

From: Ian Christie [mailto:ianchristie2@btinternet.com]

Sent: 09 January 2017 15:19

To: 'cldr.d.ellison@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.n.ali@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.a.ali@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.shaukat.ali@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.h.barrett@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.a.chohan@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.b.curley@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.y.dar@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.a.fender@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.a.kamal@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.m.monaghan@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.c.paul@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.n.siddiqi@manchester.gov.uk'; 'cldr.m.watson@manchester.gov.uk'

Cc: Carol Middleton (carolmiddleton319@gmail.com); Cllr Beth Knowles (cldr.b.knowles@manchester.gov.uk); Cllr Joan Davies (cldr.j.davies@manchester.gov.uk); Cllr Kevin Peel (kev.peel@gmail.com); Sarah Ramsbottom (sarah.ramsbottom@castlefieldstates.com)

Subject: 2 - 4 Chester Road: Planning application 113870/FO/2016

Importance: High

Dear Councillor

I am writing to you and all members of the Planning Committee on behalf of 137 members and supporters of Castlefield Forum in relation to item 10 of your meeting this Thursday 12th January - the planning application by Renaker for two apartment blocks at 2 – 4 Chester Road, Castlefield.

Specifically we are asking you to please defer any decision on this application until you have made a site visit to consider its suitability for its location..

Castlefield Forum is a voluntary, community group which aims to make Castlefield an even more superb and life-enhancing place than it is now for local residents, businesses, workers, all Mancunians, visitors and tourists. On 3rd January we submitted to Julie Roscoe, Head of Planning, a measured and closely-argued objection to this application. While our main points are summarised accurately in the report for this Agenda item, we are attaching our objection in case you should wish to read it in full. We also organised a petition which has gathered 373 signatures and which can be seen here: https://www.change.org/p/castlefield-forum-castlefield-deserves-better?recruiter=618898049&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=share_email_responsive

In our view, the current proposals are not world class and so are simply not good enough for this unique location which was:

- designated a Conservation Area in 1979
- given the status of an 'outstanding conservation area' by the Department of Environment in 1980
- declared the world's first 'Urban Heritage Park' in 1982, and
- later included in the Government's shortlist of potential World Heritage Sites.

and which has been described as "one of the strongest landscapes in the UK" (1) with a "unique identity and individualistic landscape" (2).

As you know, Conservation Areas are "areas of special architectural or historic interest, *the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.*" (3) (our emphasis). So, once local authorities have designated such areas, they have a *statutory duty* to pay special attention to "preserving or enhancing" their "character or appearance" when making planning and development control decisions relating to them.

In our view the current proposal is simply wrong for the site in its:

- height and mass
- shape
- impact on views in and out of the area
- impact on heritage assets
- spatial characteristics
- materials
- relationship to the canal basin
- shadowing effect on the basin.

As you know, Castlefield Estates/Dukes 92, who are also objecting to this planning application, have commissioned their own Heritage Impact Assessment which, unlike Deloitte's Design & Access Statement for Renaker, concludes that the proposals will "neither preserve nor enhance the character of one of Manchester's most important and significant Conservation Areas" and that "quite clearly the overall impact will be substantial and damaging".

It seems to us that when two different professional assessors come up with two opposing views of the impact of development proposals, then it is essential that you as Planning Committee Councillors are able to assess their impact for yourselves, personally and directly, by making a site visit before reaching a considered decision. Yes, this will probably mean a delay in determining this application but, given that we all are custodians of our city for our children and successors, and given that whatever is built on this site will probably be standing long after we are all gone, it seems to us that a delay of some four weeks is worth making to ensure the decision is right for this very special location in one of Europe's finest cities. ***So we ask you to please defer any decision on this application until you have made a site visit to consider its suitability for its location.***

I am copying this to Carol Middleton, Chair of Castlefield Forum, City Centre Ward Councillors Beth Knowles, Joan Davies & Kevin Peel *all of whom support our request for a site visit and* Sarah Ramsbottom, Castlefield Estates.

Yours sincerely

Ian Christie
Secretary Castlefield Forum
7 Rochdale House
15 Slate Wharf
Castlefield
Manchester
M145 4SX

Tel 0161 833 4690
Mob 07557 123 239

- (1) Jonathan Schofield *My Guide to Manchester*. 2015
(2) MCC *Strategic Plan for Manchester City Centre: 2015 – 2018*
(3) Section 72, *Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*.