

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 am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed multi-story development on the old Chorlton precinct site. This proposal is grossly out of character with the surrounding area. Chorlton is essentially a low-rise neighbourhood, and Graeme House has always been the (ugly) exception rather than the rule. Using the height of Graeme House as a benchmark misrepresents it as an established standard for local development, when in fact it has always been an anachronism. Six tall blocks of intensive housing, with only token provision for retail premises will not be sufficient to provide the range of local shops essential for Chorlton residents. Although the old Chorlton Precinct was desperately in need of refurbishment, it did provide a necessary (if limited) community resource, within walking distance for most local people.

This proposal represents a reduction in local retail provision: ie, there were more than 20 shops in the Precinct, whereas the Chorlton Square Shopping Centre is likely to offer about 12 such outlets. Even the name for the proposed "development" is a significant misnomer: this is not a refurbishment of previous retail provision - it is a residential (over) development of a site that previously provided relatively low-cost and local shopping for home essentials: eg Quality Save, Boots, Greggs, Timpson's, Pound Bakery, plus newsagents, a fruit and vegetable shop, an exceptional butchers, and shops selling low-priced clothes, shoes etc.

Like many long-term Chorlton residents - I have lived here for 45 of the last 47 years - I fail to be convinced that the proposed "development" will in any way benefit the established urban village

character of the area. In particular, it will lead to an increased density of living conditions, with a concomitant detriment to existing parking and traffic problems, further reducing the availability of parking - most significantly in access for the disabled.

Air pollution in that part of Chorlton is already so intense that I avoid the area at busy times during the week, and try to avoid it completely at weekends, particularly on Saturdays.

Adding a potential 300-400 plus residents will inevitably add more pollution, congestion and parking chaos.

It is also a source of concern that the developers can no longer guarantee that any social housing will be built. There is already a significant under-provision of such accommodation in the area. Nor is there any provision for a much-needed civic centre to provide a necessary hub for young and old alike.

Proposed green spaces are token at best, and any trees planted will take years to make a positive contribution (if at all). Where are the new green spaces and increased biodiversity promised in the original proposal? Or the proposed mix of new homes, retail spaces for diverse operators, people-first streets, sustainability, considered parking and access, or the recognition of Chorlton-inspired character? The fact is that the proposed "development" will produce a divisive and alienating effect on a thriving South Manchester suburb. In particular, it appears that the triangular area bordered and defined by blocks A, B, C and F will probably become an exclusive, gated community inaccessible to the public, thus closing off most of the site.

Chorlton is a town that, until recently, had developed in a gradual and sustainable manner from being a suburb that time forgot into a desirable residential area, with a wide-ranging and inclusive community. The proposed "development" is completely out of character and will contribute little or nothing of lasting value to the area. The existing planning proposal needs to be revised before it is too late, in order to avoid the costly mistake of over-developing this site and the contingent (and expensive) problems that will inevitably result.

As an example of good quality development sensitive to the existing area, I would draw your attention to the refurbishment being completed on the old HSBC/Midland Bank building on the corner of Wilbraham Road/ Barlow Moor Road. This is the kind of development that Chorlton needs in order to maintain the character of the Four Banks area.

I trust that you will take these considerations into account when assessing the proposed development of this site. Please do not allow Chorlton to be swept along in the wake of other obtrusive high-rise developments in Manchester. Chorlton deserves better!