



USDAW Site, Fallowfield

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

WATKIN JONES GROUP
DECEMBER 2020



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1.0 OVERVIEW

Watkin Jones Group has submitted a planning application for new, purpose-built managed student accommodation at USDAW's current headquarters, to the west of Wilmslow Road in Fallowfield. The application seeks the partial demolition of existing buildings, conversion and extension of retained building and new development to accommodate student residential accommodation and amenity / management facilities, with hard and soft landscaping, parking and access arrangements.

In summary, Watkin Jones Group's plans will deliver:

- A purpose-built managed student residence, capable of housing 425 students in the heart of Fallowfield;
- A student residential cluster of buildings with a strong sense of place, forming an internal landscaped courtyard which is anchored around the historical Oakley Villa;
- New communal facilities within Oakley Villa, including a games room, study areas, lounge areas and meeting rooms;
- The maintenance of a tree canopy within and adjacent to the site wherever possible, with any trees needing to be removed replaced elsewhere on site.

The development will capture the character of the area, whilst celebrating the heritage of the site. The proposals will seek to obscure the new facilities from public view, so that the historic Villa and dense tree canopy are the visual focus for those viewing the site from either Wilmslow Road or Langley Road.

In bringing forward these proposals, Watkin Jones Group commissioned Lexington Communications to carry out a pre-application public consultation programme. This Statement of Community Involvement has been undertaken in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and adheres to Manchester City Council's Statement of Community Involvement (2020). A summary of the activity is outlined below and further details can be found in Section 3.0:

- A leaflet was distributed to 5,823 households closest to the site to provide an overview of the plans and information as to how residents could provide their feedback;
- A consultation website was established to provide further information on the proposals, as well as a facility to submit feedback via an online form;
- Social media adverts were circulated to residents within Fallowfield and the surrounding areas to reach a wider audience. The adverts sought to disseminate details about the plans and direct users to the website;

- A community information telephone line and a consultation email address were available throughout the consultation period for those wanting to speak or correspond with a member of the development team;
- A press release was issued to local and industry media outlets to inform readers about the scheme and how feedback could be submitted;
- Meetings were held with several local stakeholders, including ward members for the site, ward adjacent members, the local MP and community representatives.

This report outlines the methods used to engage with politicians, the public and the press, as well as summarising the feedback received from respondents. It also provides Watkin Jones Group's response to key issues raised during the consultation.

A full breakdown of the feedback submitted during the consultation is outlined in Section 4.0 of this document and Section 5.0 provides a response to the comments raised. Effective community consultation lies at the heart of the planning system and Watkin Jones Group is confident that the feedback received has been addressed in this report alongside the reserved matters planning application submitted to Manchester City Council.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE: ROLE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Planning guidance states that pre-application consultation with communities, local authorities and statutory consultees can bring a number of benefits to the process of determining planning applications. Against this background, Watkin Jones Group has sought to consult with interested parties in accordance with policy and guidance in relation to community involvement in the planning system.

2.1 Manchester City Council

Statement of Community Involvement (2018)

Manchester City Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), adopted in 2018, outlines the ways that applicants are encouraged to engage with neighbouring residents, key stakeholders and the wider community before making applications. On page 33, the Council outlines several methods that can be used to engage communities. Consultation methods cited include: letters sent to residents and businesses; public exhibition; a website; leaflets distributed to nearby streets and placed in facilities; and social media.

2.2 Government Planning Policy

The Localism Act (2011)

The Localism Act 2011 seeks to provide the local community with a voice throughout the planning process, highlighted in the former Department for Communities and Local Government's paper, Decentralisation and Localism Bill: an essential guide, which outlines one of its principles as:

"Empowering communities to do things their way – by creating rights for people to get involved with, and direct the development of, their community."

Elaborating on this, the Localism Act outlines that applicants must notify the local community about their proposals to *"bring the proposed application to the attention of a majority of the persons who live at, or otherwise occupy, premises in the vicinity of the land."* It goes on to state that the publicity must explain how the applicant can be contacted by those *"wishing to comment on, or collaborate...on the design of, the proposed development"* and that applicants must consider the feedback received by having *"regard to any responses to the consultation."*

National Planning Policy Framework

In February 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government released its updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The document seeks to achieve sustainable development with three overarching objectives: an economic objective; a social objective; and an environmental objective.

Section four of the updated NPPF (2019), 'Decision-making', sets out guidance in relation to pre-application engagement and front-loading. The guidance emphasises early engagement and suggests that *"the more*

issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, including the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing, the greater the benefits”.

2.3 National Planning Practice Guidance

The National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 (NPPG) is intended to make planning guidance more accessible and easier to keep up to date. With regard to consultation and community engagement, the NPPG notes:

“Pre-application engagement by prospective applicants offers significant potential to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system and improve the quality of planning applications and their likelihood of success.”

The guidance states that this can be achieved by consulting the local planning authority, statutory and non-statutory consultees, elected members and local people, with the level of engagement proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposed development.

2.4 Watkin Jones Group’s approach

In light of the social distancing measures that have been in force since March 2020, Watkin Jones Group has engaged the community via digital means to allow the community to view the plans and have their say from the safety of their own homes. The consultation has been carried out in accordance with the core principles of community engagement outlined with the Localism Act 2011, the NPPF, the NPPG and Manchester City Council’s SCI.

3.0 CONSULTATION PROGRAMME

The consultation on the proposals was launched on Thursday 12th November and ran until Friday 27th November. To ensure the consultation process was accessible to all interested parties and groups in the area, a number of methodologies were employed, including:

3.1 Engagement with political stakeholders

Prior to the consultation launch, meetings were organised with representatives for the Fallowfield ward, in which the site is located. Two meetings were held ahead of the public consultation. The first meeting sought to introduce members to the plans, as well as understand their initial feedback. During the second meeting, members were provided with an update on the proposals, as well as provided with an overview of the forthcoming public consultation and plan to engage with other stakeholders.

In addition, a pre-consultation meeting was held with the MP for the site, Afzal Khan, MP for Manchester Gorton. During this meeting, members of the development team provided Mr Khan with an overview of the plans and encouraged any comments he had. Following the meeting, Afzal Khan issued a letter of support for the plans.

To mark the start of the consultation letters were issued to additional local politicians and stakeholders to notify them of the proposals and advise of the public consultation, the intended leaflet drop and inviting them to a meeting to discuss the proposals and consultation in more details. The letter was sent to:

- Ward adjacent members, representing Rusholme, Withington and Old Moat wards;
- Leader of the Council, Sir Richard Leese;
- Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Nigel Murphy;
- Executive Member for Environment, Planning & Transport, Councillor Angeliki Stogia;
- Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration, Councillor Suzanne Richards;
- The Member of Parliament for Manchester Withington, Jeff Smith MP;
- University of Manchester Students' Union;
- South East Fallowfield Residents Group;
- Friends of Platt Fields Park;
- Rusholme & Fallowfield Civic Society;
- Withington Civic Society.

A copy of correspondence sent to local stakeholders is provided in Appendix A.

Several meetings were subsequently held with stakeholders to discuss the plans in more detail. This included: two meetings with representatives for Fallowfield, in September and October, the second of which was attended by Afzal Khan MP; a session with ward adjacent representatives, which was extended to representatives for Rusholme, Old Moat and Withington, and attended by two representatives for

Withington ward on Thursday 12th November; and a meeting with representatives from the South East Fallowfield Residents Group on Friday 13th November.

Following the meeting with Afzal Khan, the MP for Manchester Gorton issued a letter in support of the scheme. A copy of this can be found in Appendix B.

3.2 Leaflets to local residents and businesses

To announce the public consultation, 5,823 leaflets were delivered to properties in close proximity to the site on Thursday 19th November. This distribution area was chosen to ensure that those most likely to have an interest in the proposals, i.e. those closest to the site, were made aware of the public consultation and had the opportunity to submit their feedback on the plans.

The leaflet provided an overview of the proposals, outlined the reasons for USDAW's relocation and included images of the proposals. The leaflet also included details of how people could view the plans in greater detail and provide comments via the following methods:

- Visiting the website and completing the feedback form at www.watkinjonesfallowfield.co.uk;
- Calling the community information line on 0333 358 0502;
- Emailing watkinjonesfallowfield@havingyoursay.co.uk.

The consultation provided the community just over two weeks to submit their feedback. A copy of the leaflet and a map of the distribution area can be found in Appendix C.

3.3 Website

A dedicated website, www.watkinjonesfallowfield.co.uk, was created and launched on Thursday 19th November to coincide with the distribution of the leaflet to the local community. The website provided an overview of the proposals, illustrative designs of the scheme, information about the impact of the proposals, outlined the benefits the plans would bring and the need for new purpose-built manage student accommodation. As a result of the social distancing measures in place at the time, it was not possible to hold a public exhibition on the plans. As such, a 'Virtual Exhibition' was provided. In addition, an online feedback form was also provided to capture residents' views and comments.

Between Thursday 19th November and Friday 27th November, the consultation website was viewed over 2,200 times. Images of the website can be viewed in Appendix D, whilst images of the exhibition boards on display at the 'Virtual Exhibition' can be found in Appendix E.

3.4 Consultation email and postal addresses

A dedicated email address, watkinjonesfallowfield@havingyoursay.co.uk, was established to receive feedback and answer enquiries from the general public regarding the plans. During the public consultation, two emails were received. More information about this can be found in Section 4.0 'Feedback Received'.

3.5 Community Information Line

A community information line (0333 358 0502) was provided throughout the course of the consultation to enable people to speak with members of the development team. It was established from the start of the consultation and was staffed from 9.00am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. An answerphone facility was available outside of office hours. In total, three calls were received during the consultation and a log of the calls is provided in Section 4.0.

3.6 Social Media

Watkin Jones utilised social media to engage with residents across the area around the site and the wider area. Facebook and Instagram adverts were sent to residents living in areas surrounding the site which directed users to the consultation website, www.watkinjonesfallowfield.co.uk. Copies of these social media adverts can be found in Appendix F.

3.7 Media Coverage

A press release was issued to several outlets, including React News, Place North West, the Business Desk, the Manchester Evening News and the student newspapers, The Mancunion and the Manchester Met Magazine. Copy of the coverage can be found in Appendix G. The release sought to disseminate information about the proposed development, provide details about the public consultation and encourage feedback from local people.

4.0 FEEDBACK RECEIVED

Watkin Jones Group is grateful to those who provided feedback on the proposals during the public consultation and a breakdown of the comments received is outlined in this section

4.1 Summary of feedback

In total, over 20,000 individuals either living or working in the local area were made aware of the consultation either via leaflet or Facebook advert. In total, 28 submissions were received during the public consultation. The table below provides a summary of the methods used by the public to contribute their feedback:

Feedback type	
Online feedback form	21
Email	3
Telephone	4
Total	28

4.2 Correspondence

Local residents and stakeholders were invited to contact the development team via email, with a dedicated project email address, watkinjonesfallowfield@havingyoursay.co.uk, established for the consultation. The feedback received from the four individuals who contacted the project team via email has been incorporated into the 'Feedback Received' section in this report.

In addition to the emails submitted by residents, following the consultation, the development team were contacted by members of the Victoria and Fallowfield Civic Society. The group wished to raise concerns in relation to: the suggested harm to the park and building heights; the harm to the setting of the villa; the very significant harm to the local community. The group suggested that the development be consider the scale of the proposals, as well as a change to the proposed uses.

4.3 Community Information Line

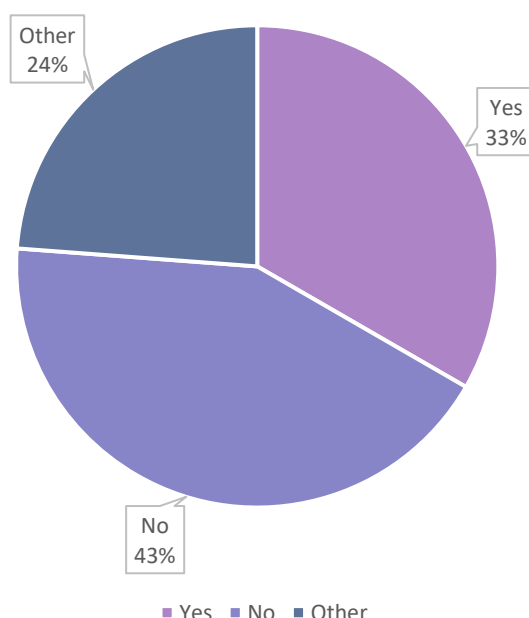
The community information line, 0333 358 0502, was established at the beginning of the consultation and provided an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to speak to a member of the development team directly. The number was publicised in correspondence with residents and stakeholders, as well as on the project website. In total, four calls was made to the line, as outlined in the table below. Any personal details have been removed.

Details of enquiry	Response
Caller wished to raise concern about the proposed height of the building.	Caller thanked for submitting their feedback.
Caller wished to know whether the South East Fallowfield Residents Group had been engaged.	Confirmed that a letter had been issued to the South East Fallowfield Residents Group.
Caller wished to register their interest in the proposed accommodation.	Advised caller that the accommodation, if approved, would not be completed until 2022.
Caller enquired as to whether Watkin Jones would be willing to assist with a bid for improvements to a community asset.	Caller advised that the enquiry would be passed on to the project team and a response would be shared in due course.

4.4 Feedback received

All feedback received via the feedback form has been compiled and the results are outlined below. In addition, feedback submitted via email is incorporated into the responses to question five of the feedback form, which asks for additional comments on the proposals.

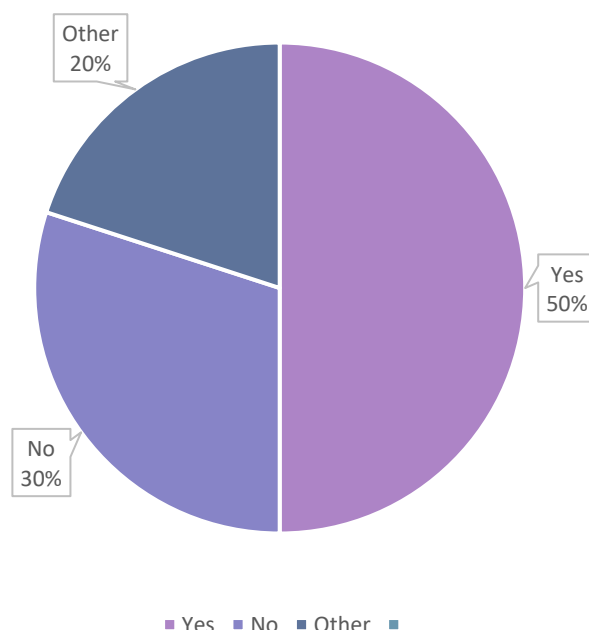
Question 1: Do you support the delivery of purpose-built student accommodation over private homes being converted into Homes of Multiple Occupancy in the Fallowfield area?



Respondents were provided with a comment box to provide additional feedback to the question. Of those who chose to provide extra commentary, the following points were raised: respondent did not wish to see

more students living in Fallowfield (10); supports the efforts to reduce HMO numbers (2); wants to see proof of the development reducing HMO numbers in Fallowfield (2); site be developed into social housing (2); site should be developed into family / young professional housing (2); concern about student behaviour in Fallowfield more generally (1); concern about the development being affordable for students (1); support for the delivery of studio accommodation (1); general opposition to the development (1).

Question 2: Do you support our ambitions to retain key aspects of the current building, including Oakley Villa, in our proposals?



Respondents were provided with a comment box to provide additional feedback to the question. Of those who chose to provide extra commentary, the following points were raised: general opposition to the scheme (3); respondent did not wish to see more students living in Fallowfield (1); believes Villa is a key part of Manchester merchant history (1); concern about traffic stemming from development (1); concern about parking around development (1); respondent does not believe there is enough information available (1); site should be developed into family / young professional housing (1); wants to see proof of the development reducing HMO numbers in Fallowfield (1).

Question 3: We want to enhance the ecology and biodiversity of the site. What can we do to ensure our plans have a positive impact on ecology and wildlife?

Respondents were provided with a comment box, in which the following feedback was submitted: more tree planting (4); improve habitats (2); more green spaces as opposed to concrete (2); more information should be provided to allow more extensive community consultation (2); pollinating plants should be placed on site (1); general comments in support of increasing ecology and biodiversity (2); deliver rain garden (1); reduce the amount of development proposed (1); include swales (1); parking should be delivered in the basement to maximise green space (1); deliver green roofs (1); opportunities for renewable energy sources should be explored (1); does not support development (1); suggests proposals for ecology and biodiversity are currently limited (1).

Question 4: What, if anything, would you change about the proposals?

Respondents were provided with a comment box, in which the following feedback was submitted: site should be developed into family / young professional housing (4); reduce the volume of development on site (3); site should be developed into affordable housing (3); land could be used to house homeless people (2); general opposition to the proposals (2); communal area for students should be delivered (1); a shop or commercial area should be included in the plans (1); believes there is an oversupply of student accommodation (1); suggests the plans are too generic (1); concern about whether the accommodation will be affordable (1); lack of information available (1); locked bike parks should be included in the plans (1); support for the delivery of more studios (1); more green space should be delivered and available for the local community (1); respondent did not wish to see more students living in Fallowfield (1).

Question 5: Do you have any further comments?

Respondents were provided with a text box to provide further comments. In addition, feedback submitted via email has been included in this section. The following feedback was submitted: respondent did not wish to see more students living in Fallowfield (6); general opposition to the plans (5); wants to see proof of the development reducing HMO numbers in Fallowfield (2); concern about student behaviour in Fallowfield more generally (2); wants to see more trees planted (2); site should be developed into family / young professional housing (1); welcomes the proposals (1); does not believe enough information has been provided.

5.0 RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

Watkin Jones would like to thank everyone that has taken the time to respond to our public consultation. The feedback that has been submitted has been reviewed by the project team and has helped to shape the plans submitted to Manchester City Council.

During the consultation, several topics were raised by respondents. The development team has sought to respond to these comments within this section of the document.

5.1 Impact of the proposals on the volume of students

During the consultation, the most common concern raised by respondents related to the suggestion that the plans could increase the volume of students currently residing in Fallowfield, with respondents suggesting they would like more information about how the plans would result in students moving from homes of multiple occupancy (HMOs) to purpose-built students accommodation (PBSA). This topic was frequently raised in conjunction with comments regarding student's behaviour, for example students hosting parties and disrupting long-term residents.

With regards to purpose-built accommodation, there has been a very limited amount delivered across the city over recent years compared to the growing number of students the city is attracting through its successful higher education institutions. This is creating pent up demand which is leading to affordability issues for students and an increasing tendency for students to occupy mainstream residential accommodation, particularly in Fallowfield. This has an impact on communities, on student wellbeing and on Council Tax revenue.

The additional need for student accommodation has been recognised by the City Council in reports on PBSA to the Authority's Executive Committee. It is acknowledged within those reports that the present levels of PBSA available to support the student population and the limited investment in PBSA over recent years is causing a series of issues for the city. Those include driving rents upwards such that Manchester is one of the most expensive UK cities for PBSA, and students increasingly occupying mainstream housing stock, particularly in Fallowfield. The latter has an impact on the availability and affordability of housing to meet local resident needs, significantly reduces Council tax revenue through exemptions, and creates issues in terms of effective management (with consequential impacts on amenity, neighbourliness etc.). The City Council has acknowledged that there is a need for additional PBSA in order to help overcome these challenges.

A Student Demand Assessment, prepared by Knight Frank and submitted alongside this application, demonstrates that there are an estimated 28,748 PBSA bed spaces in Manchester, representing only 45% of total full-time students. Therefore, the need to address demand for additional PBSA by delivery new facilities is clear.

Furthermore, the Officer Report to Manchester City Council's Executive in November 2019 outlines how the City Council has acknowledged that the popularity of HMOs in south Manchester is only "in part" because of accommodation costs; there are other factors influencing the popularity of south Manchester

as a location to live, including proximity to open space, local amenities, greater independence and the social benefits that come from living close to a large number of students. Despite the Council's recognition that South Manchester remains a popular location for students, there has been no new private PBSA developed within the Fallowfield area for over seven years. With the City Centre being notably more expensive, and price being an important factor, this will have only supported the HMO market in the Fallowfield area.

Against this background, Watkin Jones is confident that the delivery of new PBSA in Fallowfield will have a positive impact by delivering much needed student accommodation, in turn reducing the demand for HMOs in Fallowfield and the surrounding areas.

Whilst there is no formal agreement with a higher education provider at this time, Watkin Jones Group has worked closely with the University of Manchester during the progression of an application. The University has expressed its formal support for the proposals for the following reasons:

- **Location** – the University can provide pastoral care for students from the adjacent Fallowfield Campus.
- **Human scale** – the scheme will offer a different choice of student accommodation as it is a more human scale than city centre student accommodation tower blocks.
- **Price** – WJG's price point in this location will ensure there is a competitive student accommodation market. The University considers more student accommodation is necessary to engineer a change in price and type of accommodation available.
- **Heritage** – the scheme sympathetically incorporates the heritage aspects of Oakley Villa

5.2 Alternative tenure

Several respondents questioned whether the development team had considered an alternative tenure for the proposals, for example social housing, or homes designed for families or young professionals.

These proposals are being brought forward against the background of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) needing to move to a building that better suits its needs. As part of the relocation process, USDAW recognised the popularity of the area with students and sought a partner that would help deliver best value for the site. The sale of the site will allow USDAW to fund its relocation, without relying on the funds of its members. Watkin Jones was chosen as USDAW's development partner for this site as they are a reputable student accommodation provider with some experience of delivering scheme in Manchester.

The site is in an ideal location for new purpose-built student accommodation, given its proximity to the University of Manchester's Fallowfield campus and its proximity to the bus services on Wilmslow Road. Whilst some respondents suggested the site would be suitable for family accommodation, it is likely that any privately owned accommodation would be likely rented to students, resulting in more unmanaged student accommodation.

5.3 Affordability

A handful of respondents questioned whether the proposed accommodation would be affordable, particularly when compared to HMOs in the surrounding area. Watkin Jones has undertaken extensive research into the affordability of the proposed development in comparison to nearby HMOs.

Although PBSA weekly rents are generally higher than HMO accommodation, there are notable differences in the price structure as well as the offer. The length of contract has an impact on annual price; most private house shares or HMOs have 52-week contracts whereas PBSA contracts are typically much shorter aligned to actual occupation – the contracts for this development are anticipated to be 45 weeks. There is also generally the additional cost above rental in HMOs of utilities and broadband; this is generally included within the weekly price of PBSA. As such, it should be anticipated that the plans can be considered more attractive to students currently living in HMOs.

5.4 Transport and Access

Access to the site was raised by a handful of respondents, particularly with regards to the proposed parking arrangements and cycling facilities. For example, it was suggested that the plans may increase the pressure on local roads, and that a car park should be provided under the buildings to maximise the green space available. In addition, one respondent suggested that safe and secure locked bike parks should be made available.

Limited parking will be available (c.9 bays) as students will be discouraged from bringing cars within the tenancy agreement. The available spaces will include disabled parking bays and provision will be made on site for temporary parking arrangements when term starts and ends for students to move their belongings in and out of the accommodation. Given the proximity of the site to existing bus networks, it is not anticipated that students will bring cars with them.

In addition, 2no. indoor and secure cycle storage spaces will be provided within the accommodation blocks on site.

The number of vehicle movements to and from the site will reduce as a result of the proposed development, as will the prevalence of on street parking in the local areas. As there is only public transport accessibility to the site by bus, many of the existing USDAW staff members choose to drive to work and park at the site and on surrounding roads.

5.5 Ecology and Biodiversity

In response to the question asking how the proposals could maximise ecology and biodiversity, several suggestions were made. This included with regards to additional tree planting, improving local habitats, maximising opportunities to use renewable energy, and opportunities to increase the green space available on site.

The application includes proposals to maintain the mature tree canopy along the street and Platt Fields Park boundaries, with any trees needing to be removed, replaced elsewhere on site at a rate of two replacements for every tree lost. A high-quality area of landscape will be provided to the east of the site in front of Oakley Villa and within the central courtyard. In addition, the scheme includes appropriate on-site habitat protection and enhancement measures. The recommended mitigation includes the minimisation of tree loss, habitat protection during construction and the planting of native species.

5.6 Development scale

A handful of respondents suggested that the scale of the proposals should be reduced, for example reducing the number of bedrooms proposed as well as the height of the building.

The scale and form has been carefully designed relative to its context (including the high density development within the UoM Fallowfield campus) and the residential character will be more consistent with the surrounding area.

During the pre-application process, the development team engaged with the Places Matter Design Review Panel on 23 October 2020. The feedback received was positive and the retention of Oakley Villa and its leafy setting was recognised as the heart of the site and a key feature of the scheme that sets it apart from student accommodation offerings elsewhere in Manchester. The Panel agreed that setting new built development back from Wilmslow Road behind Oakley Villa means the historic characteristics of the site remain at the heart of the scheme.

The Panel supported the design of the four-storey contemporary block on the Langley Road frontage and as the block turns along the western boundary. The generous amount of green space and tree retention is also recognised as a positive and the Panel emphasised the importance of ensuring the open space is functional, particularly given the possible change in living trends as a result of Covid. A key point raised by the Panel and which has been incorporated into the scheme design evolution is pulling built development away from the north western corner of Oakley Villa to help create a view into the central courtyard and maximise the permeability and usability of this key feature.

All comments received have been taken into consideration and directly affected the design evolution. The process of design review has served to refine and enhance the proposals. A comprehensive summary of which is provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

5.7 Proposed amenities

Some respondents referred to the facilities proposed within the development, for example suggesting communal spaces should be delivered, as well as shops and commercial space. The proposals will establish a student residential cluster of buildings with a strong sense of place, forming an internal landscaped courtyard which is anchored around the historic Oakley Villa. New communal facilities will be created within Oakley Villa, including a games room, study areas, lounge areas and meeting rooms.

Once built, the development is expected to be managed by Fresh, a reputable provider of purpose-built student accommodation. Fresh manages student accommodation across the country with one simple objective – to provide exceptional service to the clients whose properties they manage, and to the students who live in them.

Fresh's customer facing services are delivered locally by directly employed site-based staff. The teams are led by professional and experienced Accommodation Managers, who are responsible for the day-to-day running of each site, marketing to potential new tenants, health and safety compliance and working and liaising with Universities, the local community, and other stakeholders. Support is provided to the site-based staff by an experienced specialist Central Services department, whose areas of expertise provide the Accommodation Teams with a detailed delivery framework, ensuring consistency of service delivery in line with recognised good industry practice.

Fresh works in tandem with Universities and Colleges to provide a positive 'student experience' and ensure seamless access to shared services by integrating into the University's pastoral care regime and ancillary services. The on-site teams play a vital part in supporting students and providing a link between academic life and 'home'.



6.0 CONCLUSIONS

In bringing forward the proposals for the USDAW building in Fallowfield, Watkin Jones has undertaken a pre-application consultation regarding its proposals. The consultation has been undertaken in accordance with Manchester City Council's Statement of Community Involvement, the Localism Act 2011, the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance. This has provided an opportunity for local residents, politicians and stakeholders to learn about the plans and submit their feedback.

Watkin Jones would like to extend appreciation to all those who took part in the consultation process and engaged with members of the development team to provide feedback on the plans. Over 20,000 individuals were advised of the consultation either via the form of a leaflet or social media. Useful feedback was received via stakeholder engagement and the public consultation highlighted important feedback from the 28 individuals who responded. Responses to these comments have been included within this document, and additional technical information has also been submitted as part of the planning application.

This report reflects the views expressed during the public consultation and Watkin Jones has sought to address the concerns raised regarding the development. Moving forward, members of the team remain committed to continued engagement with local people and stakeholders with all channels of communication will remaining available throughout the planning process.

7.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter to stakeholders



≤Salutation≥ ≤First Name≥ ≤Last Name≥
≤Address Line 1≥
≤Address Line 2≥
≤Address Line 3≥
≤Postcode≥

Friday 6th November 2020

Dear ≤Salutation≥ ≤Last Name≥,

Public consultation launch | Request for a meeting

Watkin Jones is bringing forward plans to redevelop the existing premises of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW), off Wilmslow Road in Fallowfield, and deliver new purpose-built student accommodation.

As you may already be aware, USDAW has operated from the site for over 100 years. Its decision to move premises has been driven by high maintenance and running costs, an unsuitable building layout and outdated facilities which make disabled access difficult throughout the building. It is no longer suited to modern office user requirements. USDAW are scheduled to relocate to new premises in the Spring, leaving the existing site vacant.

Our proposals will establish a high quality, attractive and affordable alternative to Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in the Fallowfield area, in turn supporting enhanced student wellbeing and facilitating the freeing up of properties for the mainstream residential market. The proposals will deliver approximately c.440 student bedroom units arranged in clusters, alongside a series of social facilities and communal amenity areas. The proposals entail the retention and reuse of Oakley Villa, a building of heritage value, providing it with a sustainable future use. The proposals will convey substantial regeneration benefit.

The site ~~is considered to be~~ most suitably and ideally located for student accommodation, given its proximity to the University of Manchester Owens Park campus and Fallowfield District Centre. Furthermore, it is located on a central bus route which connects Fallowfield to the Universities and Manchester City Centre. Delivering high quality, managed, purpose-built student accommodation at this site would mean that students can reside in facilities that are best suited to their needs, in turn reducing demand for HMOs that have accounted for a significant proportion of the area's housing stock.

Once established, the development would be managed by Fresh Property Group (FPG), a leading expert in the purpose-built accommodation sector. Fresh Student Living (FSL) is Fresh Property Group's student accommodation division and manage Student Accommodation with one simple objective: to provide exceptional service to the clients whose properties they manage, and to the students who live in them.

Watkin Jones is committed to engaging with residents, ~~students~~ and stakeholders about our plans for new student accommodation in Fallowfield ahead of the submission of a planning application to Manchester City Council. We strongly believe that only by working with the local community we can help to deliver what your area needs in the right way. We have had extensive discussions with officers of the City Council over recent months and are developing the proposals in close dialogue. We are also developing the proposals in discussion with the University of Manchester, who have expressed their support for the scheme, recognising its suitability and affordability to meet demand.

We are proposing to launch a public consultation on the proposals on Thursday 12th November. Ahead of this, we wanted to reach out to you and tell you about our ambitions for the site and invite you to meet with us to discuss the plans in more detail. A colleague will shortly be in touch to see if this would be of interest. In the meantime, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call us on 0333 358 0502 or email us at watkinjonesfallowfield@havingyoursay.co.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Iain Smith
Planning Director, Watkin Jones

Appendix B: Afzal Khan MP support letter



Afzal Khan MP
Member of Parliament for Manchester, Gorton
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Dave Roscoe
Manchester City Council
Town Hall Extension
Albert Square
Manchester M60 2LA

Sent by email

5th October 2020

Dear Dave

Redevelopment of Usdaw Central Office – 188 Wilmslow Road

As the Member of Parliament for Manchester Gorton, the constituency that includes Fallowfield, I'm writing to give my support to the proposed redevelopment of the Usdaw Central office site on Wilmslow Road.

The site cannot be used as an office any longer; having served the Union's needs for over 100 years it is clear that they need more suitable premises to support their membership, and for the staff to be able to work in a building more easily adapted to face the challenges of modern working life.

As the Union's relocation is essential for them to continue their work supporting their members, I support the redevelopment of the site and am deeply concerned that a delay could allow the site to become vacant or fall into disrepair. A large unoccupied building would almost certainly become a magnet for anti-social behaviour and this would cause unnecessary stress and anxiety for the longer standing residents in the area.

The proposals themselves are of a high standard and have the approval of the university, which is a huge endorsement. This shows that the designs have been carefully thought out and considered to provide a suitable environment for students to live in, and I am pleased that the Oakley Villa will be retained as a heritage consideration. It is absolutely right to be concerned about the exploitation of students in terms of housing and purpose built accommodation as has been proposed elsewhere, but as you can see this is not the case with this proposal.

As a wider point, I hope that by supporting students to live in purpose built and professionally managed accommodation, students will be attracted away from unsuitable and precarious housing and into accommodation which suits their needs in surroundings that are appropriate for them.

BMHC, College Road, Whalley Range, Manchester, M16 8BP | 0161 226 5546
afzal.khan.mp@parliament.uk | www.afzalkhan.org.uk

I believe that a professionally managed, purpose built, and sympathetically designed redevelopment of the site into student accommodation is the best use of the site. The support from the University of Manchester and the local councillors indicates that this is a widely held view.

Yours sincerely,

Afzal Khan MP
Member of Parliament for Manchester, Gorton

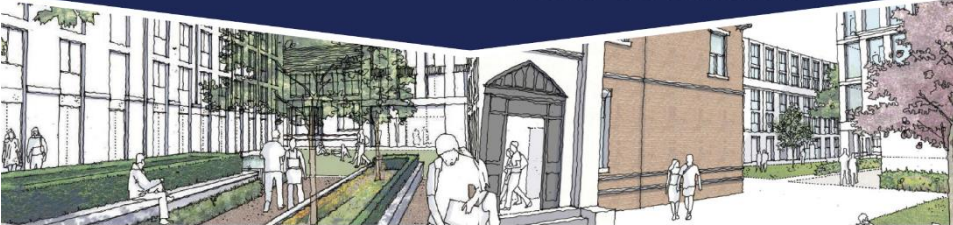
Appendix C: Consultation leaflet and distribution area



Have your say

Your views are important to us ahead of the submission of a planning application for this site. Our public consultation is underway, and you can share your thoughts about our commitment to delivering a high quality neighbourhood in the following ways below:

Plans for new high quality, professionally managed student accommodation in Fallowfield Public Consultation



-  Visiting our consultation website: www.watkinjonesfallowfield.co.uk
-  Speaking to a member of the team on **0333 358 0502** (Monday - Friday, 9:00am to 5:30pm)
-  Emailing watkinjonesfallowfield@havingyoursay.co.uk

Watkin Jones is bringing forward plans to redevelop USDW's offices, off Winslow Road in Fallowfield, and deliver new purpose built managed student residential accommodation. The proposals will establish an affordable, sustainable and desirable managed student residence, capable of housing c.440 students in the heart of Fallowfield.

Once built, the development will be managed by Watkin Jones' own management arm, Fresh Property Group (FPG), a leading expert in the purpose built accommodation sector. The scheme provides an attractive and affordable alternative to homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in the Fallowfield area, in turn supporting enhanced student wellbeing and facilitating the freeing up of traditional properties for the mainstream residential market. The plans would mark a new chapter and viable use for the site, with retention of heritage value and energy efficiency being key elements of the design and material use.

All feedback received will be logged and reviewed to help shape the final plans before an application is submitted to Manchester City Council. All comments should be received no later than Friday 27th November to ensure they can be taken into consideration before the final plans are submitted to the Council.

Ahead of submitting a planning application, we are holding a public consultation. This is an opportunity for you to understand more about the proposals and provide your feedback. To find out more, please turn over.

We look forward to hearing from you.

www.watkinjonesfallowfield.co.uk

The proposals

Our plans will deliver an attractive and affordable alternative to HMOs at a sustainable location in the heart of Fallowfield. The proposed scheme aims to:

-  **Deliver an affordable and desirable managed student residence**, capable of housing c.440 students in the heart of Fallowfield;
-  **Create a safe, managed environment** for students which benefits from on-site wardens;
-  **Establish a student residential cluster** of buildings with a strong sense of place, and a high quality new development anchored around and complementary to the retained historical Oakley Villa;
-  **Deliver a development that captures the character of the area** and celebrates the heritage of the site, giving Oakley Villa a sustainable future;
-  **Create new communal facilities** within Oakley Villa, including a cinema room, multimedia/gaming room, lounge areas and meeting rooms;
-  **Maintain the mature tree canopy** along the street and park edges around the site, with any trees needing to be removed, for example due to rot, replaced elsewhere on site;
-  **Enhancing the landscape** of the site, maintaining its open aspect to the front of the Oakley Villa and creating a new high quality central courtyard.

Why is this happening?

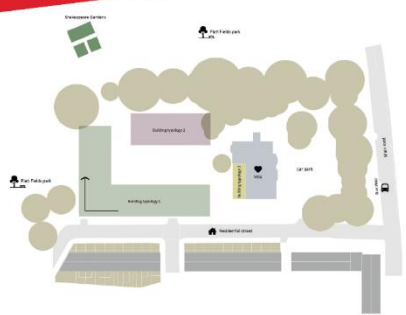
The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDW) currently occupies the site. USDW recruits, organises and represents workers in the retail, distributive, manufacturing, and service sectors. The Union is moving to another location, to a building which better suits its needs. USDW's intention to relocate elsewhere is driven by high maintenance and running costs, an unsuitable building layout and outdated facilities. The building's current configuration is disorientated and changes in level throughout, limiting the ability to provide disability access. Overall, it is not suitable for a modern organisation.

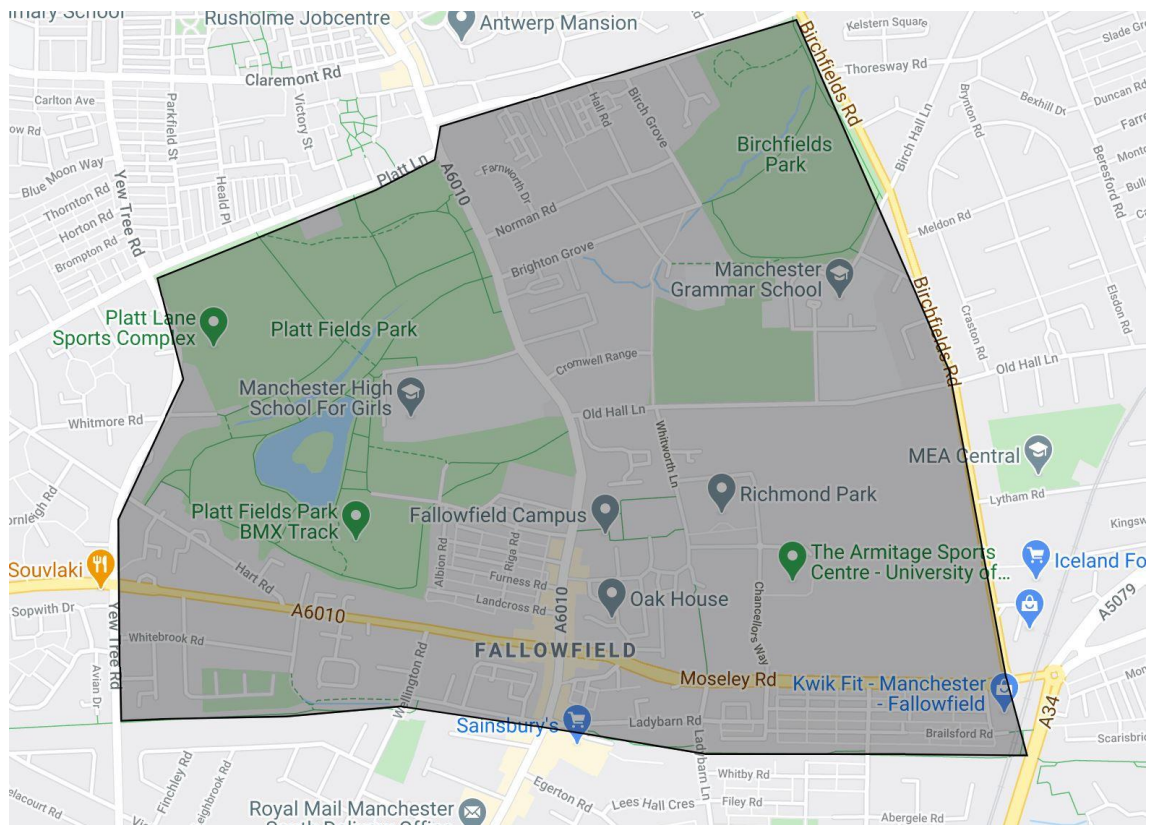
As part of Watkin Jones' proposals, the existing 1930s/1950s office buildings on site - not including Oakley Villa - will need to be replaced to repurpose the site. Given the site's position on the corridor connecting Fallowfield with the Universities and City Centre, and close to the University of Manchester facilities across Winslow Road, the location is considered best suited for purpose-built student accommodation.



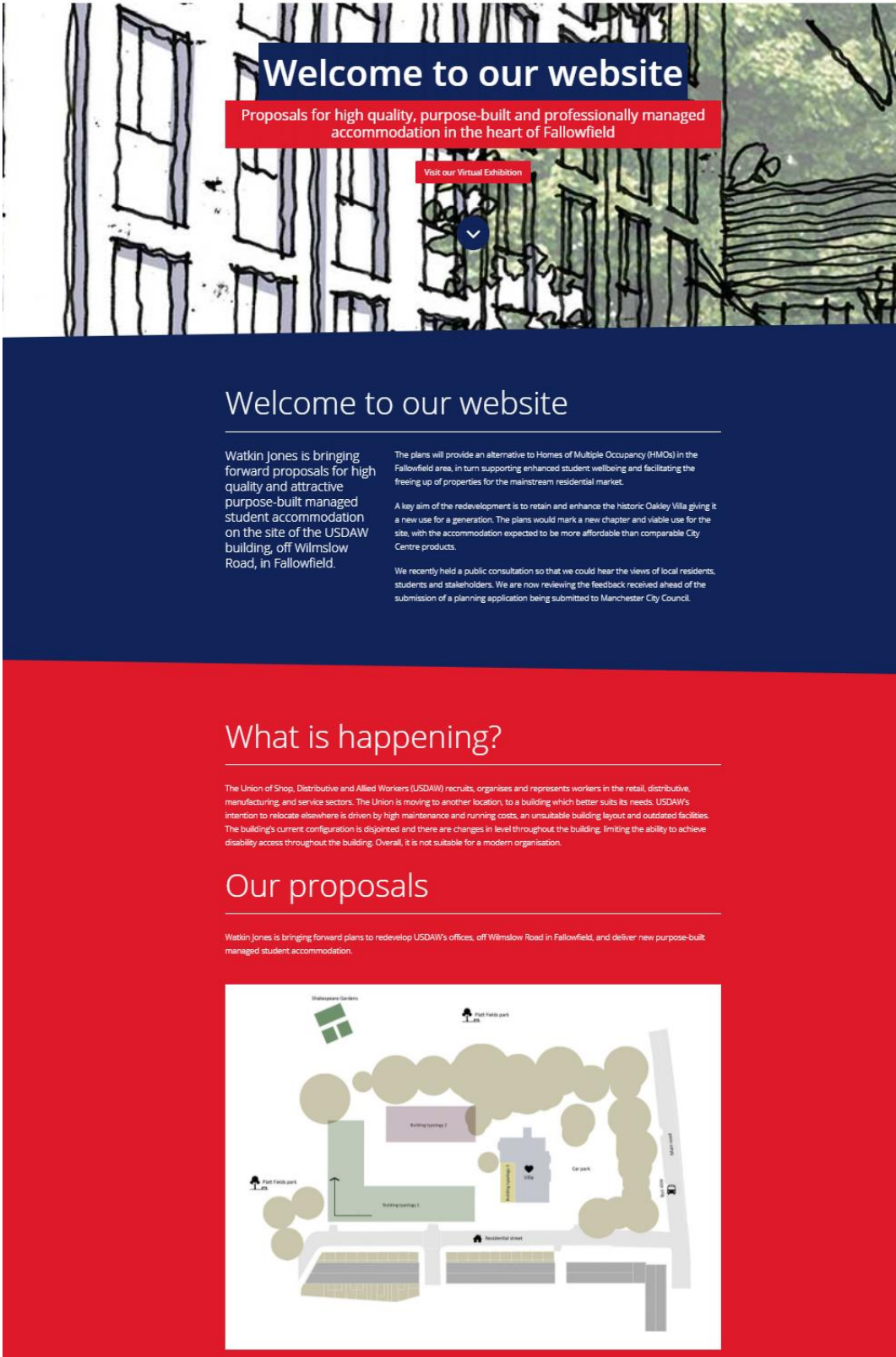



You can find out more about the proposals by visiting our website at www.watkinjonesfallowfield.co.uk





Appendix D: Website



The proposed scheme aims to:

- ☐ Deliver a desirable purpose-built managed student residence, capable of housing c.440 students in the heart of Fallowfield;
- ☐ Establish a student residential cluster of buildings with a strong sense of place, forming an internal landscaped courtyard which is anchored around the historical Oakley Villa;
- ☐ Deliver a development that captures the character of the area and celebrates the heritage of the site;
- ☐ Create new communal facilities within Oakley Villa, including a cinema room, multimedia/gaming room, lounge areas and meeting rooms;
- ☐ Maintain the mature tree canopy within and adjacent the site wherever possible, with any trees needing to be removed replaced elsewhere on site;
- ☐ Obscure the new facilities from public view so that the historic villa and dense tree canopy are the visual focus for those viewing the site from either Wilmslow Road or Langley Road.

The scheme provides an attractive alternative to Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in the Fallowfield area, in turn supporting enhanced student wellbeing and facilitating the freeing up of properties for the mainstream residential market. The plans would mark a new chapter and viable use for the site, with energy efficiency being a key element of the design and material use.

To find out more, please visit our Virtual Exhibition

[View our virtual exhibition](#)

Professionally managed to ensure student well-being

Once built, the development is expected to be managed by Fresh, a leading expert in the purpose-built accommodation sector.

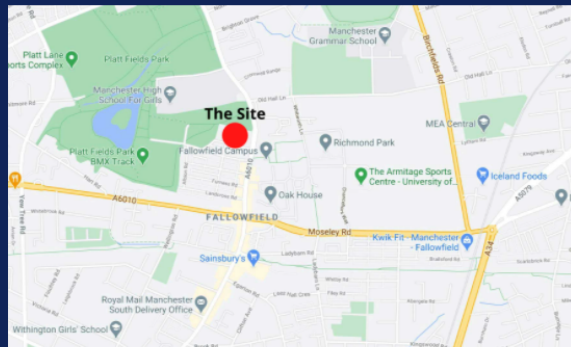
Fresh manages student accommodation across the country with one simple objective – to provide exceptional service to the clients whose properties they manage, and to the students who live in them.

Fresh's customer facing services are delivered locally by directly employed site-based staff. The teams are led by professional and experienced Accommodation Managers, who are responsible for the day-to-day running of each site, marketing to potential new tenants, health and safety compliance and working and liaising with Universities, the local community, and other stakeholders.

Support is provided to the site-based staff by an experienced specialist Central Services department, whose areas of expertise provide the Accommodation Teams with a detailed delivery framework, ensuring consistency of service delivery in line with recognised good industry practice.

Fresh works in tandem with Universities and Colleges to provide a positive 'student experience' and ensure seamless access to shared services by integrating into the University's pastoral care regime and ancillary services. The on-site teams play a vital part in supporting students and providing a link between academic life and 'home' life.

Location



The site is located off Wilmslow Road, linking Fallowfield to Manchester City Centre and the main University campuses and sits adjacent to the University of Manchester's Fallowfield campus. It is bound by Langley Road to the south and Platt Fields Park to the west and south. It is currently occupied by USDAW's offices, with the union planning to move to another location.

The site is ideally located for student accommodation, given its proximity to existing student accommodation and Fallowfield District Centre. Furthermore, it's eastern boundary is formed by a major bus stop on Wilmslow Road taking students in Fallowfield to the Universities and Manchester City Centre. Delivering high quality, expertly managed, purpose-built student accommodation at this site would mean students can reside in facilities that are best suited to their needs, in turn reducing pressure on the area's housing stock and addressing some of the issues arising from unmanaged student accommodation.

Design

Design is an important aspect of the proposals we are bringing forward.

The building's current configuration is disjointed; changes in level throughout the building limit the ability to achieve disability access throughout the building and the office layout limits the ability for internal teams to work closely together. Our proposals would regenerate the site and establish a cluster of student accommodation with a strong sense of place, including an internal landscaped courtyard and a contemporary approach to anchoring the important heritage assets of Oakley Villa to the scheme.

To find out more about the design principles we are promoting as part of this development, please visit our Virtual Consultation.



FAQs

If you have any questions about our plans, check below to see our frequently asked questions and answers. For all other questions, please visit our contact page.

- + What type of accommodation is proposed?
- + Why do we need more student accommodation?
- + Have you considered other uses for this site?
- + What will happen to the Oakley Villa?
- + What are Watkin Jones' plans in terms of landscaping the site?
- + What impact will the proposals have on ecology and wildlife?
- + Will the development be noisy?
- + How will the site be accessed?
- + Will parking be provided?
- + In the current climate, we need jobs, jobs, jobs. How will this development create new jobs?
- + Will there be an out of hours contact for local residents?
- + When do you expect to submit this application?
- + Who are you consulting?

Contact Us

We recently held a public consultation so that we could hear the views of local residents, students and stakeholders. We are now reviewing the feedback received ahead of the submission of a planning application being submitted to Manchester City Council.

Should you have any questions about the plans, you can contact us in one of the following ways:



Your Feedback

Send us your feedback by filling in our [online feedback form](#) here.



Calling

0333 358 0502
(Monday to Friday - 9.00am to 5.30pm)



Emailing

watkinjonesfallowfield@navigrousey.co.uk

To view our virtual exhibition and find out more about the proposals, please visit our **virtual exhibition page**.

[Visit our virtual exhibition here](#)

Appendix E: Virtual Exhibition



Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to view our virtual exhibition.

Watkin Jones is bringing forward plans for the **redevelopment of the USDAW building in Fallowfield**, for the delivery of high quality, purpose-built managed student accommodation.

The scheme provides an attractive alternative to Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in the Fallowfield area, in turn supporting enhanced student wellbeing and freeing up more traditional family homes for the mainstream residential market. The plans would mark a new chapter and viable use for the site, with energy efficiency being a key element of the design and material use.

The aim of this virtual exhibition is to help you find out more about our proposals and provide you with an opportunity to have your say on our revised proposals before a detailed planning application is submitted to Manchester City Council.

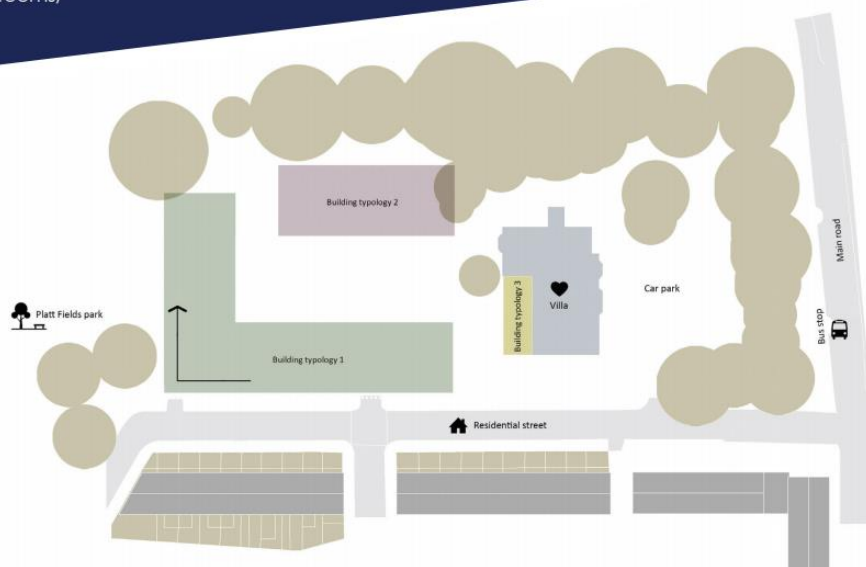


Our Proposals

Watkin Jones is **bringing forward plans** to redevelop USDAW's offices, off Wilmslow Road in Fallowfield, and deliver new purpose-built managed student accommodation.

The proposed scheme aims to:

- **Deliver a desirable managed student residence**, capable of housing c.440 students in the heart of Fallowfield;
- **Create a safe, managed environment** for students which benefits from on-site wardens;
- **Establish a student residential cluster** of buildings with a strong sense of place, and a high quality new development anchored around and complementary to the retained historical Oakley Villa;
- **Deliver a development that captures the character of the area** and celebrates the heritage of the site, giving Oakley Villa a sustainable future;
- **Create new communal facilities** within Oakley Villa, including a cinema room, multimedia/gaming room, lounge areas and meeting rooms;
- **Maintain the mature tree canopy** within and adjacent the site wherever possible, with any trees needing to be removed replaced elsewhere on site;
- **Maintain the mature tree canopy along the street and park edges around the site**, with any trees needing to be removed, for example due to rot, replaced elsewhere on site;
- **Enhance the landscape of the site**, maintaining its open aspect to the front of the Oakley Villa and creating a new high-quality central courtyard.



Design Evolution

The proposed scheme aims to inject new life in to a remarkable setting at the heart of Fallowfield. The site includes the characterful 19th century Oakley Villa, with a generous tree line setting adjacent to Platt Fields Park. Due to its proximity to the University of Manchester Fallowfield Campus and adjacent residential properties it provides a unique opportunity to contribute to the character and appearance of the community.

Starting with the demolition of the tired 1950 extension to Oakley Villa, this enables space for the new purpose-built managed student accommodation building. The massing of the scheme is key, and a sensitive respectful approach has been adhered to throughout its design evolution. The residential block fronting on to Langley Road wraps around to Platt Fields Park and is separated from both Oakley Villa and taller residential block to the north of the site. Ensuring there is sufficient space around the 19th century Oakley Villa gives it individual admiration and in turn allows visual permeability through the site and into the central courtyard. This approach both respects the character of Oakley Villa and gives it a new vantage point and purpose.

The Villa itself will be, in part, rebuilt to its original design with a more contemporary and glass fronted design on the western façade where the existing building is to be removed. This western extension will complement the Villa, enabling it to open out to the new landscaped courtyard. The Villa itself will house all of the communal and staff facilities, with the accommodation being housed in the new outer blocks. These will be a mix of

studios and cluster bedrooms with kitchen and living facilities.

The elevational design is to be modest and sympathetic to its local environment. Pulling from influences in the immediate area. Simple window and facade proportions correspond to the neighbouring vernacular, hence adding a characterful yet modest design, therefore establishing the continuity of the areas architectural language.

The mature tree canopy along the park edges will be maintained where possible, should any trees need to be removed, the landscaping scheme ensure they are replaced on site. The remainder of the development will be obscured from public street view behind the historic villa and dense tree canopy in the adjacent Platt Fields Park.

The scheme has been designed by local architecture practice Tim Groom Architects and influenced by local heritage consultant Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture.



Site Considerations

The need for purpose built, managed student accommodation.

There has been a very limited amount of new student accommodation delivered across the city over recent years compared to the growing number of students the city is attracting through its successful higher education institutions. This is creating pent up demand which is leading to affordability issues for students and an increasing tendency for students to occupy private rented residential accommodation. This has an impact on communities, on student wellbeing and on Council Tax revenue.

The site is ideally located for student accommodation, given its proximity to existing student accommodation and University of Manchester health and welfare amenities at their Fallowfield Campus and Fallowfield District Centre. Furthermore, it is located along a central bus route which connects Fallowfield to the Universities and Manchester City Centre. Delivering high quality, managed, purpose-built student accommodation at this site would mean that students can reside in facilities that are best suited to their needs, in turn reducing pressure on the area's housing stock.

Ecology and landscaping

Watkin Jones will maintain the mature tree canopy along the street and park edges around the site, with any trees needing to be removed, for example due to rot, replaced elsewhere on site. A high-quality landscaped area will front the site and a new central courtyard created.

In addition, the scheme includes appropriate on-site habitat protection and enhancement measures. The recommended mitigation includes the minimisation of tree loss, habitat protection during construction and the planting of native species.

Noise

A Noise Assessment will be submitted alongside the planning application. However, through effective management of the use and appropriate design, the potential for any disturbance will be minimised. Once built, the development is expected to be managed by Fresh, a leading expert in the purpose-built accommodation sector. Fresh's customer facing services are delivered locally by directly employed site-based staff. **The teams are led by professional and experienced Accommodation Managers**, who are responsible for the day-to-day running of each site, marketing to potential new tenants, health and safety compliance and working and liaising with Universities, the local community, and other stakeholders.

Access

The site will be accessed via Langley Road.

Given the site's proximity to local bus services, it is expected that the vast majority of residents will use the local bus services, as well as cycle and walkways on Wilmslow Road that connect the site to Fallowfield Central, the Universities and City Centre. **Parking spaces will be made available for disabled residents who require them.** Servicing of the development is designed into the proposals and will be appropriately managed, conscious of residential amenity.

Next Steps

Thank you for taking the time to view our virtual exhibition.

All feedback received during this consultation will be reviewed in great detail and we will look to incorporate appropriate comments within the scheme as the planning application progresses.

All feedback will also be collated in a Pre-Application Consultation Report for submission to the Council alongside the planning application. Following consideration of the comments, a planning application is expected to be submitted to Manchester City Council in the coming months.

Once the application is submitted and validated, Manchester City Council will undertake statutory consultation on the proposals.

Have Your Say

Our public consultation runs from Thursday 12th to Friday 27th November. During this time, you can leave your comments by:



Completing our online feedback form available on the consultation website:

www.watkinjonesfallowfield.co.uk



Speaking to a member of the team

on **0333 358 0502**

(Monday - Friday, 9:00am to 5:30pm)



Emailing us with your comments, questions or feedback at:

watkinjonesfallowfield@havingyoursay.co.uk

About Watkin Jones

Established in 1791, Watkin Jones Group is a market leading multi-occupancy residential developer with a proven track record of delivering multi-occupancy residential development. Over the past 20 years, Watkin Jones has delivered 43,000 student bed spaces across the UK, including significant experience in Manchester.

Fresh is the operational and management arm of the Watkin Jones Group, managing just 21,000 units in 65 locations across the UK. Fresh has won numerous awards and accolades including obtaining a satisfaction rating of 93% within the 2020 National Student Housing Survey.



Appendix F: Social media adverts

Land off Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield

Sponsored

Like Page

Our proposals would deliver high quality and affordable student accommodation in the heart of Fallowfield. The plans would provide a safe and affordable alternative to HMOs. Click the link below to find out more about our public consultation.



New student accommodation in Fallowfield
High quality, affordable student accommodation

YOUR CAPTION HERE

20

562 Comments 311 Shares

Like

Comment

Share

Land off Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield

Sponsored

Like Page

Our plans to breathe new life into the USDAW building, off Wilmslow Road, would provide purpose-built accommodation for students, relieving the pressure on the mainstream rental market. Click below to find out more and share your views.



New student accommodation in Fallowfield
High quality, affordable student accommodation

YOUR CAPTION HERE

20

562 Comments 311 Shares

Like

Comment

Share

Land off Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield

Sponsored

Like Page

Have you heard about our ambitions for the USDAW building off Wilmslow Road? With regular bus services and dedicated cycling infrastructure nearby, our plans provide a sustainable opportunity to deliver purpose built student accommodation. Click to find out more.



New student accommodation in Fallowfield
Sustainable student accommodation

YOUR CAPTION HERE

20

562 Comments 311 Shares

Like

Comment

Share

Land off Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield

Sponsored

Like Page

With the Oxford Road Corridor bus and cycle routes on the doorstep, our proposals will deliver sustainable student accommodation in the heart of Fallowfield. This will provide an ideal home for students looking for both a convenient location and a sense of community. Click below to find out more and share your views.



New student accommodation in Fallowfield
Sustainable student accommodation

YOUR CAPTION HERE

20

562 Comments 311 Shares

Like

Comment

Share

Land off Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield

Sponsored

Like Page

Our proposals would deliver new student accommodation and regenerate a historic building in the heart of Fallowfield. USDAW are relocating from Oakley Villa and our plans will help preserve the building as a social hub. Click below to find out more and share your views.



New student accommodation in Fallowfield
Sustainable student accommodation

YOUR CAPTION HERE

20

562 Comments 311 Shares

Like

Comment

Share

Land off Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield

Sponsored

Like Page

Oakley Villa will be regenerated as part of our plans to deliver new, high quality student accommodation in Fallowfield. The historic building will be retained as a communal facility and student hub. Click below to find out more and share your views.



New student accommodation in Fallowfield
Sustainable student accommodation

YOUR CAPTION HERE

20

562 Comments 311 Shares

Like

Comment

Share

Appendix G: Media coverage



The flats are intended to provide an alternative to HMOs

Watkin Jones plots Fallowfield student scheme

12 Nov 2020, 10:19 Dan Whelan

The developer is readying plans for 440 student beds on the site of the USDAW trade union building on Wilmslow Road in Manchester, a scheme designed by Tim Groom Architects.

Watkin Jones' proposal includes demolishing the majority of buildings on the site and constructing a pair of residential blocks. An internal landscaped courtyard, as well as communal facilities such as a cinema room, multimedia or gaming room, lounge areas and meeting rooms, also feature in the plans.

Oakley Villa, the oldest building on the site and part of the trade union's complex, would be retained and is earmarked to house the development's communal facilities.

The developer said it hopes the project will free up properties in Manchester's mainstream residential market, an objective outlined by Manchester City Council last month, and provide an alternative to houses of multiple occupation for students.

The flats, to be operated by Watkin Jones' management arm Fresh, are also expected to be cheaper than similar city centre accommodation, the developer said.

The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, which currently occupies the site and has done for more than 100 years, has decided to relocate due to high maintenance and running costs, an unsuitable building layout and outdated facilities, according to Watkin Jones.

Iain Smith, group planning director at Watkin Jones, said: "Delivering purpose-built managed student accommodation at this site would mean students can reside in facilities that are best suited to their needs, in turn reducing demand for HMOs, which have accounted for a significant share of the area's housing stock."

A public consultation on the proposals has launched and will run until 27 November after which time a planning application could be submitted.