The site is located in the north western block of the former Sandyford Industrial Estate. Both the north/south and, more recently, the east/west sections of Blackthorn Drive connect further to the south and west with the Drummartin Link Road (R133). This Link Road connects Sandyford to the M50 at Junction 14. At a short distance to the east of the site is the Luas Stillorgan stop (Green Line).

The main body of the site is of rectangular shape and it extends over the western half of the aforementioned block. The remaining portion of the site comprises a strip of land that extends to the east alongside Carmanhall Road. The overall site has an area of 2.02 hectares and it would originally have been subject to gradients that sloped downwards in a northerly direction. The site is partially developed as per a previous ‘parent’ permission (see DLRCC Reg. Ref. D05A/1159; An Bord Pleanála Ref: PL 06D.215205) and subsequent modifications to this permission to provide a multi-storey mixed use development that is complete and operational in the northern portion of the site. The site is principally bounded by the above referened existing mixed use and residential development to the north (Grande Central and South Central) and undeveloped lands to the east (known as the Tivway site) and an existing part-constructed office development to the west (The Sentinel).



Figure 2.1: Site Location and Context, with location indicated with a red star (Source- Google Maps, Annotated by TPA 2019)

This existing development comprises retail, commercial, and residential uses in Blocks denoted as A and D. In the south western corner of the site is Block C, also known as The Sentinel, which is part 6 and part 14 storeys and which has been constructed to floor plate stage only, as outlined in the previous page. A through route for pedestrians has been laid out between Blackthorn Drive (east/west axis) and Carmanhall Road. This route passes between Blocks A and D on an upwards incline, which culminates in a focal point with a sculpture. A further pedestrian route runs to the south of Block D. The current proposal would be sited in the remaining central and eastern portions of the southern half of the site. These portions have been partially developed to provide three basement levels of car parking, which are presently accessed only off Blackthorn Drive (east/west axis). They maintain a frontage along their southern boundary with Carmanhall Road, opposite, which comprises the mixed-use development known as Beacon South Quarter.

The site is zoned Objective MIC in the current Development Plan (see *Sandyford Urban Framework Plan (SUIFP) – Appendix 15*) ‘To consolidate and complete the development of the mixed-use inner core to enhance and reinforce sustainable development’ and ‘Residential’ is a permissible use under this objective. The proposed development will consist of 428 no. apartments with related ancillary development (viz. residential amenity uses, creche, local retail etc), designed in a courtyard arrangement ranging in height from 5 no. to 14 no. storeys in line with the relevant height provisions of the Sandyford Urban Framework Plan.

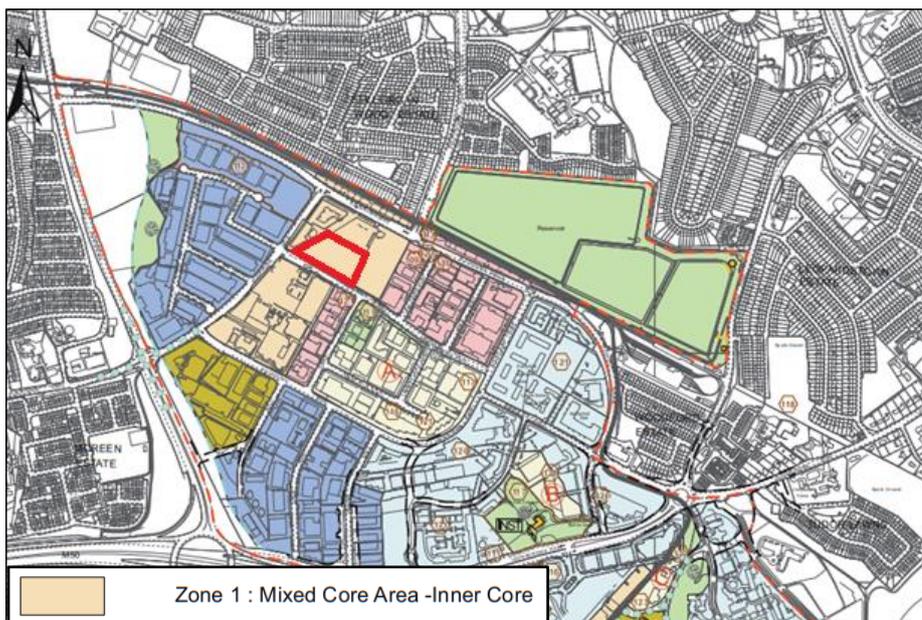


Figure 2.2: Land Use Zoning – indicative site boundary outlined in red (Source: Extract *Sandyford Urban Framework Plan (SUFP) 2016-2022 Map*; annotated by TPA, 2018)

The subject lands, which will accommodate significant new public open space are sufficiently large to accommodate a well-designed higher density residential development without giving rise to any adverse impacts on existing residential amenities. The site has the benefit of a previous planning permission for a high-density residential scheme, which demonstrates the clear suitability of the site in principle to accommodate new residential development.

Thus, it is considered that given the site’s locational characteristics, residential development will inherently accord with National and Regional sustainable planning principles particularly in relation to the promotion of more compact and efficient forms of urban development in appropriate locations.

2.2 Planning History

The most relevant aspects of the site’s planning history relate to the previously permitted parent permission dating from 2006 relating to the original HKR Architects proposal for the entirety of the former Allegro site and the more recent refusal of permission dating from 2017 (known as the Studio Anyo scheme). The original permission for the lands provided a template for the design and completion of development on this urban block in the form of perimeter blocks arranged around courtyards and boulevard. This design approach ultimately informed the Sandyford Urban Framework Plan (SUFP) and the parameters established on foot of that initial permission have effectively guided the current proposal.

The Board’s assessment of, and subsequent refusal of permission for the Studio Anyo scheme have also significantly guided the planning and design approach to the current scheme. The requirement to ensure that the reasons for refusal have been addressed in full was a paramount concern as the design evolved. Further details are set out below.



The Parent Permission - DLRC Reg. Ref. D05A/1159 and ABP Ref. PL 06D.215205

Permission for the former Allegro/wider “Rockbrook” lands was granted on 7th June 2006 and was partially implemented on the site i.e. Blocks A and D have been completed (Grande Central and South Central); Block C has been partially constructed (The Sentinel office building), and the overall basements, including that serving the permitted, but undeveloped, Blocks E and F, has been substantially constructed.

The scheme consisted of a mixed-use development in 6 no. blocks with 847 no. residential units (142 no. one-bed, 621 no. two bed, 76 no. three-bed, and 8 no. four-bed), shops and services/eateries (11,794 sq m), offices (10,761 sq m), and a crèche (374 sq m).

- Block A (situated facing Blackthorn Drive (east/west axis)): 6 – 12 storeys (maximum height 42.18m): 208 no. apartments and shops/services (2,687 sq m),
- Block B (situated internally on the site and adjacent to Blocks A and C): 2 storey restaurant and community building (maximum height 8m),
- Block C (situated facing Blackthorn Drive (north/south axis), the Sentinel Building): 6 – 14 storeys (maximum height 55m): offices (10,761 sq m),
- Block D (situated facing Blackthorn Drive (east/west axis)): 6 – 8 storeys (maximum height 28m): 211 no. apartments and shops/services (3,316 sq m) and crèche,
- Block E (situated facing Carmanhall Road): 7 – 15 storeys (maximum height 49.15m): 229 no. apartments and shops/services (1,751 sq m), and
- Block F (situated facing Carmanhall Road): 7 – 9 storeys (maximum height 31m): 238 no. apartments and shops/services (3,796 sq m).

Blocks E and F essentially comprise the remaining undeveloped part of the site, which is the subject to this application.

Modifications to the Parent Permission of the Wider Rockbrook Block

A number of amending applications were lodged and granted permission modifying elements of the ‘parent’ permission as described below.

Blocks A and D

- D06A/1704 & PL06D.222779: Block A: This application included the omission of the 10th and 11th floors and amendments to sections of the 5th and 9th floors (maximum height 36.1m), and the reduction in apartments from 208 no. to 195 no. units: Permitted and implemented.
- D07A/0069 & PL06D.223245: Block D: This included increase in apartments from 211 to 224: Permitted and implemented.



Blocks E and F

- D07A/0822: Block F: This application included alterations to height to facilitate 5– 14 storeys (maximum height 46.5m); the increase in apartments from 238 no. to 323 no. units and amendments to shops/eateries to provide 6 of the former (3,471 sq m) and 2 of the latter (810 sq m): Permitted and implemented as far as podium above basement.
- D07A/1106: Block E: This application included alterations to height to facilitate 8 – 14 storeys (maximum height 48.31m), decrease in apartments from 229 no. to 168 no. units: Permitted and unimplemented.

Block C (The Sentinel Building)

- D09A/0117: This application included the modification and retention of a constructed core, omission of entrance reception and the addition of 13 storey glazed corner atrium: Permitted and unimplemented.
- D13A/0457: This application included the increase in floorspace from 13,213 to 13,698 sq m to facilitate eatery and additional offices: Permitted and unimplemented.
- D16A/0991: This application sought to complete the construction of the substantially constructed, but unfinished building known as the Sentinel, including completion of internal configuration of permitted office floor space to comprise 294 no. office suites and 28 no. meeting rooms; the provision of two additional floors (1490 sq m) to the existing 6 storey part of the building adjoining Block A; the provision of the ground floor cafe/restaurant use (198 sq m); new entrance to Blackthorn Drive; elevational amendments. Currently being implemented on site, bringing the Sentinel building to 14 storeys (commercial height).

Overall Basement

- D07A/0975: This included modifications to two basement levels and the addition of a third level resulting in an increase of 75 no. spaces to 1,796: Permitted and partially implemented.

The Refused Studio Anyo Scheme at Rockbrook- DLRCC Reg. Ref. D16A/0697 and ABP Ref. PL 06D.248397

Permission was refused the Board for 492 no. apartments in 3 no. fourteen storey blocks, including a retail unit, a café, and a crèche in Block 1 with modifications and completion of three basement levels and revised ramp access arrangements, landscaping and all ancillary works on 28th September, 2017 for 3 no. reasons. The original scheme sought permission for 492 no. units, which was refused permission by Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC). This decision was appealed by the Applicant whereby the scheme was reduced to 456 no. units for the Board's consideration.



The reasons for refusal, and how these reasons were considered in the design development of this proposed scheme are outlined below. It should be noted that these differ from the reasons for refusal recommended by the Inspector.

Reason No. 1:

“Encroachment of proposed Block 1 on existing north/south boulevards and proposed urban plaza (see Dwg 10 SUFP). This compromises the legibility of the boulevard and negates the opportunity of providing a centrally located urban plaza as envisaged in the Sandymount Urban Framework Plan (SUFP).”

Comment: This reason for refusal derived from the potential impact of the previous development on the existing part-built context of the adjoining lands viz., Blocks A, C and D and the related pedestrian boulevards. The previously proposed Block 1 was deemed to interfere with the boulevards and future provision of a new urban plaza as per the SUFP. This plaza is identified in conceptual form on a number of graphics contained within the SUFP and has been a key consideration in the development of the enclosed Landscape Masterplan and Landscape Design Report, prepared by Murray + Associates.

The proposed scheme also respects and enhances the existing boulevards and facilitates the creation of the central urban plaza. The layout of the development ensures the primacy and legibility of the boulevard is respected and does not encroach on any of the proposed boulevards.

Reason No. 2:

This reason can be summarised as follows:

- Monolithic nature of the design of the blocks;
- Scale, bulk and massing;
- Lack of an ‘appropriate level of supporting community facilities’;
- The limited range of apartment sizes and types;
- Non-compliance with the Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines 2009 and related Best Practice Design Manual would fail to provide a high-quality living environment for future residents.

Comment: The previous scheme was considered ‘monolithic’ and comprised three large single 14 storey parallel blocks of development. The material differences with the proposed new design proposal are explicitly described and outlined in the accompanying Design Statement prepared by TOT Architects. In summary, however, a modulated proposal comprising two perimeter blocks ranging in height from 5-14 storeys arranged around courtyards ensures that the subject development cannot be considered ‘monolithic’.

The scale, bulk and massing of the previous proposal was also deemed to be unacceptable. (Note, the scheme as assessed by the Board was reduced in scale and height from the ‘as submitted’ proposal). Thus, the ‘as submitted’ and Appeal schemes were reviewed.



The means by which the scale, bulk and massing of the current application differ are clearly graphically illustrated and described to address this issue in the above referenced Design Statement, prepared by TOT Architects. It is evident, however, that the revised design approach and the introduction of height and scale variations within the proposal ensures that its bulk and mass are not excessive. This is further borne out in the enclosed visual impact assessment, which illustrates views of the development from a wide variety of locations.

The issue of what constitutes an ‘*appropriate level of supporting community facilities*’ was assessed, reviewed and discussed with DLRCC and the Board and is addressed in some detail in this application. As described above, this development will include a crèche (486 sq m) with ancillary outdoor play areas; 4 no. ground floor local/neighbourhood retail units (862 sq m); communal community residents’ facilities (934 sq m in total) including a multi-purpose space (184 sq m), laundry and community co-working area (97 sq m) at ground floor level, and residents’ exercise area, break-out/meeting areas, book and media sharing areas, reading/seating areas, play area and TV/games area located at various levels throughout the proposed development (653 sq m). This is considered to comprise a very significant level of supporting community facilities (in keeping with the community provision permitted in the adjoining Tivway SHD development as permitted by an Bord Pleanála) for future residents of the proposed development and will greatly enhance the amenity of the proposal. (It should be noted that the original ‘parent’ permission included a Block B described as a two-storey restaurant (244 sq m) and community building (185 sq m), which is far exceeded by the subject scheme.

The subject development incorporates centrally located public open spaces that equates to 28% of the site area (5,664 sq m). The siting and layout of this open space adheres to the previously permitted parameters as granted permission by both An Bord Pleanála and DLRCC in 2005 (see DLRCC Reg. Ref. D05A/1159; ABP Ref: PL 06D.215205), as well as the recently granted adjoining Tivway scheme.

Having regard to the foregoing, we note that the private open space provision for the proposed apartment units complies with the requirements of the *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2018*. A 486 sq m crèche, catering for 73 no. children has been provided for at ground floor level of the development. A childcare audit of existing vacancies in the vicinity of the site has been completed and is appended to the Statement of Consistency Report.

The issue of the limited range and type of apartments previously proposed has now been addressed through compliance with the 2018 Apartment Guidelines, as outlined in the enclosed Statement of Consistency, where a variety of unit types have been provided. The relevant provisions of the 2009 Guidance and related Design Manual have also addressed in the context of the new scheme, as relevant.



Reason No. 3:

This reason for refusal referenced the:

‘Undue diminution in the availability of light to existing apartments in Blocks A and D, when compared to previously permitted development on the site’;

Comment: The design, siting, location and layout of the proposed apartments have been assessed by ARC Architectural Consultants, who have concluded that the scheme will not diminish levels of daylight and sunlight serving the existing units in Blocks A and D, particularly when compared to the previously permitted scheme. (The previous scheme relates to the apartment units permitted and built on the site as part of the ‘parent’ development proposed in 2005 – the HKR Architects proposal).

The Former Aldi Site or “Tivway” (Adjoining Development to the East)

- D07A/0619: Mixed-use development composed of 6 blocks of 6 – 14 storeys (maximum height 47.5m) over a 3 no. storey basement and incorporating a new pedestrian boulevard and plaza. Unimplemented.
- ABP Reg. Ref. 301428: Strategic housing development consisting of the demolition of all buildings and structures on the site and the construction of a residential development of 460 no. apartments in six 5 no. to 14 no. storey blocks, the provision of ancillary on-site facilities including communal facilities and the construction of a two-level basement carpark. Planning permission was granted for this in late July 2018 by An Bord Pleanála, subject to 29 no. conditions.

A detailed assessment of the scheme was undertaken in relation to potential interactions and impacts on the design development of RB Central. The ABP Inspector notes the following as being the principal issues to be considered in this case:

- Residential Density and Quantum of Development;
- Building Height and Visual Impacts;
- Quality of Residential Development;
- Schools Demand and Childcare Facilities;
- Impacts on Residential Amenities;
- Traffic and Transport;
- Drainage, Flood Risk and Site Services;
- Part V and
- Appropriate Assessment Screening.



We are satisfied that the subject development has addressed the above issues, insofar as these might relate to the current proposal. As described in detail above, the proposed residential density is considered compliant with both the SUFP, Development Plan and National guidance.

PUNCH, Consulting Engineers are satisfied that all storm water details and related site-specific investigations can be provided to the satisfaction of both the Board and DLRCC as required. The scheme has also been designed with DMURS provisions, where applicable, as outlined in the enclosed CST Group.

The proposed development has been designed to facilitate significant pedestrian and cycle connections and linkages to the adjoining lands as discussed with DLRCC and the relevant landowners. No adverse impacts on the residential amenities of adjoining developments will arise on foot of the subject development.