

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: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: This is a personal submission and I would like to point out how much harm has been done to me and my family, my friends and neighbours over the years which has been caused by the very high concentration of students in this area.

I've lived in Fallowfield for almost 30 years. We moved here just before having a family and loved the location, with access to parks, schools and local services and shops. We loved the vibrancy of having students in the community. Back then our street was full of families and retired couples. A few years after moving here, houses went like dominos in our street and were turned, one by one, into HMOs for students. We watched many of our friends leave the area following this, they couldn't stand the noise. Our street went from one student house out of 25 houses to 20 leaving only 5 owner occupiers behind. The nightclubs, bars and takeaways quickly followed and before we knew it, the area had transformed into one overflowing with students and noisy parties. It was intolerable. We felt helpless and stressed because the police did not want to know about student parties. The litter, vomit, broken glass, bin tipping, drunken pranks began to increase along the night noise and other environmental problems such as landlord flytipping. The area went from fairly residential to massively 'studentified' in the late 1990s. Fallowfield then became a legendary place for the very best student experience and it attracted students who put socialising above their education. Once a reputation like that sticks, it's very hard to undo.

The harm done to our family has been considerable over the years. We have chosen to stay here because Fallowfield is our home but students have been sold a University experience which has

branded Fallowfield as 'the party place in the UK'. The knock on effect has been horrendous. The nightly sleep loss has altered my body clock so that even during quiet holiday periods I wake up at 3-4am which coincides with the usual return from the clubs in Fallowfield District Centre, the noise of students yelling down the street. Whenever there is a house party anywhere in the neighbourhood we suffer all night. There are groups of drunk and drugged party goers coming and going constantly. The music can throb at club level and there are often dealers hanging around. We've had party floors collapse, parties with 9 DJs in one house, playing club sessions with professional sound equipment. We've had outdoor bouncy castle parties with 300 guests in adjoining gardens, parties where fire alarms have gone off and tactical aid have descended, outdoor all night summer garden parties like festivals. The examples are endless.

It's the effect on the wider community that I find really upsetting. Hearing your neighbours say they are leaving because they can't sleep at night is awful. Sleep loss is dangerous too as some people have responsible jobs that need full concentration. One of neighbours that moved out was a University Professor, another was a heart surgeon, others have been young families who couldn't cope with their children being disturbed. The stress builds up and then causes anxiety. People who live just out of the area find it hard to believe what we experience. I was personally quite traumatised when the student next door fell out of the attic window at 4am one Thursday morning dropping 30 feet. I had to rush out in my nightwear to call an ambulance. I couldn't sleep for days after, hearing the thud and thinking how she could have died. Down the road, the students had a barbecue on the roof at 1.30am and set fire to the block of flats. It frightened a family at the rear who were Syrian and had young children. They didn't know how to call for the fire brigade and they left the area soon after because of this.

One of my friends lives on Fallowfield Brow, not far from the Oakley site. She has suffered sleep loss and distress for many years because of the partying and antisocial behaviour on her street and the mess created in the communal bins and alleyways. She has decided not to object to this application because she is so worn down by it and has given up fighting for peace and quiet and can't wait to get out of 'this hell hole'. She has a lovely home, why should she have to feel this way?

Another harm to the community is the effect I see on the elderly residents. One of my friends is now in a care home. Whilst she was at home, she used to be disturbed night after night by noisy students coming home from the Ram nightclub at the other end of the street. The noise confused her, frightened and unsettled her in her home of 50 years. She would get out of bed and wander around upstairs trying to locate the noise and wondering if someone was trying the door handle. The area attracts burglars so this happens a lot.

Joan tells me tales of how she knew all the occupants on Egerton Road and how everyone washed their curtains and polished their doorsteps. Egerton Road has become a nightmare for people like Joan. It is about 80% HMOs now and student bins get left on the pavement and = there is broken glass and vomit for her to negotiate with her walking aid. Her home area has been

trashed by students who have the attitude that Fallowfield is one big student campus. I think it's tragic that people who have lived here all their lives have their latter years spoiled by inconsiderate party behaviour. They wouldn't behave like that in their home town and would hate their grandparents to be disturbed but give no thought to that when having a good party with their mates.

There is recognition of the problems now but the root cause of all these issues which harm the community is that there are too many students living in this area. More PBSA on the Oakley site will simply add to the strain.

There is such a lot of heritage in Fallowfield and it could become an attractive suburb and attract more council tax paying home owners but this will only happen by reducing student numbers, not increasing them. Building more PBSA will not do this. Real incentives by MCC are required to encourage landlords to sell their HMOs and build more PBSA in other areas of the city to spread the students out.

The Oakley site would be perfect for some much needed family homes. This could begin to help rebalance the community and create a more sustainable Fallowfield. The addition of 425 students would harm the community and make more families leave. This application must be refused to uphold policy SP1 for sustainable communities of choice.