



3 August 2020

Dear Mr Morris,

127300/FO/2020

8 Birch Polygon Manchester M14 5HX

Erection of a single storey rear extension and conversion of property to provide 5 no. self contained apartments with associated elevational alterations, car parking and landscaping 8 Birch Polygon Manchester M14 5HX

Manchester Civic Society OBJECTS strongly to this proposal.

Manchester Civic Society is full agreement with the detailed objection letter submitted by the Rusholme and Fallowfield Civic Society. There is no need to repeat here the points made; we fully endorse them.

Manchester Civic Society notes that the previous application (124997/FO/2019) to develop this property has been withdrawn. That proposal was a gross overdevelopment of the site; this is a lesser one, but still very significant overdevelopment.

This proposal does not provide a larger family home; it removes one.

The attitude of the City Council to development is set out in its ***Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance***. We wish to highlight two relevant issues it raises.

The Council wishes to prevent further loss of family housing. Para 7.4 states:

Parts of the City have seen the loss of family housing in favour of flats to such an extent that the character and sustainability of these areas is jeopardised. We believe that the balance of development in such areas should now revert to the provision of a range of family housing more traditionally characteristic of these parts of the City, which can offer choice to local people and assist the sustainability of these neighbourhoods.

The Design and Access Statement seeks to justify the proposal to convert this large single home to apartments by employing 'context', i.e. the fact that some nearby properties have been subdivided (Section2.0). This approach is no longer the City Council's preferred choice for development. Manchester's current and expressed need is to retain and enhance the large family homes, both to ensure a vibrant and mixed community of occupants and to retain the sustainability of neighbourhoods.

In the present uncertain circumstances, there is a distinct prospect of a surplus of apartments and small flats becoming available, due both to changes in student population and to an upsurge in working from home in the satellite metropolitan boroughs.

The Council values its attractive Victorian Era properties

11.6 The City's Victorian terraces exist in many areas and there are a wide variety of styles and sizes, from small back of pavement homes, **to elegant properties with large gardens**. They provide a safe, supportive environment and where they are well looked after, retain an attractive and welcoming sense of place.

11.7 These areas will continue to sustain medium to high densities. However **the introduction of a broader choice of housing is important and this may lead to the reduction of densities in particular circumstances**. Infill sites and conversions should respect and enhance the simple urban character of the area, whilst at the same time introducing choice, variety and interest, although pastiche, or poorly considered new developments or extensions will be discouraged. Garden wall, window and door details which are typical of the period, should be retained.

PARKING is still a vexed issue.

Much of the rear garden area is lost, despite the claim that the *appearance* of the hard standing is attenuated by the garden areas. The same is true at the front of the property.

There is no mention of the **loss of garden wall at the front**.

The narrow pathway to the rear garden parking poses access and safety problems.

IN CONCLUSION, Manchester Civic Society OBJECTS because

1. This is a very substantial and handsome semi-detached property which retains the ability to resume its original function as a large family home.
2. The incorporation of a small 3 bedroomed flat within its walls, generated as part of a subdivision of such a home, does not provide the large and rare family homes which are needed in a mixed community.
3. Large family homes in central Manchester and near to the University are sadly rare and thus in demand. It would be quite wrong, and against council policy, to lose this one to apartments.
4. Victorian family homes, including large homes in large gardens, are a valued component of Manchester's mix of housing.

Far from providing a valued larger family home this proposal actually removes one from the market.

Yours sincerely,

