

Comments for Planning Application 137226/FO/2023

Application Summary

Application Number: 137226/FO/2023

Address: Part Of Plot C And Plot E Great Jackson Street Manchester M15 4NP

Proposal: Full planning permission for the demolition of existing structures and the phased construction of four residential buildings (two at 47 storeys and two at 51 storeys) to provide 1,746 homes (Use Class C3), flexible commercial, leisure, food and drink uses (all Use Class E) and / or drinking establishment (Sui Generis), basement car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and public realm, servicing and access arrangements, highways alterations and 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: I would like to put forward the following comments regarding the proposed building plans, as I own a property in the neighbouring Deansgate Square development.

Natural Daylight - Deansgate Square

The GIA report states that, as a whole, Deansgate Square will retain average daylight comparable with similar types of developments and that residents of Deansgate Square have been aware for several years of proposed developments.

The second part of the statement is completely untrue. In fact, it is very surprising that Renaker, the applicant, have not asked GIA to correct these statements in the report as Renaker themselves have been advertising properties in the marketing suite with much smaller buildings on the plots discussed. Numerous photos of the models are available and other photos are part of the Great Jackson Street Development Framework authored by Deloitte. Many Deansgate Square residents have bought properties based on the natural daylight the properties would offer for years to come.

The GIA report comments on the daylight situation as an average. It is clear from the visuals on figure 16 that pretty much the entirety of the West facing side of the North Tower will be left with low level lighting. The situation is almost similar for the West side of East Tower. When combined with the other 71 floor proposed development on plot D and the new constructions currently rising on the South and West side, circa 2/3rds of apartments on the South Tower will be left with very little daylight. The report itself seems incomplete. The assessment focuses on only one side of some key buildings. This is the case for South Tower, for example, which will be impacted on

three sides. The South face will be impacted by plot D (no figure), the West face will be impacted by plot D and C7/C8/E1/E2 and the North Face will be impacted by C7/C8/E1/E2 (no figure). Curiously, whilst the report fails to show before and after (called existing and proposed in the report) for buildings heavily impacted by the loss of sunlight, for example the West side of Deansgate Square North Tower, it happily volunteers before and after for apartment blocks completely unaffected by the towers (like City South). With these kinds of inconsistencies, one cannot help but feel that the report has not been written in a completely neutral way.

Another well-known impact of the change in lighting conditions for so many apartments will also result in an increased need for internal lighting and heating, and thereby an increase in CO2 emissions. The environmental impact assessment for this planning application does not take that into account.

Residents of Deansgate Square have access to a green area on the West facing side of North Tower called the Roof Garden. Due to its positioning, the Roof Garden is a very windy place, and therefore unless warmth provided by natural sunlight is present, it is not a very welcoming place. The Roof Garden is used a lot less use than it used to at the beginning following the construction of the four towers on the West side of the Great Jackson development. Direct sunlight is now available early afternoon and late afternoon, but there is a gap mid-afternoon when the sun is behind the four towers opposite. The combination of the proposed 72 floor tower and the four towers in this application will effectively deprive all the residents from their only private green space, as there will be no direct sunlight ever reaching the Roof Garden as can clearly be seen from figure 16 of the Gia report. It is worth noting that this green space has often been used for events designed to create a community at Deansgate Square. So the proposed development will impact not only residents' wellbeing from a natural sunlight point of view, but it will also make it more difficult for them to belong to a community, which, as we know, also has a number of positive impact on crime rate, wellbeing, antisocial behaviour, loneliness, and other.

The Roof Garden is also the only child-friendly place within the Deansgate Square environment. There are no places in the entire development where children can go and play apart from the Roof Garden. The next closest place is the playground outside Crown Street School, and that playground will also be without any direct natural sunlight if the proposed development goes ahead.

Considering a lot of properties were sold to purchasers on the belief, reinforced by drawings and models, that their apartment would benefit from high levels of direct light and that they would be able to enjoy a green, communal, child-friendly, place in the Roof Garden, it is not acceptable, and could even be considered as dishonesty and misseling, that an application for a completely different development which will impact the daylight of so many apartments in such a drastic way has been submitted. The situation for Deansgate Square should not be looked at as an average, but should really focus on the West facing sides of the South, East and North towers, and disregard the negligeable impact of West Tower which is geographically detached from the other three towers. The application is also in direct contradiction with the Greater Jackson Development Framework, two pillar of which are "maximising separation distances between buildings" and "enhancing sunlight and daylight penetration into the site".

Natural Daylight - Green Spaces

Recent aerial photographs show that there are currently only two green spaces easily accessible to residents of the Great Jackson developments. One of them is the park located outside the school and in front of the Blade building, the other one is a private area only available to Deansgate Square residents called the Roof Garden.

Both of these spaces will see a drastic reduction in natural delight if the proposed construction go ahead.

There is already very little natural daylight for the park on Plot C as the park was built on the East side of plot C's tall buildings and is surrounded on three sides by tall constructions. Thus the park gets very little sunlight post midday, apart from a brief period when the sun is between the towers known as the Circle and the Blade.

That park gets good natural sunlight in the morning though, but the proposed towers in this application, alongside the proposed 71 floor high tower on plot D, will remove most of the morning natural daylight from the park.

The situation is very similar for the Roof Garden, which will see close to ZERO natural sunlight if the project to build E1 and E2 goes ahead.

As is widely known, easy to reach green spaces contribute both to the physical and mental health of local communities, even more so in places like Manchester where winters can have very short amount of natural daylight. Due to their location in the midst of tall buildings, the parks are very windy, and natural daylight provides the necessary warmth to make these spaces enjoyable in windy conditions. By drastically reducing the amount of natural daylight, the proposed constructions will also drastically reduce access to green spaces for the local community.

The proposed development has two small grassland areas which will be surrounded on all sides from tall buildings and will see very little direct natural sunlight. So there will be very little 'green benefit' to residents of Great Jackson from these two small grassland areas.

Apart from the impact on the residents of the Great Jackson development, the reduction in natural light will also impact plant growth in these green areas, and consequently the overall biodiversity of the area.

The initial aim of the Great Jackson redevelopment was to create a mix of green spaces and tall buildings providing a pleasant and relaxing environment for residents of the area. A few years on, it is proposed to remove the natural daylight from the only two green spaces available to local residents (and most residents in the area actually have access to only one as the Roof Garden is a private green space) and render them inhospitable and unusable most of the time. This seems completely at odds with the initial objective set for the area. It feels instead like Manchester has not learnt from its past, particularly the 1970's high-rise developments which failed partly due to the lack of enjoyable green spaces available to local residents.

Concluding remarks

Based on the various elements above, I would like to request that your reject application 137226/FO/2023.

It is clear that the application has been made using a blend of wrong data, inaccurate or out of date information and that the proposed development will have a serious impact on the residents of Great Jackson and even in surrounding areas like Castlefield.

Furthermore, it is breaching ALL THREE of the key pillars published in the Great Jackson Street Development Framework published by Deloitte (namely maximising separation distances between buildings, increasing the quantum and variety of public spaces within the Development Framework, enhancing sunlight and daylight penetration).