

Comments for Planning Application 138805/FO/2023

Application Summary

Application Number: 138805/FO/2023

Address: 2 Gloucester Street Manchester M1 5QR

Proposal: Partial demolition of the former Hotspur Press Complex (Medlock Mill) and redevelopment of the site to provide Purpose Built Student Accommodation (Sui Generis Use Class) above ground floor commercial or community uses (Use Classes F(e), F2(a)(b) and E(b)), within a part 4/5-storey and part 36-storey building plus roof parapet level above basement level, associated ancillary internal and external amenity space, public realm (including a new public square), hard and soft landscaping and associated highway works.

Case Officer: Angela Leckie

Customer Details

Name: Not Available

Address: Not Available

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I wish to object the planning application for the following summarised reasons:

1. The size, appearance, layout and density of the proposed development:

The site of the former Hotspur Press Complex (Medlock Mill) was built in 1801, originally designed as a cotton mill and known to later serve the Percy Brothers as a Printing works, plus numerous other occupants for 120+ years, making it an iconic landmark and one of the city centre's most distinctive reminders of Manchester's industrial past.

Made with the original red brick and hand-built with pride by local labourers, it sits across from the Grade II listed Altrincham Railway Viaduct and Grade II listed Chorlton and Mackintosh Mill.

The proposed development lacks sympathy to the building's heritage and is disrespectful of the original design (pitched roof, red brick, warehouse and timber frames), using 'Polyester Powder Coated dark plum' and vertical grid formation for the facade is not in-keeping with the original construction and will partially obscure views of the listed bridge and demolish a piece of the city's important history. The applicant should consider much more fabric of the building to be retained or preserved for further heritage purposes.

The 36-storey high tower will significantly impact the already high density of student

accommodation in the area, lacking diversity of community in the local population. The applicant must consider potential outcomes of increased student numbers from the development, and address how student noise and anti-social behaviour will be managed. These concerns were raised in the online feedback form during the consultation, of which only received 19 (form) responses, with a total of 26 consultees engaged - a far too small a number given the "wide-reaching" awareness referenced in the Statement of Community Engagement.

2. Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing

The proposed development will be highly visible in the emerging townscape context, and together with narrow streets and proximity to the surrounding buildings, the vicinity of the proposed development would mean the impact of a tall 36-storey tower will have significant adverse visual intrusion and would dominate, remove daylight, privacy and overlook numerous apartments within the; 23 27, 31 35a Whitworth Street West and 1 Cambridge Street residential properties.

The scale and mass of the proposed development is clearly evident and will significantly feature alongside the neighbouring collective of surrounding towers, but with proposed views set to overshadow and dominate the existing Grade II listed chimney stack to the left.

3. Noise and disturbance

The impact on noise and disturbance during and throughout the construction and operation of the proposed development will be felt acutely by the surrounding residential, leisure, commercial and student community. Noise outbreaks from plants will increase disturbance and further mitigation should be taken by the applicant to reduce unacceptable noise impacts.

4. Air Quality and odour

The impact on air quality and odour during and throughout the construction and operation of the proposed development will significantly worsen due to increased particulate, pollution and dust, and increased operational waste and traffic odour with long-term health implications. The increase in respiratory problems, especially post-covid, must be considered for Manchester residents, who will be severely impacted by this development. Further mitigation should be taken by the applicant to reduce or remove any negative outputs caused from air quality and odour.

5. Means of access, parking, servicing, traffic generation, highway safety

During construction and operation of the proposed development, severe increases in traffic will be experienced with associated noise and air pollution. This increase will result in poorer safety for occupants and surrounding community. Without a proper allowance for safe crossings, a joined up consideration should be taken by the applicant with proposed vehicle loading to the area.

6. Effect on listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology:

The site of the proposed development, known as Hotspur House, is identified by Manchester City Council as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), not within a conservation area, but located close to the boundary of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area. The proposed partial demolition and redevelopment of the site will not conserve enough of the building heritage, therefore inappropriate to its significance, and will indirectly impact the settings of the surrounding listed buildings and viaduct.

The applicant should take more consideration to enhance the historic environment, character and setting of the development which holds architectural and historic interest, as set out in the Heritage appraisal including the rare C19 red brick and c.1903 freestanding Percy Brothers Ltd signage. The recent Manchester mill article: 'If these walls could talk: The life and times of the Hotspur Press' also highlighted the numerous stories from previous workers from the 1950s and studio occupants there 20 years ago which the applicant should take into consideration.

The Site at present is in extremely poor condition and required significant investment should look to provide a development that whilst viable, ensures increased retention of heritage assets and a more balanced long-term viable use for the redundant historic building.

7. Other material considerations

The proposed development fails to achieve sustainable economic, social and environmental objectives to support Manchester city's goals for strong, vibrant and healthy communities. It has previously struggled to make progress with viability difficulties delivering the original 2018 residential scheme and the revised planning application for a taller 36-storey, 550+ student beds will bring a weak, transient community, lacking cultural and community contributions and limited access to green and public space within its grounds.

In light of the adjacent First Street Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) and neighbouring construction plots, further detail must be provided by the applicant how the proposed development will embed itself within the area (as part of First Street North, referenced in SRF), which is focussed on a successful place-making vision to become a new cultural hub with high quality public amenity.

The applicant should take more consideration of emphasis on climate change and Green and Blue infrastructure, especially given the site is located in flood zone 2 (at medium risk for fluvial flooding) and adjacent to River Medlock.

The proposed development does not consider short and long-term impacts on the immediate and wider biodiversity contained in the neighbourhood and further mitigation should be included by the applicant. More consideration should be given to offsetting negative environmental impacts and

further create green, wilder space for the increased number of student inhabitants and public amenity for the community.

Through taking a more responsible approach to the social and environmental impacts, the applicant has the opportunity to drastically improve wellbeing and overall better (student) living experience and connection with Manchester city.