

We are commenting on the Planning Application for the Redevelopment of Chorlton Precinct on behalf of the Board of Chorlton Community Land Trust (CLT). The CLT has a material interest in the Precinct site as we have been negotiating with Southway Housing (and previously, the Co-op) to acquire the Chorlton Picture House building which sits on the opposite corner of Nicolas Road from the proposed development. The centrepiece of our plan, which the City Council has supported and the developer has been aware of from the outset, is the redevelopment of the Picture House building into a venue for residents and visitors offering food and leisure activities. We also plan for the development to generate its own electricity, making use of the substantial south facing roof on the building. The proposed development at the precinct, and particularly the height of the proposed building on the opposite corner of Nicolas Road, would materially and adversely affect our long-held plans.

We have reviewed the application material and have concerns about the scale of the buildings and the commensurate over development of the site. As identified in the Design Access Statement, Graeme House is an 8 storey building (with a small section at 9 storeys), however it is set deep within the site. The proposals suggest an 8 and 10 storey building along Barlow Moor Road overlooking the Picture House. Despite a set-back on the top floor, the roof height of these buildings is unbroken and so will be read as a large monolithic block. At 10 storeys block A will cast a shadow not only on the footpath to the north but also across the footpath (and potential future public realm) to the front of the Picturehouse.

These large-scale buildings will impact the pedestrian experience at ground level (including new pedestrian street that cuts diagonally through the site) in terms of air flow and shade. There is no precedent for buildings at this scale that directly address the street anywhere in Chorlton. The impact of this building and the contrast with the existing scale of adjacent buildings is clearly demonstrated by the view down Warwick Road (7.5.3 in the Design and Access Statement).

The Chorlton CLT Board is happy to support responsible development for Chorlton and recognise this site has great untapped potential, but would urge Manchester City Council and the developers to think again about the current proposal.

Simon Hooton
Chair, Chorlton Community Land Trust