

Comments for Planning Application 142652/FO/2025

Application Summary

Application Number: 142652/FO/2025

Address: Chorlton Square Shopping Centre Barlow Moor Road Manchester M21 9AQ

Proposal: Erection of 6 no. residential buildings of 10, 8, 6 and 4 storeys in height to provide up to 262 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with ground floor commercial uses (Use Class E (a-e)); infrastructure works including electric substation and associated utilities works, basement and ground level car parking, service yard, vehicular and pedestrian accesses; together with public realm works and hard/soft landscaping following the demolition of the existing buildings and structures on 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'm not sure if you received this, I didn't get a receipt. So I'm sending it again. Apologies if you have already seen it.

1. I am concerned about the impact the proposed development will have on the health and structural integrity of the ash tree in my garden on the western border of the development site. I am aware of my responsibility to maintain this protected tree as it is on my property. If it is damaged by neighbouring building work, am I still liable for damage a falling branch may cause?

1.1 The tree survey schedule from the Tyler Grange report, Chorlton Precinct Arboricultural Method Statement, underestimates the height, trunk diameter and canopy spread of the G2 trees on their survey. It doesn't mention the root zone extension into the site at all.

1.2 The diameter of the trunk, measured at 100cm from the ground, is 140cm not 70cm as stated in the Tyler Grange report. Higher than this the trunk becomes a multi stem tree with six substantial trunks increasing the diameter substantially. This is important because a more accurate root zone can be estimated from a ratio calculation applied to the diameter of the trunk. (Day, Wiseman, Dickenson and Harris; Contemporary Concepts of Root System Architecture of Urban Trees, Arboriculture & Urban Forestry July 2010, <https://www.isa-arbor.com>). The Tyler Grange report underestimates this zone. (Martin Dobson: Tree Root Systems, Arboriculture Advisory and Information Service, July 1995).

1.3 The report further comments on the ash tree showing signs of decline. The site survey was conducted on 13th November 2024 when the tree was mostly, if not entirely defoliated and entering a period of winter dormancy and therefore difficult to establish any evidence of decline. It has several areas of dead wood that have been there for at least 12 years due to neighbouring sycamore saplings (removed 2012 and 2021) blocking its light. Inevitably small and larger, living and dead branches do fall on the neighbouring carparks.

1.4 A site visit to assess the health of the tree was conducted in May 2025 by The Tree Station because of my concerns over ash die back. The arboriculturist did not suspect ash die back, but attributed uneven defoliation to probable root compaction caused by the surrounding tarmacked and concreted carparks. The building of an additional concrete slab in the health centre carpark (2024) and damage to a major root during the construction may well contribute to the tree's uneven foliation pattern. A written report has been requested from the Tree Station.

2. I am concerned about the lack of consideration to the conservation area to the west of the site, particularly, lack of consideration of habitats within the conservation area in the site surveys, ambiguous boundary demarcation and potential hazard to cars parked under trees here.

2.1 The Arboricultural Method Statement survey mentions the screening value of the trees for the row of houses to the west of the site. This is obviously significant in the summer (in our case late May to early September) and negligible for the rest of the year when the existing Graeme House is clearly visible. The report does not consider the ecological and environmental benefits of these trees as habitats for numerous insects, invertebrates, birds, bats, hedgehogs, foxes and other mammals. Nor does it consider the groups of mature trees and gardens as being in need of protection as a conservation area from proposed demolition or building works.

2.2 The Ecological Impact Assessment Report, also by Tyler Grange, only refers to habitats within the site. It makes no reference to the adjacent Conservation area to the west of the site. This area is a "directly connecting habitat" and therefore species within it, could be significantly threatened by the demolition and construction process.

Because of this there are inaccuracies in the report.

- My own garden contains a pond which is a potential habitat for amphibians. Other local gardens may also have similar ponds adding to the potential for protected wildlife.
- Since 2012 when we moved here, until the installation of very bright security lights on the Bail Hostel late last year (2024), bats foraged along the corridor of house walls and flew between our house and the neighbouring property. We presume they are roosting in the Oswald Road gardens or neighbouring gardens on Vincent Avenue (Also part of the conservation area) and the Nicolas Road garden corridor.
- Hedgehogs have been sighted foraging within my own and my neighbours garden and probably travel through the corridor of gardens.
- I have also seen foxes rear young and travel between gardens in this row.

2.3 In the north west corner of the site, the boundary is ambiguous. In some plans the boundary includes a square section contained by a fence within the neighbouring health centre. In others, the boundary omits this area. It contains a tall Lawson cypress and some small birch trees. Has the site boundary been changed? Please clarify? In the proposal these will be removed and replaced by a single young Quercus Robur Fastigiata. This is an excellent tree and in years to come will create an effective narrow screen, however in the meantime the boundary will be exposed.

2.4 The plans show proposed car parking spaces along the western boundary and line of trees in the conservation area. Falling branches from these protected trees have potential to cause damage to parked cars and people using the spaces.

2.5 Historically, this boundary was a brick wall. This wall was accidentally knocked down by vehicles of contractors when the site was owned by Peel Holdings. The previous owners of our property were "compensated" by a cheap replacement lapboard fence. The current proposed plans indicate there will be no fencing or other built installation to mark the boundary. Who will then be responsible for maintain this boundary?

2.6 My suggestion is to have a line of new security fencing along the boundary (with hedgehog access points) and an area of planting with smaller trees, hedges and shrubs that create a green buffer zone/ habitat, similar or wider to proposed areas around the health centre, and most of the rest of the site, thereby somewhat protecting existing trees and habitats within the conservation area and also preventing damage to people or vehicles on the development site. I know people are concerned about the loss of parking on the site, since it has for a long time been a carpark. In my experience people are wary of parking under these trees for fear of damage. (Visitors and residents of the bail hostel park here, seeking seclusion and privacy whilst staying in their cars).

3. I am very concerned by the loss of privacy, noise and disturbance caused by the demolition, construction and eventual use of the site, and my suggestion of a green buffer zone would for us, help mitigate this.

4. I am very concerned that the scale of the development is out of proportion to the rest of the built environment in Chorlton and how this will negatively impact the experience and behaviour of residents. The buildings will tower over neighbouring streets.

5. I am worried that this development, if it were approved, will set a precedent for further high-rise, high-density apartment buildings on the corner of Nicolas Rd and Barlow Moor Road on the site of the Co-op Funeral Home. And potentially other sites on Oswald Road and around the centre of Chorlton.

6. I am very concerned that Chorlton has lost a great public amenity (with the loss of the precinct) and that the proposal offers little amenity value to existing residents and will largely benefit and feel exclusive to new residents of the development. I have read large parts of the Places for Everyone document and fail to see how this development is beneficial to my local community.

7. I am concerned that what is effectively a planted verge on Barlow Moor Road has been presented as a pocket park, and that this area will be dominated by outside restaurant seating and not useable to children as areas to play.

The Chorlton Public Realm document emphasises public meeting places and event spaces and I fear this will not be allowed on this development.