

6 July 2021

Delivered by email

Rob Griffin
Manchester City Council
Planning Department
PO 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

Ref: WATM3006

Dear Rob

PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE 129020/FO/2020 - 188 WILMSLOW ROAD

We write on behalf of Watkin Jones Group and USDAW, the joint applicants for the above application.

As you know, we are seeking a further meeting with you to discuss the application in advance of its determination and in light of the additional information that has been submitted in support of the application. In advance of that meeting and to inform your recommendation to Planning Committee, there are a series of points we wish to highlight / reiterate.

Policy H12 and the Executive endorsement of a 'policy approach' to PBSA

We trust that in your recommendation to Planning Committee you will address the appropriate weight to be applied to Policy H12 and the Council Executive's endorsement of a 'policy approach' on PBSA. Policy H12 is part of the statutory development plan, is the most relevant policy for the determination of the application, and is be attributed significant weight in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Act. We have set out within both the Planning Statement and our letter of 8 June 2021 why we consider the proposed development fully accords with this policy and the development plan as a whole.

The resolution of the Executive of 14 October 2020 whilst capable of being a material consideration cannot be given determinative weight. It does not and cannot be considered to supersede or replace Policy H12. Given its informal, non-statutory nature, it cannot be considered to outweigh the terms of Policy H12. This is a matter on which WJG has taken legal advice and we are sure this will be consistent with the Council's own interpretation, to be reflected in your recommendation to Committee.

Design

As the Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement explain, the design of the proposed development has been significantly influenced by design review, with the architect positively responding to the helpful feedback from Places Matter. As the Places Matter letter accompanying our letter of 8 June

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2021 explains, following a second design review meeting Places Matter positively endorse the design response.

The architect, Tim Groom, has given further consideration to the remaining limited matters raised by Places Matter in this second review, and this is reflected in the note appended to this letter. Mr Groom concludes that no further design development is required and the design responds positively, appropriately and successfully to its context.

Security

The application was accompanied by a Crime Impact Statement and we note that Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have raised no objection to the application. WJG have held further discussions with GMP since the application was submitted in order to ensure that the proposed development responds to the highest standards of design security and contributes where possible to addressing any anti-social/criminal behaviour in the vicinity of the site. In light of those discussions we can confirm that the applicants agree to commit to the following:

- Achieving the Secure by Design Gold Award certification after construction through implementation of the measures identified in the Crime Impact Statement;
- Extending site CCTV monitoring beyond just the entrance and exit points by monitoring the Riga Road junction, the south west corner of the site where Langley Road turns south and the junction of Langley Road and Wilmslow Road, where possible;
- Introducing additional dense planting and shrubbery on the northern and western site boundaries to prevent intruders.

These matters can be addressed by means of planning condition.

WJG are also willing to assist in local crime prevention and security initiatives (e.g. CCTV, lighting, signage) in the local area at crime hotspots as identified by GMP, where possible. This would require further discussion with both GMP and the City Council to firm up the particular locations and measures that may be appropriate. This could be captured by appropriate condition.

We trust the above is helpful and will be reflected in your recommendation. We look forward to having the opportunity to discuss this and the application as a whole in advance of your recommendation being finalised.

Yours sincerely



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Senior Director

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6th January 2021

Dear Robert Griffin

Introduction

The Places Matter DRM took place on 20 April 2021. The Design and Access Statement was circulated to the Panel before the presentation for information and key extracts from the Design and Access Statement were used to create the presentation.

The written feedback received includes a small number of suggested amendments but overall demonstrates the Panel's support for the scheme. We have sought to address each of the key points in turn below:

Additional windows to the cluster lounges on the L-shaped building façade facing the Villa

We considered adding additional windows to the gable of the L Shaped building but ultimately opted not to. The reasons for this are that the lounges themselves already have excellent levels of natural light from the main elevation where there are floor to ceiling windows. Additional windows on the gable could impinge on the layout of kitchens and furniture within the room. What is important to us is the composition of the gable façade and how it relates to the historic Villa. The two facades are perpendicular to one another and collectively provides points of interest whether that be detailed brickwork patterns, banding and other compositional plays. We decided to add just one window as part of the compositional arrangement and feel the façade arrangement is successful without the need to overly glaze it.

Façade treatments to the tallest block

The tower is separated from both the Langley Road building and the Villa and sits in its own space. The tower very much has a different context to the two other elements but is equally as contextual. The tower looks over the park setting and by its very nature is the tallest built element on site. There are other taller buildings that adopt a similar height in the vicinity, whether that be the "toast rack" development or other existing University buildings. Our proposal takes advantage of the park setting and looks over and on to green space, a method repeated the world over. The design of the tower in plan is regular and ordered. This order is reflected in the elevational treatment of the façade and use of materials. While each floor plan is repeated from top to bottom, we chose to reflect that order elevationally with windows ordered repetitively. At the lower levels of the building we enriched the façade materials with depth and detail so at a human scale there is more to experience and enjoy. The heavy weight material of GRC is fluted and stepped at a point where the human eye can appreciate it. The mid-section of the tower uses brick, a common and comforting material suitable for the context. As part of the design development of our proposal we tested how to crown the building and it was discussed at Places Matter DRM. As part of our townscape analysis, we demonstrated that the tower is actually not hugely visible when approached from many of the key routes in Fallowfield. It was not necessary or desirable to overtly celebrate the top of the tower as one may choose to do with a landmark focal building or way finding nodal tower. The rhythm and repetition of all floors is the same and the top does not necessarily warrant special treatment for the sake of it. The form of the building follows its function and on this occasion we chose to stick to what Places Matter referred to as a 'controlled, rational and well-mannered scheme' and make only fine tuning refinements to the top. This is done through using the GRC material from the overarching building palette to express the top floors and connect the building form from bottom through to top.

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Landscape Narrative

The Panel considered further narrative was needed to demonstrate how the proposals for the outdoor seating and amenity space had been arrived at and the scheme should demonstrate the usability of the outdoor areas.

We discussed during the meeting the background to the landscape proposals and confirmed that the landscape plans, drawings and the Landscape Design Development documents have been submitted with the application and provide this crucial background to the landscape proposals. We followed up the meeting by sharing these application documents with the Panel.

The landscape material prepared by Layer Studio for the application fully addresses the landscape design formulation, materiality and usability of the scheme.

Yours sincerely

Tim Groom
Director