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: Group
Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application
Comment Reasons:
Comment:Chorlton Civic Society (formerly Chorlton Voice) object to the proposals for redevelopment of Chorlton Precinct.

Height, Scale and Massing:

The proposed development, by virtue of its excessive height, scale and massing, is contrary to Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Statement and Policies EN 2 and DM 1of the adopted Core Strategy.

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Statement states that development should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment.

While Policy EN 2 of the adopted Core Strategy identifies district centres as potential locations for tall buildings, it also states that "the height of tall buildings in such locations should relate more to the local, rather than the City Centre, urban context." The reasoned justification notes that tall buildings by their very nature can dominate the street scene and be highly visible over long distances and should therefore be designed to the highest quality, both in terms of appearance and their impact on the functioning of surrounding space.

Policy DM 1 requires all development to have regard to appropriate siting, layout, scale, form,

massing, materials and detail; to impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development; and to the character of the surrounding area.

The Society considers that the height, scale and massing of the proposed buildings fail to relate to the local suburban character of the surrounding area and would unduly dominate the street scene, particularly on Barlow Moor Road and Nicolas Road.

The local character and history of the surrounding built environment of Chorlton predominantly comprises two or three storey high buildings. While the height of a typical Victorian/Edwardian three storey building is the equivalent of four modern storeys, this is still substantially lower than the proposed buildings.

The applicants use the existing Graeme House as a benchmark for the height of the redevelopment. However, Graeme House is a single tall, but slender building, set back within the site, and is screened from the surrounding street scene by lower buildings, significantly reducing its impact on the street scene.

The tallest of the proposed new buildings is some 8 metres higher than the roof height of Graeme House and is situated on the most prominent part of the site, at the junction of Barlow Moor Road and Nicolas Road. The second highest building, fronting Barlow Moor Road, is also higher than the roof height of Graeme House. They are both taller and bulkier than Graeme House. These buildings would be highly visible from along the street, both close by and from distance.

The height, scale and massing of the frontage buildings is completely out of scale with the character of the area and would be a discordant feature in the local street scene and across the whole of Chorlton. The scheme design fails to respect human scale or the urban grain of the area and is unresponsive to Chorlton's heritage.

The height of the proposed buildings would dominant the aspect of and have an overbearing effect on neighbouring properties, particularly those on the opposite side of Barlow Moor Road.

The limited areas of public open space within the site will generally be shadowed by the buildings and are unlikely to perform as attractive town centre meeting places.

The Society does not consider that the design of the proposed development is of sufficiently high quality to mitigate the impact of its excessive height, scale and massing.

The use of flat roofs through the development is at odds with the character of the surrounding area. This is particularly jarring on the frontage to Wilbraham Road where the proposed block sits immediately between traditional pitched roofed buildings.

The elevational treatment, with prominent use of bay window features, is stated to be inspired by

"Chorlton Type Mansion Blocks". However, this existing building type typically only features bay windows on two or, occasionally, three storeys. The use of bay windows across buildings up to ten storeys is not in any way comparable; it results in a building form which is alien to the character and history of Chorlton.

Whilst red brick is a common design feature across Chorlton, it's use as the predominant material of buildings of such size is not sympathetic to the surrounding built environment. The "Chorlton Type Mansion Blocks" typically include contrasting elements of render panels and architectural timberwork. The proposed development is entirely faced with brickwork, which would lend it a monotonous appearance. The attempt to minimise the impact of building height by setting back the top floor of each building is tokenistic and has little effect.

Mix of Uses:

The mix of uses in the proposed development is contrary to Policies C 2 and C 6 of the Adopted Core Strategy.

Policy C 2 states that "development in District Centres should prioritise delivery of key 'visitor' services, including retail, public and commercial services and food and drink. The Council will ensure that retail remains the principal use in Primary Shopping Areas, but also ensure that provision is made in District Centres for commercial and service uses, leisure and community facilities and other uses which make a positive contribution to vitality and viability of centres.

Policy C6 of the adopted Core Strategy states that "redevelopment in Chorlton will provide a substantial increase in retail, alongside improvements to other commercial and community services. New development should also make a contribution to the character of the centre, including a range of unit sizes and environmental improvements." The reasoned justification notes that there is "an opportunity for redevelopment in Chorlton which can improve performance, providing it builds on the centre's existing strengths. Further development is expected to be accommodated through the redevelopment of the precinct, and this may be alongside an increase in capacity at existing facilities. A comprehensive scheme in the centre should provide opportunities for the continued growth of the independent sector and improved facilities for other services (including health and education)." The proposed redevelopment represents a significant reduction in the amount of retail floorspace and doers not provide any other commercial or community services.

The proposed development does not provide a substantial increase in retail, alongside improvements to other commercial and community services. It proposes a significant reduction in retail floorspace and includes no other commercial or community services.