

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 objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I write as a Chorlton resident (for 25 years) to object to the current development proposals for One Chorlton.

My main objections are that 1) it is much too dense and 2) not doesn't actually meet what is needed in this part of Chorlton.

What was the district shopping centre for the Chorlton area will be replaced by several large blocks of flats. I responded to the 2023 version of the plans for One Chorlton objecting to the density and number of homes being planned, especially at the expense of retail and other community facilities, which was a shared concern among residents. But since then the proposals have become even more intensified rather than revised down as many of us had hoped. In 2023 the plan was for about 200 homes, now this has gone up to 262, and the variety of homes proposed has been reduced. Previously the plans had been for 'a diverse mix of 1,2 and 3 bedroom apartments, duplexes and townhouses, all with outdoor space such as balconies and gardens' (2023 consultation) On the current plan it now seems to be just apartments and mostly of just 1 or 2 bedrooms, and I can't see many gardens or guaranteed balconies. In addition, the blocks seem higher than ever, with 3 of the 6 blocks to be 7-10 storeys tall. This is out of character for the area, where most houses and buildings are 2/3 storeys or equivalent. I know we have a housing crisis locally and nationally, but this shouldn't be an excuse to throw up any kind of buildings however inappropriate or out of keeping. Also, people don't just want or need apartments, we need a diversity of housing and, crucially, for genuinely affordable housing,

especially in an area like Chorlton where the property market, both rental and owned, is overinflated.

This development refers to affordable housing but makes no guarantees. It has already got itself an exemption from having to meet the requirements to provide a certain number of affordable units, because the developers' Financial Viability Assessment calculated that this was not viable. So, it now depends on whether or not they can get a grant from Homes England to enable a few of the apartments to be 'affordable' i.e. 80% of market rent/sales. I suspect this won't be known until the development has been built. Manchester has a city-wide housing target that 20% of new housing should be affordable. Surely developer's plans that can't even meet this basic standard, for an area like Chorlton where they stand to make huge profits, should be reason enough on its own for it to be refused.

The site in question used to be a shopping centre, with a smattering of flats above some of the shops, a massive office block, which is now empty and no longer needed, and a carpark larger than required. Clearly there's the potential for any development of the space to include more housing than before, but this could be blended with the kind of district centre residents need and in keeping with the council's vision: 'By 2027 Manchester all be a city of thriving district centres... with a good range of public services, retail and local facilities'. I believe that's what most residents expected when development plans were first produced for Chorlton Precinct back in 2017. However, the current proposal won't deliver this. The mix of housing to retail and other community assets is completely out of balance. The plan itself admits a loss of retail space of 2,242 square metres - from 3,218 to 976. That's a big loss to existing local residents. And with an extra 262 households (500+ people) the need and potential for retail businesses will actually increase. It is also disappointing for retail and other businesses who might have hoped to locate in a refurbished district centre. Encouraging local business is frequently cited as a key objective in the vision statements of both Manchester City Council and Greater Manchester Pension Fund (the landowners). In earlier consultations many residents raised the need for the other kinds of community spaces you hope to find in a district centre - a multi-purpose community centre for example. The current proposals don't address this type of need in any meaningful way. Non-privately owned community spaces are very thin on the ground in Chorlton, despite our increasing population. We lost our leisure centre a few years ago when its replacement was located at Hough End. In fact, more flats are now being built where the leisure centre used to be. Now, the only community space of any permanence is the library, which is indeed a wonderful library, even better now it's been refurbished. But not all aspects of community need can be met by a library. Not including any indoor community spaces within this development seems like a totally missed opportunity.

Another key concern I have is that Chorlton doesn't currently have the infrastructure to support this level of surge in population. By this, I'm thinking mainly of schools, health services and social services support. I was surprised to read in the Health Impact Assessment that Chorlton surgeries are currently under capacity, as it doesn't tally with experience as a service user, when trying to

get a GP appointment for example. Obviously it is not up to the developers to fix issues like this, but I imagine the planning committee needs to consider issues like this and how such shortages could be addressed in the near future.