

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: I am very worried about such a development on the site of the current USDAW buildings, including Oakley Villa, on Fallowfield Brow. It adjoins Platt Fields Park and overlooks parts of it, especially the popular Shakespearean Garden (much loved by many including our former MP Sir Gerald Kaufmann). The current building of two stories just overlooks the Garden and the proposed one would also overlook much more including the increasingly successful and important 'Market Garden'. I hope many others have put in objections! I was shocked to see <https://www.skyscrapercity.com/threads/oakley-villa-langley-road-fallowfield-14-4-fl-pro.2287129/> As a Friend of both my local Parks, Forest Gardener and Biodiversity Champion involved with increasing tree cover in the area I am particularly concerned about the potential loss of trees on the grounds of the site and on the boundary inside Platt Fields. The trees on the site are of the same provenance as the trees in the Park. Two Yews were planted at the same time as the Yew in the Park and these like the Hollies are slow-growing species, not easily replaced! These and the taller broadleaved trees provide fairly continuous tree-cover connecting Platt Fields to the grounds of the University over the main road. Being remnants of the grounds around Oakley Villa they link to the grounds as they were at the time the land was purchased for the people. The loss of such trees would be a great loss to the park users.

My tree-loving environmentally aware friends and fellow residents of this relatively leafy inner-city area (sometimes considered to be the lungs of this city or metropolis) have seen too many trees lost in poorly thought out developments. On behalf of the Friends of Platt Fields in particular, I wrote to check if there is a Tree Protection Order (TPO) on the trees in the grounds of the USDAW buildings, including Oakley Villa. Most notable trees there are

- the northerly large mature Sycamore by the corner nearest to the Shakespearean Garden;
- the line and clusters of trees (near the wall at right angles to Wilmslow Road and) adjoining the Park - predominantly Sycamores, Hollies and Yews near the park, probably planted at the same time as the nearby trees in the Park and pre-dating the land becoming part of the Park;
- Beeches, Lime, a big forked English/Pendunculate Oak, Sycamores, Limes & a Cherry near Wilmslow Road; and
- an Ash & what looked like a Crab apple tree near Langley Road.

The landscaping appears not to include all these trees, nor to protect the root-space of the Park trees nearby, particularly mature sycamores and horse chestnuts. Erection of such tall buildings in close proximity to trees on the boundary of the park would do irrevocable damage not only to the trees themselves but also to the visual beauty, peace and enjoyment of the park by the general public. A big building as proposed would block sunlight to the trees, interrupt the green space and overshadow the park itself. This at a time when we are trying to develop the 'Green infrastructure' and nature-based solutions to the 'Climate Emergency', increase biodiversity and protect and improve health and well-being.

It is not a sustainable development, doesn't comply with the Council's Core Strategy and Guide to Development in Manchester regarding net improvements to the environment or biodiversity gain, nor adequate sustainable urban drainage schemes (SuDS) when the park and Nico's Ditch are already over-flowing with unmanageable flood waters.

The area is already over-loaded with students and needs more mixed housing for a greater mix of residents, and more options for individuals, couples and families to live in our green inner-city oasis.