

Comments for Planning Application 142652/FO/2025

Application Summary

Application Number: 142652/FO/2025

Address: Chorlton Square Shopping Centre Barlow Moor Road Manchester M21 9AQ

Proposal: Erection of 6 no. residential buildings of 10, 8, 6 and 4 storeys in height to provide up to 262 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with ground floor commercial uses (Use Class E (a-e)); infrastructure works including electric substation and associated utilities works, basement and ground level car parking, service yard, vehicular and pedestrian accesses; together with public realm works and hard/soft landscaping following the demolition of the existing buildings and structures on site.

Case Officer: Robert Griffin

Customer Details

Name: Not Available

Address: Not Available

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I am objecting to the proposal and the primary reason is the height. Proposals for 8-10 storey street lining perimeter blocks are hugely overdeveloping for this site. The existing Graeme House is set back from the road and only 8 storeys high and we think of that as a tower. What precedent are you using in order to develop up to a height of 10 storeys?

There is no precedent for this London concept in Manchester and even in London they are generally around 6 storeys with fine Edwardian detail, i.e. nothing like monolithic brickwork brutalism of this proposal. This is grotesquely inappropriate for a suburban district centre.

The scale of the proposals are clearly in contradiction of Manchester's Guide to Development SPD as shown by the following excerpts:

"Design should respect and be informed by location

2.3 A high quality environment is created by buildings which reflect their purpose and respect the place in which they are located. Different parts of the City, its neighbourhoods and streets have distinct or individual characters which are a product of the design of their buildings, the nature of the streets, the quality of the landscape or the nature of their activities. Such positive characteristics should be recognised and enhanced by new development. Each new development should be designed having full regard to its context and the character of the area."

The proposals completely fail to recognise or enhance the positive characteristics of the area. They have no regard to the context and character of the area. They do not respect, nor are informed by the location.

"Development should help to sustain local neighbourhoods

2.7 We wish to encourage the most appropriate form of development to enliven neighbourhoods and sustain local facilities. The layout of the scheme and the design, scale, massing and orientation of its buildings should achieve a unified urban form which blends in with, and links to, adjacent areas. Increased development density can be appropriate where it is necessary to reinforce community identity, promote a more economic use of land, increase demand for local facilities and contribute to safer, self-policed streets. However density levels must be informed by the character of an area and the specific circumstances of a proposal."

The design, scale and massing of the scheme do not blend in or link with adjacent areas at all. Density levels are in no way informed by the character of the area. This is an entirely alien, overbearing form which would be much to the detriment of the local character and have a highly negative impact on the local neighbourhood.

"Areas of change should promote a sense of place

2.8 In areas of significant change or regeneration, the future role of the area will determine the character and design of both new development and open spaces. It will be important to ensure that the development of new buildings and surrounding landscape relates well to, and helps to enhance, areas that are likely to be retained and contributes to the creation of a positive identity. There should be a smooth transition between different development forms, and styles and integration will be a key factor in the determination of planning submissions."

The new buildings clearly do not relate well to nor enhance neighbouring areas nor buildings that will be retained. There is no smooth transition between different development forms, rather there is a preposterously abrupt explosion in scale of 500% in height from surrounding buildings.

"Buildings should relate well to each other"

2.13 The scale, position and external appearance of new buildings should respect their setting and relationship to adjacent buildings, enhance the street scene and consider their impact on the roof line and skyline. Buildings should recognise the common building line created by the front face of adjacent buildings. Projections and setbacks from this line, such as bays, foyers and entrance halls, can help to create visual emphasis; they should not, however, reduce safety by creating

hidden areas, or accessibility by making obstructions, nor detract from the visual continuity of the frontage."

The new buildings in no way relate well to the local urban forms. The scale, position and external appearance of the new buildings shows no respect to their setting and relationship to adjacent buildings, do not enhance the street scene nor consider their massive impact on the roof line and skyline. They obviously and enormously detract from the visual continuity of the frontage by their alien scale.

"Building height should be carefully considered

2.14 It is important that new developments are of an appropriate height having regard to location, character of the area and specific site circumstances and local effects, such as microclimatic ones.

2.15 Although a street can successfully accommodate buildings of differing heights, extremes should be avoided unless they provide landmarks of the highest quality and are in appropriate locations. In established residential areas, significant variation in height may not be appropriate."

The proposed development is not of an appropriate height in this area. The scale of this proposal is absolutely unprecedented for a suburban district centre and will severely damage the character and very nature of Chorlton centre. The change in height is extreme and the proposal is certainly no landmark of the highest quality. This significant variation in height is entirely inappropriate.

"7 Housing Density and Mix

7.2 New housing development should not be viewed in isolation and proposals must be designed having regard to not only the immediately adjoining buildings but also the townscape of the wider area. Developments should be informed, both in terms of design and layout, by the wider context. It is the character and identity of an area that will determine appropriate densities and form"

The new housing development has quite clearly been viewed in isolation and proposals are not designed with any regard to immediately adjoining buildings nor the townscape of the wider area. The development is absolutely uninformed in terms of design and layout, by the wider context. While the aspiration for some higher density housing use on brownfield sites is understandable, this proposal is not a sustainable model for regeneration but an absurd experiment which will destroy the character and life of the place it supposedly seeks to enliven. Blocks of 4-5 storeys above shops would be adventurous but 10 storeys is just ridiculous.

The building does not provide a positive landmark located on the corner of a side street and not being a significant public building or facility. It does not terminate any significant views and does not make an attractive and distinctive contribution to the neighbourhood or the city or it's skyline.

Overall I agree that redevelopment of the site is badly needed with a reasonable medium to high density mixed development but this proposal is pushing the height limit way too far. Manchester City Council has good policies and vision for progressive redevelopment but these are only meaningful if rigorously enforced and evidenced in proposals. I just hope the words actually mean something real and that those making decisions can appreciate the value and impact of good urban design.