

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:1. The physical scale and size of the development is hugely out of proportion to existing surrounding buildings.

This will have a major impact on the experience of existing residents and town centre users, with high rise flats dominating the physical space and altering the sense of place and identity that Chorlton centre has had.

I am particularly aware of the sensory experience of the built environment and how this impacts mental health. Visually the 6 blocks dominate the surrounding streets and will obscure views of sky and a sense of openness from street level and from within existing homes surrounding the site. The pedestrianised "soft landscaped" Manchester Road is narrow and despite the proposed landscaping could feel confined. The scale of the buildings will also have an impact on how sound is experienced with potential for amplification and echoing as sound bounces around the buildings. There will also be inevitable nuisance sound issues between residents in buildings of this scale. There are a lot of studies on the negative psychological and social impacts of high density, high rise buildings.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3763/asre.2007.5002>

"the literature suggests that high-rises are less satisfactory than other housing forms for most people, that they are not optimal for children, that social relations are more impersonal and helping behaviour is less than in other housing forms, that crime and fear of crime are greater, and that they may independently account for some suicides."

Generally the scale of this proposed development is not conducive for human and societal well-

being.

2. Lack of retail units.

Please remember this was once, until very recently, a busy shopping centre, with thriving retail units and a sense of safety and protection from car traffic. (Not therefore, a brownfield site.) It was a place where chance meetings occurred between locals and there was a strong sense of community and history. The proposed development has far fewer retail units. My fear is there will be cafes with outside seating on the street, (which might look smart and attractive) but will not provide useful shops. Chorlton lacks a decent well priced supermarket like Lidl or Aldi. Morrisons is always crowded and poorly managed. Previously in the precinct we had a good fruit and veg shop, a fantastic butcher, several bakers a discount supermarket and a useful Timpson's, as well as a variety of craft and charity shops and a newsagent and cafe. Many useful shops in Chorlton have closed and become cafes, bars and takeaway outlets; not necessarily conducive to inclusive access to healthy food. On the first proposal for this development it looked like the pedestrianised Manchester Road would have retail units either side. There is only one proposed now.

3. Negative environmental impact.

My house on Oswald Road is one of the row of houses that borders the development site. This is a conservation area due mainly to the large mature trees in the gardens being of value to the public realm. I have been advised by an arboriculturist from the Tree Station, that the large ash tree in my garden is suffering, not from ash dieback but from impaction and root damage caused by neighbouring car parks. Chorlton Health Centre is a neighbour and has recently laid a concrete slab and attempted to cut through roots, (before I stopped them.) The ground survey for the site also drilled holes in close proximity and potentially caused harm to the ash tree. I am very concerned that roots of this tree, and therefore its health, will be affected both by the demolition process and the build itself. I don't fully understand or trust that the Arboricultural Impact Assessment will have sufficient powers to protect these particular trees.

4. Increased traffic and parking on pavements.

I am concerned about the current volume of traffic and congestion on Oswald Road. This has apparently increased since the beginning of the improvements to Manchester Road and Barlow Moor Roads, with many people cutting through to avoid the traffic lights and restricted junction at the crossroads. The end junction (crossroads) with Oswald Road, Manchester Road, and Wilbraham Road is much more dangerous now. I know the intention is for us all to be walking and cycling but realistically this is not happening. Lots of people travel by car to work, shop and drop off/pick up school children. This proposed development won't stop this level of car activity despite good local transport links and will likely add to the existing parking and traffic problems.

5. Public realm repurposed to maximise financial gain.

In the last 25 years I've lived in Chorlton, there have been many excellent documents outlining Manchester City Council's intentions for Chorlton in consultation with its residents, as listed on page 9, 2.1 Policy Background in the Chorlton Local Infrastructure Framework document (LIF). I applaud the work of the people involved in developing these and the most recent Chorlton LIF. My sense is that the Local Council should have had a much keener overview of how this particular proposal has come about. In artists impressions of developments for this site there has never been anything on this scale. From JP Livesey public consultations, we are told that the Council

had set the height guideline to be the height of Graeme House. I think this was a mistake, given the previous excellent published Council aspirations for Chorlton. It is understandable however given the huge pressure for housing.

I also feel Chorlton Precinct retail traders were treated very badly by the site owners. The owners apparently were reluctant to fulfil obligations to maintain the site effectively, hence the running down of the site. The owners also gave traders very short notice to quit or be evicted. Now the site can be designated brownfield and therefore more susceptible to overdevelopment.

I really hope that the Council now exert their power and influence to refuse this overdevelopment.

SUGGESTIONS

Reduce height of blocks so elevations are more human scale.

Increase number of retail units on ground floor of blocks facing inward on pedestrianised Manchester Road.

A broader, more creative use of public realm; workshops, retail, pop up market spaces, performance spaces, green, and play spaces.

Ensure promotion as well as protection of environmental and wildlife issues.