

Comments for Planning Application 129020/FO/2020

Application Summary

Application Number: 129020/FO/2020

Address: Oakley 188 Wilmslow Road Manchester M14 6LJ

Proposal: Erection of 1 no. 13 storey building and 1 no. part 4 and part 5 storey building to form purpose built student accommodation together with a single storey side and rear extension to the retained and refurbished Oakley Villa and conversion to form amenity and communal space together with associated landscaping, cycle parking, car parking and associated works following the demolition of existing office accommodation on the site

Case Officer: Robert Griffin

Customer Details

Name: Not Available

Address: Not Available

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Objection to Planning Application

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129020/FO/2020 | Erection of 1 no. 13 storey building and 1 no. part 4 and part 5 storey building to form purpose built student accommodation together with a single storey side and rear extension to the retained and refurbished Oakley Villa and conversion to form amenity and communal space together with associated landscaping, cycle parking, car parking and associated works following the demolition of existing office accommodation on the site | Oakley 188 Wilmslow Road Manchester M14 6LJ

I write in the context of the following background. In 2016 the University were granted permission for an extra 1033 beds on Owen's Park. There have been serious problems on this overloaded campus already (N.B. The new places opened last September) and the campus and in the current academic year Fallowfield achieved unwanted national notoriety through the poor treatment of students there by the University's security team. The 425 students in the proposed new accommodation straight across the street from Owen's Park are individuals who, subsequently, are likely to be moving into houses in the immediate area in their second and third years, stimulating the market for the further expansion of existing HMO accommodation taking precious family homes into HMO accommodation, through various backdoor routes and apparently sanctioned by our town planners. The additional 425 students' accommodation, across the road

from Owens Park, with their back/front door straight onto Platt Fields Park (which will inevitably become their playground to the detriment of current users) is not acceptable in normal urban planning terms.

I am part of the same education community through my role at the University of Manchester over 40 years and have lived in Fallowfield since 1978. I wish to object to this application on the grounds that this development can only add to the community imbalance caused by the already excessive number of students in this area. At about 65% of the population, this current concentration of one type of person living in large and mainly unaccountable HMO households and student halls of residence is destroying our balance as a diverse community, with attendant impacts on family and all age quality of life and on the natural environment, such as in Platt Fields. At this point, as long term council and national tax contributors, I think residents have the right of a decent quality of life and acceptable place in which to live it.

I work proactively to engage with students in my street to make them welcome and have a sense of belonging to our neighbourhood, and at the same time I am aware of the stress and anxiety that they inadvertently cause in the lives of our long-term residential neighbours, by their transient nature (an average of 10 months in one HMO house), lack of local engagement and care for the neighbourhood and the frequent disregard for the lives and needs of others. Individually they are fine, but, late at night, in party mode, in groups of 15-20, transiting our residential streets with bottles in hand, they can be a nightmare. Managing the appropriate use of the local services such as waste disposal is often a major challenge. They have drawn in undesirable characters such as drug dealers who work openly on the street alongside homes where young children live and as well as burglars looking for easy pickings. There have been burglaries in several houses locally over the last year with little apparent effective response from the Manchester police. (e.g. 'Have you got cctv we can look at?') In short, the high concentration of students clearly degrades the neighbourhoods that they over-populate, mainly through no fault of their own, but rather as an outcome of a market-driven, resident-blind approach to city planning. The further 425 beds proposed can only add to these challenges of living here.

The proposed development will further overload the already groaning infrastructure and environment of South Fallowfield and moving to breaking point the area's carrying capacity, including facilities and utilities such as water (n.b. current low pressure), waste disposal, parking capacity, and simply, space to breathe in all contexts, and impacting on the Platt Fields Park, itself already over-burdened.

There needs to be another Manchester Council strategy to disperse students across the city in reasonable numbers in different residential areas rather than to allow high concentrations of them in areas such as Fallowfield which create student ghettos that can in turn drive established residents out. 'You shouldn't live here if you don't like students' is not an acceptable position, although is one sometime advanced in the face of residents' concerns. There must be balance and room for all.

As a resident, I can see little or nothing to recommend this proposal in terms of adding in any positive way to the built and natural environment and our quality of life and wellbeing in this area. Conversely, there are clear signs that it will have a negative outcome in terms of further serious impacts to the natural and social environments of the area.

[REDACTED]

02/02/2021