

Comments for Planning Application 142535/FO/2025

Application Summary

Application Number: 142535/FO/2025

Address: 140 Great Ancoats Street Manchester M4 6DU

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 2no. new buildings providing up to 758 apartments (Use Class C3), Class E floorspace (comprising flexible office accommodation (Use Class Eg(i)) and Class Ea and b) and associated hard and soft landscaping (including works within the public highway), formation of vehicle accesses and servicing access together with associated works.

Case Officer: Lucy Harrison

Customer Details

Name: Not Available

Address: Not Available

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: To: Manchester City Council Planning Department

Subject: Objection to Planning Application 142535/FO/2025 - Redevelopment of the Stockton's Furniture Site

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally and strongly object to planning application 142535/FO/2025 for the proposed redevelopment of the Stockton's Furniture site on Great Ancoats Street, which includes the construction of two residential towers (50 and 26 storeys). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I, along with many other residents, will be severely affected by this scheme if it proceeds in its current form.

My objection is based on a number of material planning concerns, including: unacceptable loss of daylight, overlooking and privacy issues, inappropriate scale and design, lack of parking and access, increased noise and disruption, inadequate disabled access, no affordable housing, and lack of proper engagement from the developer.

The proposal prioritises height and density over community wellbeing, and I believe approving it in its current form would cause long-term, avoidable harm to the existing residential community.

Severe Loss of Daylight to Existing Homes

The applicant's own daylight/sunlight assessment (GIA, April 2025) admits that the impact on Oxygen Tower will be of a "high magnitude", with many windows facing the site seeing their Vertical Sky Component (VSC) drop to the mid-teens or lower. Some will fall into single digits.

These levels fall well below the BRE Guidelines (2022), which recommend 27% VSC or no more than a 20% reduction. The retained values for many Oxygen homes would be under 50% of current light levels - a drastic and deeply harmful change.

To justify this, the developer has used a theoretical "mirror building" (BRE Paragraph H6) as a comparison baseline. But this "mirrored massing" is an imaginary building that has never existed. It's a convenient fiction, designed to downplay the real impact on our homes.

If the Council accepts this logic, it will be complicit in manipulating planning guidance to favour commercial outcomes over residential quality of life.

2.

Overlooking and Invasion of Privacy

The new towers, particularly the 50-storey block, will be positioned just metres away from existing homes in Oxygen. Hundreds of new windows and balconies will directly face our apartments and terraces across Store Street. This will create a permanent sense of being overlooked - a serious invasion of privacy.

The separation distance is far below the standards usually expected between high-rise developments. Residents in Oxygen will lose their right to enjoy their homes in peace and privacy, replaced by a daily sense of exposure and intrusion.

3.

Excessive Height and Poor Design

The scheme blatantly exceeds the Council's own planning guidance, which caps building height for this site at 45 storeys. The proposal pushes that to 50 storeys - ignoring the Council's Strategic Regeneration Framework (East Village Central SRF) and setting a dangerous precedent.

The massing of the development is excessive, overwhelming the human-scale buildings in Piccadilly Village, Ancoats and New Islington. The visual dominance would permanently alter the skyline and overshadow the surrounding area.

This is not thoughtful, context-sensitive development. It is speculative overdevelopment, driven by maximum yield, not good planning.

4.

No Parking, Unsafe Streets, and Emergency Access Concerns

The application includes zero on-site parking, not even a single space for disabled users. For a development of over 750 apartments and commercial units, this is unacceptable.

Even in a well-connected city centre location, people still use cars - whether for mobility needs, work, or family. Without proper provision, cars will be forced to park in nearby streets, worsening congestion and creating safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists.

Residents already experience issues with parking, loading, and unsafe drop-offs in the area. This scheme would add hundreds more residents and deliveries - with no plan to manage that impact.

5.

Increased Noise, Disruption and Pressure on Infrastructure

Construction of these towers will take years and cause long-term disruption - noise, dust, blocked access and vibration. Many residents in Oxygen work from home, have families, or are vulnerable - the impact of prolonged works must not be underestimated.

After completion, the development will add more than 1,000 people, commercial traffic, refuse collections, and late-night activity to the area. There is no clear plan to manage this pressure on local infrastructure, public transport, or public realm.

Residents in Oxygen and the wider community face a future of increased disturbance, reduced peace, and worsened living conditions - all for a development they were not consulted on properly.

6.

Inadequate Access for Disabled Residents and Visitors

Despite the development's size, there is no meaningful provision for disabled parking or step-free drop-off. The current plans suggest disabled visitors might rely on valet services at off-site locations - this is unacceptable.

Inclusive design is not optional. Manchester has stated its goal of being the most accessible city in Europe - this development ignores that entirely.

Even the Council's planning committee has recently deferred smaller schemes over lack of accessible parking. That standard must be applied here. If anything, this scheme should be held to a higher bar, not a lower one.

7.

No Affordable or Social Housing Provision

This scheme contains zero affordable or social housing - despite being one of the largest residential applications in the city in recent years.

In a time of rising housing need, how can a development of this scale and value be allowed to contribute nothing to Manchester's housing mix?

The absence of any affordable units reflects a clear lack of social responsibility. This is a luxury scheme, designed to maximise investor returns, not community benefit. The Council should not accept a development that offers nothing back to the city's residents - either in affordable housing, local services, or genuine place-making.

8.

No Genuine Engagement with Local Residents

Oxygen residents have made multiple attempts to engage with the developer - through formal letters and by providing feedback during their consultation. No meaningful response has been received.

There have been no meetings, no follow-ups, and no real effort to work with existing neighbours. This lack of engagement is especially troubling given the scale of the proposal and its potential impact on hundreds of homes.

Meaningful community consultation is a core expectation of modern urban planning - not a box-ticking exercise. The applicant has failed this test, and the Council should take that seriously.

9.

Residents Deserve Better - Planning Must Put People First

As residents, we are entitled to live in homes with access to daylight, privacy, safety, and peace. We contribute to this city - through council tax, community participation, and our shared investment in making Manchester a better place to live.

Yet this application ignores us. It prioritises height, scale, and profit - while asking us to accept worsening living conditions in silence.

This is not sustainable planning. It is not inclusive development. It is not fair.

Conclusion: Refuse or Redesign - This Scheme Is Not Ready for Approval

The proposed towers at the Stockton's site are fundamentally flawed. The Council must not approve this scheme in its current form. To do so would be to endorse a development that fails on every key measure of residential quality, inclusive design, and fair engagement.

I urge you to:

- Refuse the application outright
- Or at the very least, require a full redesign that includes:
 - o A reduction in height and density
 - o Greater separation from existing buildings
 - o On-site parking and disabled access
 - o Affordable housing contributions
 - o A daylight strategy based on real conditions, not theoretical comparisons
 - o A genuine effort to consult and work with the local community

Manchester deserves better - and residents of Oxygen will not accept being sacrificed for speculative development. I trust the Council will do the right thing and reject this harmful proposal.

Thank you for considering this objection. I also attach some informative images below.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted signature block]