



Press release from Castlefield Forum

21 March 2017

Castlefield continues campaign despite call-in rejection

Castlefield Estates and the Castlefield Forum have been notified that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid, has decided not to call-in the proposed 2-4 Chester Road development and that all planning decisions on this development should be made solely by Manchester City Council.

The campaign group were hoping a Public Inquiry could stop Renaker Build from constructing two towers (one 21 storeys, one 12 storeys) in the historic Castlefield Basin in Manchester city centre. Manchester City Council's planning committee voted to approve the scheme on 9 February 2017.

Carol Middleton, Chair of Castlefield Forum said: "We believed we had a strong case for this scheme to be called-in on a number of grounds, so this news is extremely disappointing. We still firmly believe that this development does not preserve or enhance the Conservation Area and so should not be built in its current form. It is completely different in character, height, shape, colour and materials to all other buildings in this part of the canal basin. These light-coloured towers will be a blight on the landscape and future generations will question why they were allowed to be built here."

The National Trust is working with Castlefield Forum and other interested parties to test a 'Spirit of Place' project in Castlefield. The Trust is supporting the Forum to engage with the community and local experts, to help them to articulate what is special about the place and how its distinctiveness could be enhanced through future management and decision making. The National Trust have chosen to pilot an urban Spirit of Place project in Castlefield because they believe it is a special place, valued by Mancunians and enjoyed by visitors. As one of the birthplaces of the Industrial Revolution, it is nationally and arguably internationally significant, and thereby warrants thoughtful care.

Sarah Ramsbottom, Managing Director of Castlefield Estates said: “It is disgraceful that the City Council can allow a scheme such as this to be built in a Conservation Area. It should be a source of deep shame for the Council that this development will blight Castlefield for generations and this blight will be inflicted with the blessing of the Council and based on Renaker’s previous schemes, it will probably be financed with the City’s money too. We are currently seeking legal advice about any further avenues we can pursue and we will continue to scrutinise the details of this scheme every step of the way.

“Castlefield is the jewel in Manchester city centre’s crown because there are people here who really care and work tirelessly to ensure it is a desirable area in which to work, live and play. It seems some elements of the Council do not seem to care about Castlefield, but despite this, together with Castlefield Forum, we will continue to be guardians of Castlefield, including pursuing the feasibility of the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.”

This campaign has been supported by more than 500 local residents, the three local councillors and Lucy Powell, MP.

For more information visit www.ourcastlefield.co.uk. For up-dates follow @ourcastlefield on Twitter.

Ends

For further press information contact Roz Hughes on 07967 800395 or email roz@rozhughes.com.

Note to editors

Castlefield Forum is a voluntary group set up by residents to help improve the Castlefield area of Manchester city centre for those who live, work and visit it. The Forum has more than 430 members, 2,500 Twitter followers and more than 835 followers on Facebook. For more information visit www.ourcastlefield.co.uk or follow @ourcastlefield on Twitter.