

31/01/2021

Planning ref: 129020/FO/2020

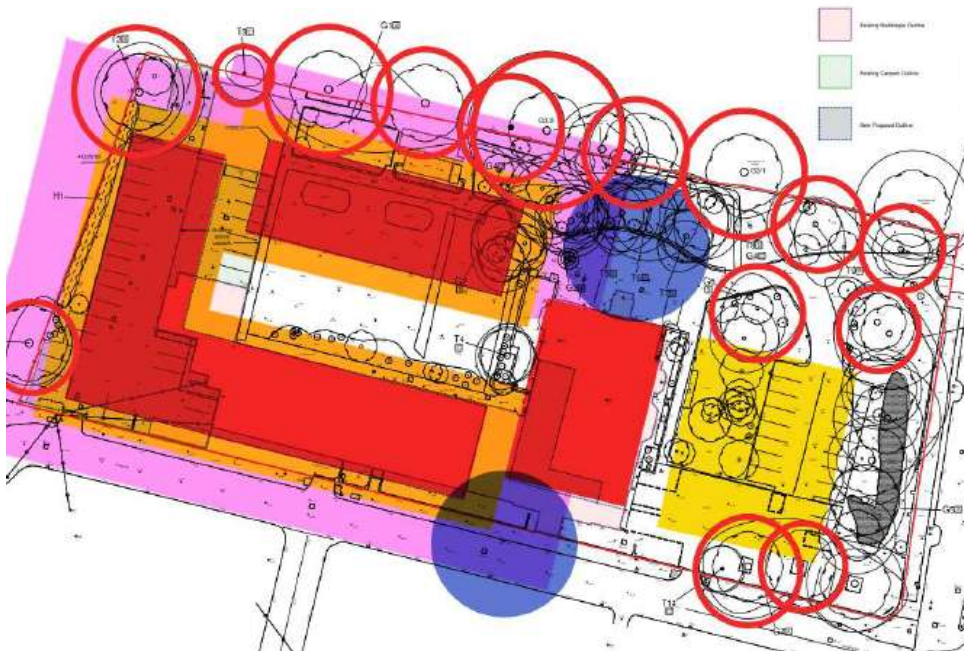
To whom it may concern

We wish to object to the above referenced planning application on behalf of the Friends of Platt Fields. The objectives of the Friends are:

To promote the preservation, restoration, maintenance, and improvement of Platt Fields Park, and to encourage both a greater use by the public of the facilities available and high standards in the provision of such facilities.

We wish to object on the following grounds:

1. **Loss of light or overshadowing** - The proposed tower is more than double the height of the trees in the park on the northern boundary of the site. This will seriously overshadow the park grounds and deprive the vegetation of light to the detriment of the gardens and existing trees. The height of the tower will also ruin what is currently a complimentary tree-lined boundary to the park, being much to the original design of the park when it was purchased over one hundred years ago. There is no assessment of the light pollution from the 13 storey block over the park.



1 Threatened trees highlighted with a red circle. Note that most are outside the site boundary, in the park.

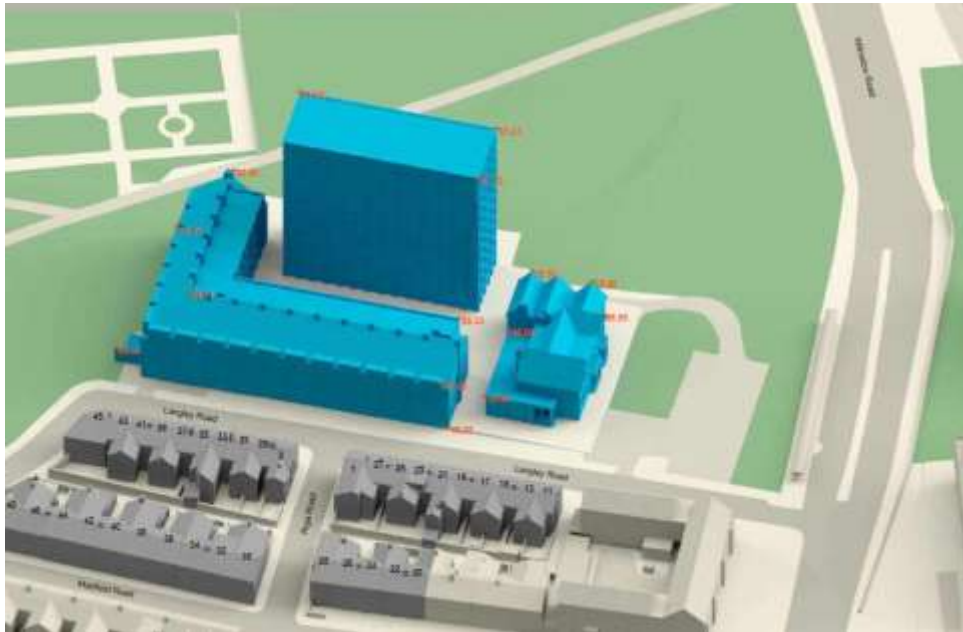
2. **Loss of trees** on the boundary *inside* Platt Fields particularly **six mature sycamores**. The height and proximity of the proposed buildings to these trees will likely lead to their loss. A building of such size will have deep and damaging foundations which will cut through the root ball of those trees, and failing that the loss of light from a building so close and over twice the height will block out too much sunlight.

Also, there are trees *on the site* which should be considered for TPOs:

- a. The large mature Sycamore in the northernmost corner of the site;
- b. The line and clusters of trees adjacent to boundary of the park opposite Asburne Hall grounds - predominantly sycamores, hollies and yews near the park, probably pre-dating the land becoming part of the park;
- c. Beeches, lime, a large native English/pendunculate oak, sycamores, limes and cherry near Wilmslow Road;
- d. Beeches, ash and a crab apple tree near Langley Road.

These trees on the side provide the backdrop to Platt Fields in this area. Being remnants of the grounds around Oakley Villa they are a link to the grounds as they were at the time the land was purchased. The loss of such trees would be a loss to the park users.

3. **Noise and disturbance resulting from use**. The Design Landscape Development cites the opportunity for residents to use the park as an open outdoor space, but it is our concern that the residents will dominate the area immediately around the development where there is currently little infrastructure to provide for it. Given that much of the site grounds will be developed and built on, offering only a small "Garden Courtyard" with very little light, it is easy to see how the residents will go to the park for use of outdoor space and dominate the area to the detriment of the existing park users. There is no assessment of the noise pollution from the proposed buildings over what is currently a quiet and peaceful secluded area of the park.
4. **Core Strategy Policy H12** states: *"location is a key factor in ensuring the quality, security, sustainability and wellbeing benefits of accommodation. As a result, purpose built student accommodation should be located in the areas immediately adjacent to the core university areas, principally the Oxford Road Corridor area"* This development is not in this area.
5. **Core Strategy Policy H6** states *"high density development in South Manchester will generally only be appropriate within the district centres of Chorlton, Didsbury, Fallowfield, Levenshulme, and Withington, as part of mixed-use schemes"* This development is not a mixed-use scheme.
6. The 13 storey tower contravenes **Council Tall Buildings Policy EN2** in many regards, including height relative to local buildings, location, and local microclimate. The tallest block is extremely close to the boundary with the park. The siting of such a tall building in such a location is contrary to policy and will cause significant visual intrusion and harm to the visual amenity of the public from this and surrounding wards. It will give rise to real harm to foraging wildlife and bats, to trees in the park and to the secluded nature of that part of the park it borders (including the secluded Shakespeare Gardens). The noise and light pollution from such a large number of occupants together with undoubted overspill of activity into the immediate area will be extremely disruptive.



2 The illustration shows how close the development is to Platt Fields, particularly the Shakespearean Garden (top left). The garden is sunken, and so the relative height of the tower is increased.

7. **Nature conservation.** Noise and in particular light pollution will impact on wildlife in this area of the park (particularly nocturnal wildlife such as bats) which is otherwise away from residential areas. The 13-storey tower will blaze with light across the park disrupting the peaceful enjoyment of the park as well as foraging grounds for local wildlife (including badgers as noted in the report.) The appraisal also notes that light pollution is a significant issue for bats and will have a significant effect on mating and nesting activity (even if bats are re-located in the required manner), which is likely to lead in reduced diversity and public amenity.
8. **Loss of public amenity.** The 13-storey tower looms over the park and especially the very immediate parts of it in a menacing and intimidating manner in an otherwise tranquil landscape. Photographic montages provided by the applicant over-emphasise a comparison with Owens Tower at Fallowfield Campus (which is in any event threatened with demolition) and do so from a distance in an attempt to minimise the impact and place an inappropriate context of height on the development, which is as a matter of fact, overwhelmingly low-rise. Nevertheless, the threatened demolition is welcomed, where neither Owens Tower nor the proposal are welcome intruders or an enhancement of the skyline per policy.
9. **Heritage impact.** The additional height proposed along Langley Road (plus a steeply pitched and high roof) and the 13-storey tower rising immediately behind the villa would create a backdrop that in terms of "Table 3: Criteria for defining the effect and degree of direct and indirect heritage impact" would "fundamentally compromise the setting of a designated asset" and would be a "substantially harmful change to the... setting of the identified designated heritage assets". As such the proposals would have a Major Adverse Impact, which "should normally be avoided". Where we show elsewhere that there is no mitigating public benefit to the proposals, such harm would necessarily support the reason for refusal of consent.

10. **Sustainable development.** The proposed development offers minimum compliance with Manchester City Council Core Strategy (2012) and Guide to Development in Manchester (SPD) (2007) regarding net improvements to the environment or progress towards sustainable development. We note particularly a lack of green infrastructure, mitigation to climate change, carbon efficiency, opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity, or adequate sustainable urban drainage schemes (SuDS). Environmentally, there is nothing sustainable regarding the development. Socially it contravenes council policy aiming for a greater mix of residents in Fallowfield.

11. **Traffic generation.** By deeming the development "car free" the developers seem to have washed their hands of this problem by not providing parking spaces. It is our belief that residents will simply park their cars on already crowded nearby residential streets, affecting parking availability for the existing residents and access for visitors to the park.

These above points contravene the objectives of the Friends as stated above. We can see no benefits to this development on the border of the park, only significant loss of amenity to the fabric, ecology, and users of Platt Fields.

We wish to thank Peter McGurk who has been more than helpful in preparing this objection from the perspective of park users who we represent. Having read his objection we agree with the additional points he has raised not addressed here.

Please see below, a selection of comments made by our Membership:

All Oppose -

Too big, tall and too focussed on students; not leaving the trees that join the grounds with our Park; not what our neighbourhood or settled population needs.

Enjoy the garden as it is .. a lot of effort has been given to renovate the garden to make it so enjoyable. Big shame to block out the view and sunshine. Let's try to keep a wonderful serene area intact.

As a Gardener who worked in Shakespearean Garden light is a problem for most of the day. So we do not need a tower blocking out more light.

As a regular park user the development will have a negative impact on areas of the park, restriction of light, impact on trees and the garden.

Too close to an important South Manchester recreation area.

Why? no need for more building work Fallowfield is a dump now, what a lovely place it used to be. Leave USDAW alone.

1)Scale of the development inappropriate.

2) Will further cement the dominance of students in Fallowfield Brow and undermine still further the possibility of rebuilding a residential community

3) It will dominate that part of Platt Fields Park and will reduce amenity

4) There is a high probability of significant trees being lost through the building process

Student accommodation is over provided already.

Too big and will mean even more traffic might support if lower scale and parking free"

Looking at the proposed elevations (elevations D and E) you can see how much the 13 storeys dwarf the surrounding area. I agree with the idea of freeing up housing stock by building purpose built student accommodation, but feel it is too high and intrusive of park space with the proposed height.

On behalf of the Friends

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]