

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: Group

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Dear Sir,

I would like to share with you the following comments to object to application 137226/FO/2023. Please confirm in writing by 28/06/2024 that you have received my comments.

Impact of Increase in Traffic

Increased traffic in the area is to be expected with the construction of four additional towers.

Building E1 is planned to have a car park entrance on Owen St. Owen St. is a narrow street which already gets very crowded in its current state.

It is stated in the Framework Travel Plan that the traffic flow on Owen St is controlled by barriers. This is inaccurate information. The traffic on Owen St has not been controlled in that way for at least 3 years as it was impractical. Furthermore the barriers have now been removed.

It is also stated that Owen St has red lines, but these are regularly ignored by delivery drivers as well as vehicle registered abroad which are common occurrences due to the occupancy demographics of the towers.

As a consequence of the numerous vehicles parked on the stretch which will be co-shared with towers E1 and E2, vehicles often swerve onto the pedestrian area when passing another vehicle. It is also worth noting that that area is used as terrace by restaurants like Salvi's.

The addition of a car park entrance on Owen St will increase the risk of accidents and injury to pedestrians either using the pavement or a restaurant's terrace. The increase in vehicles passing

each other will also increase the risk to other road users. It will also contribute to higher pollution levels around the towers, as vehicles struggle to pass one another, as well as increased noise levels well into the night as amounts of food deliveries and taxis remain high on the Deansgate Square turning circle until at least midnight and even later over weekends.

Apart from Owen St, other road infrastructures appear inadequate. Referring to report Transport_Note from Curtins, it is difficult to understand how estimates of vehicles has been reached. The population of the Deansgate Square towers is made in majority of wealthy students and young professionals who tend to travel by taxis when going out. What we witness at Deansgate Square during term time, i.e. when the buildings are at full capacity, are vehicles queuing to get onto the turning circle. We easily see three times the number of taxis per tower picking up people on the turning circle. It seems a reasonable assumption that the lifestyle of the towers will not differ significantly. There are regular occurrences of vehicles queuing on Owen St. when there are already 5 vehicles parked on the outer circle and 3 double parked on the inside. It is therefore reasonable to expect a lot more than 22 taxis per hour between the hours of 8 and 9 in the evening.

Aside from taxis, a lot of food deliveries take place. It is, again, difficult to understand how Curtins came up with figures for loading bay requirements for loading bays. Curiously, peak times for servicing vehicles are between 10 and 11am and 4 and 5pm. The peak time that can be observed at Deansgate Square is between the hours of 7 and 10pm, when a lot of the food gets delivered by cars. Delivery drivers regularly complain that there is nowhere for them to stop, and some have even threatened to stop delivering to the towers.

Given that the entrance to the car park for E1 will be on Owen St., and that the exit for E2 loading bay users is a one way path into Owen St., it is not difficult to imagine the seriously chaotic and dangerous situations which will arise from the current proposal. It is also proposed to reduce a portion of Owen St down to one lane, which will further exacerbate the situation and cause even more vehicles to climb onto pedestrian areas. The proposed traffic control measure which is to limit the traffic with bollards is also naïve and completely impractical for the numbers of vehicles which will be using the area (there used to be controlled access via barriers for Deansgate Square and these were dropped very quickly as the concierge desk could not effectively manage the flow of vehicles and queues would form behind the barriers onto Deansgate in front of the West Tower and blocking entrance to Deansgate Square car park).

So based on the above, I would like to comment that the road infrastructure on the planning application is inadequate both on Owen St and on the loading bays. The current proposal will lead to a higher risk exposure for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users, and increased air and noise pollution.

Finally, it is questionable as to whether the assessment by Curtins is valid at all. Curtins seem to be under the impression that C7 and C8 are smaller towers than E1 and E2. It is easy to see from the Elevation drawings that that is not the case. So when Curtins state that "there could be instances on Towers C7 and C8 ... when theoretical demands slightly exceeds the supply of loading spaces", that conclusion is drawn on estimates which are even lower than they will be in reality. Given that Curtins developed their entire assessment on the wrong sizing of the towers, it is really doubtful whether the entire report can be relied on for informed decision making.

Greater Manchester Strategy, crime and anti-social behaviour

Contrary to what is stated in the marketing literature promoting the Great Jackson redevelopment, there is not really a "mixed type" of occupation in the area. The apartments are primarily marketed abroad to foreign investors in the Middle East and the Far East. As a consequence, the proportion of owner occupiers in the towers is very low. The foreign property owners do not tend to occupy the properties themselves, and in turn promote their properties locally. So circa 80% of the occupiers are wealthy foreign students mainly from the Middle East and China and the Far East. The families with children living in Deansgate Square are few and far between, as the environment is becoming less and less conducive to raising families. This can be seen, for example, with the Crown Street school which has had to extend its catchment area as there were too few families in the surrounding towers to fill the classrooms, despite the school itself being very small (only 54 places for September 2024).

As a consequence of the type of occupancy, petty crime rate has started to rise significantly in the area mainly around drug taking, anti-social behaviour or mobile phones theft. The type of anti-social behaviour revolves around noise pollution from music played loudly within apartments, noise from car revving engines to attract attention on the vehicle, cars driving aggressively on Owen St., fouling (vomiting, dog fouling, human urine in shared spaces, broken glass). Due to the wealthy nature of the student population, that population has also become a target for thieves mainly for smash and grabs on mobile phones. The area has now also had for multiple years a very high rate of cars being broken into.

Drug taking is also a real problem at Deansgate Square with dealers residing within the towers so as to be closer to the recreational consumers.

As there is no reason to believe that the properties will be marketed differently, and therefore consist of a different type of demographics, it is a real concern that the construction of 1,746 new apartments on the doorstep of Deansgate Square will also result in even more drug taking in the area as well as an increase in anti-social behaviour. But it also is in contradiction with the Greater Manchester Strategy which mentions people as its biggest asset and the need to build on the strength of families and communities. Instead of having residents invested in the long term future of the Jackson Street development, less than 10 years after its launch, we now already have a population which is in majority transient and seasonal. This is also directly in contradiction with The Great Jackson Development Framework which set out to cater for a 'diverse population' and whose vision was to cater for a 'vibrant, safe, secure and sustainable community'.

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 misselling, 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 negligible 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 pillars 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 daylight if the proposed construction goes 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.

Daylight - school

A popular addition to the redevelopment of the Great Jackson area was the addition of a primary school, the first one to open in Manchester city centre for 20 years.

It is common knowledge that students' learning ability, mood and overall well-being is affected by natural daylight, even more so in places which get very little daylight in the winter like Manchester. The GIA Daylight Sunlight report states that the school will lose very little daylight and recognises that the baseline is very low. It also states that occupants will not be aware of any reduction in daylight as the school is not yet constructed. This information is incorrect. The school is built and the first intake of students will take place in September 2024.

It is also concerning that low level baseline daylight is used as a reason to proceed with the development. It can definitely be argued that as students and staff at the school are already provided with a very dark environment, everything ought to be done to preserve the very little natural light that these human beings will be getting.

Furthermore, it is notable that the GIA report only considers the building itself. It is the front of the building that will be hugely impacted by the construction of the four towers. Directly outside of the building there is a play area. That play area will also be hugely impacted by the proposed development. Currently it is possible for future pupils to exercise and enjoy the play area in direct sunlight in the morning. This will be taken away from them as the proposed new developments (this one and the 71 floor tower from plot D) will remove any direct sunlight in the morning from the play area.

In conclusion, for the wellbeing of students and staff at the school it is imperative not to go ahead with a development which will leave them with no direct sunlight even in the school outdoor areas for most of the year.

The Great Jackson redevelopment was meant to be a place which attracts a mixed population, including young families. This proposed development goes against the initial aim of the redevelopment scheme.

Privacy

The proposed towers E1 and E2 have an undulated design on the long side, but a straight design on the short side as per Elevation drawings. The straight sides mean that these towers will offer direct views onto apartments from the North Tower and their private spaces. Due to the proposed construction design it will be possible to look directly and have very good visibility into several apartment from a sole vantage point in E1 and E2 towers. This has more impact on privacy when looking horizontally or downwards, but as the planning application is for two towers of 48 floors each, there will be ample opportunities for looking horizontally or downwards. This will undermine apartment residents' right to privacy and personal security which is crucial to residential areas. These apartments will already be severely impacted by the reduction in natural daylight caused by

the construction of E1 and E2. Thus, residents from these apartments will now be faced with one of two choices: either draw curtains to preserve privacy and lose the little bit left of natural daylight, or try and maximise the little natural daylight and give away any right to privacy during daylight hours.

Residents from Deansgate Square's four towers have access to a private garden area known as the Roof Garden. The two straight sides of the E1 and E2 buildings will also offer a vantage point directly into the garden area, currently the only private communal space available to Deansgate Square residents. This area is used by residents for private events to create a sense of community and bonding between the residents.

So, in summary, the proposed construction of E1 and E1 goes against the right to privacy and the sense of security and community which Deansgate Square residents currently enjoy.

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).

Best regards

