

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: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer made comments neither objecting to or supporting the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I am a long-term Chorlton resident and have followed the proposals for redevelopment of Chorlton Precinct with interest from the beginning. Like the majority of local residents, I am in favour of redevelopment of this site, which had long been overdue for improvement. During the public consultation I was actively engaged, providing written comments and visiting the hub to discuss the proposals with the development team.

Now that the planning application is ongoing, I wish to register both support and concern about the plans. On the positive side, the overall building design is of good quality and references other local developments. It is good to read in the supporting documentation that there is an ongoing commitment from the developers to support independent retailers, and to resist the further expansion of fast-food outlets, which have come to dominate Wilbraham Road in recent years. Also to be encouraged is the developers' desire to provide a mix of residential accommodation.

I do however have two major concerns. First is the loss in the plans of the proposed housing on the old car park, replaced with another block of flats. This does not reflect the needs of the local community, which is a diverse mix of young and old, singles and families. Apartments do not suit everyone, so if a "mix" of housing is proposed, this has to include ground-level housing units, not just more flats. Flats suit the developer of course, as higher density housing means more profit, but it is an important part of the planning department's role to push back against such profiteering at the expense of the community.

Similarly, my second concern is the relative lack of retail and commercial space. I believe there were 22 shops and units in and around the old precinct; the new proposal is for "a maximum" of 11 units - which may be combined for larger retailers, so there is even less diversity. This just is not enough; I believe I speak for many local residents when I say that the old precinct shops are hugely missed, and Chorlton genuinely feels like it has lost its heart since the precinct closed, despite it being so tatty. We need those shops, or similar, to come back, so more than halving the retail capacity in the new development is a disaster.

Like many others, I am concerned about the height of the new development. Graeme House is often quoted as justification for the new buildings, but Graeme House is not on the road-side, it is hidden away behind other buildings - and it is an eye-sore, not something to be used as a model! Chorlton has residential expansion going on at multiple sites as I write (including the far-too-high development on the old Leisure Centre site). Maximising the number of flats is not in the community's interest, but is in the developer's (as mentioned earlier). By bringing the height of those blocks down by a storey or two, the whole development would feel more in-keeping, less dominating, and would help reduce the inevitable wind-tunnel that always results from these sort of "canyon" developments (c.f. Home on Whitworth Street, Spinningfields, and many others).

I realise that I am posting this on the final day of consultation, so probably this is too little, too late. But how refreshing it would be if the planning department were to exercise the muscles that it has, and rein in the profit-driven aspirations of the developer. Of course the project has to be viable, and the building companies make their money, that is understood. But Chorlton has been a proud, characterful district since before Manchester was anything other than an old Roman settlement, before the industrial revolution. The planning department has a responsibility to all residents to maintain that independence and character in the face of private financial and commercial interests. Please listen to the residents!