

URGENT

The Rt Hon. Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
England
SW1P 4DF

9th February 2017

Dear Sirs

Request for call-in under s77 Town and Country Planning Act 1990

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT: 2-4 CHESTER ROAD, MANCHESTER, CASTLEFIELD
CONSERVATION AREA

APPLICANT: Castlefield Developments (Manchester) Ltd;

PLANNING AUTHORITY: Manchester City Council

APPLICATION REFERENCE: 113870/FO/2016

I request that the above application be called in for determination under s77 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The application was resolved to be approved subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement at Manchester City Council's Planning Committee today, 9th February 2017.

This matter is therefore urgent.

The application comprises the construction of two (21 storey and 12 storey) residential apartment buildings within the Castlefield Conservation Area in Manchester City Centre. A scheme for a 7 storey building on a nearby site in the Conservation Area was refused at appeal by one of your Inspectors (reference: APP/B4215/A/08/2070864/NWF) on the grounds that the development would be over-dominant, contrast markedly with the existing structures and would damage the character of the Conservation Area as a whole.

I consider that the current proposal at 2-4 Chester Road (113870/FO/2016) has not been robustly considered by the Local Planning Authority and that the advice of Historic England has not been fully reflected in Planning Officer's assessment or the Planning Committee's decision.



The application is contrary to the Manchester Core Strategy Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage) which states development in the City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.

It is also contrary to Core Strategy Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas) and Policy EN2 (Tall Buildings) which clearly state that whilst there will be opportunities to create landmark buildings, these must be appropriately located and 'complement the City's key existing building assets and make a positive contribution to the evolution of a unique, attractive and distinctive Manchester.'

In its formal response to the application (dated 21st October 2016), Historic England (HE) raised concern about the '*markedly different architectural language*' of the proposed buildings being '*distinct from the more simple and restrained character of historic buildings within the conservation area*' and explicitly recommended that the proposed materials be re-considered. As described in the Committee Report (attached):

"Whilst HE does not object in principle to the proposed development, it considers the statutory and policy context is only partially met by the proposed development. It recommends that the design of the proposed development should be re-considered to improve how it would related to the character and appearance of the conservation area, particularly in terms of the proposed materials."

No changes to the proposal were made in response to the above concerns and as such, we consider the Local Planning Authority has failed to in its duty to robustly assess the application and afford weight to comments from statutory consultees. In particular, and notwithstanding the advice from Historic England, the full details of materials have been left for approval by condition. This is clearly integral to understanding the impact on the scheme and is not an appropriate approach in this historically sensitive location. We consider this approach has made it impossible for Members to fully consider the impact of the scheme in making their decision.

Overall, the proposal raises significant architectural and design issues which have not been robustly and fully considered. Castlefield Conservation Area is a nationally important heritage site. The attached Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by The Architectural History Practice Ltd (and submitted in response to the application) emphasises the exceptional historical value of the Castlefield Conservation Area in ancient and modern history. It goes on to assess the application proposals at 2-4, Chester Road as having a 'substantial and damaging' overall heritage impact. In light of this, I consider the application to be of national significance.

I therefore consider that the application be called in for consideration at a public inquiry.



As you will appreciate this is a matter of some urgency and so I look forward to your response by return.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Ramsbottom
Castlefield Estates Limited

Cc:
National Planning Casework Unit
5 St Philips Place
Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 2PW
npcu@communities.gsi.gov.uk

