

**60A Wood Road,
Manchester,
M16 8BL**

**141045/FO/2024
APPEAL STATEMENT**

May 2025

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Statement is submitted in support of an appeal against the refusal of planning permission by Manchester City Council under planning application reference 141045/FO/2024. The application sought permission for the erection of four two-storey detached dwellings (Use Class C3) following the demolition of the existing building at 60A Wood Road, Manchester, M16 8BL.

1.2 The proposal was refused on the basis of three primary reasons relating to:

- (1) the impact on the character and appearance of the Whalley Range Conservation Area,
- (2) the visual amenity within the streetscene, and
- (3) the impact on existing tree coverage.

1.3 This Statement will respond comprehensively to each of the refusal reasons, drawing upon relevant national and local planning policy, case law, and appeal precedents. It will be demonstrated that the proposal complies with the Development Plan and national guidance, and that the Local Planning Authority (LPA)'s decision lacks consistency and a sound planning basis.

1.4 It is also important to note that earlier engagement with the Council saw support in principle for removing the current structure—which has long been recognised as an eyesore—yet when proposals were advanced for a high-quality residential scheme, dialogue with the Council became opaque and unconstructive. The lack of meaningful engagement with revised plans demonstrates a black-box approach to decision-making, contrary to the principles of positive planning.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.2 The relevant local planning policies are contained within the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012), saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (1995), and relevant policies of the Places for Everyone Plan (PfE 2023).

2.3 Relevant policies include:

- Core Strategy:
 - Policy DM1 – Development Principles
 - Policy EN3 – Heritage
 - Policy EN9 – Green Infrastructure

- Policy EN15 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles
- Saved UDP Policies:
 - Policy DC18 – Conservation Areas
- Places for Everyone (PfE):
 - Policy JP-P2 – Heritage
 - Policy JP-G7 – Trees and Woodland
 - Policy JP-G8 – Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery

2.4 Relevant national policies include:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (NPPF)
- National Design Guide (2021)

3.0 RESPONSE TO REASON FOR REFUSAL 1 – IMPACT ON CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE WHALLEY RANGE CONSERVATION AREA

3.1 The first reason for refusal alleges that the proposal is out of keeping with the historic development pattern and would be an overbearing and incongruous addition to the Conservation Area, causing “less than substantial harm”.

3.2 Paragraph 202 of the NPPF is clear that such harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. That is the relevant legal and policy test.

3.3 The existing structure on-site lacks any architectural or historical merit and contributes negatively to the Conservation Area. It is currently occupied as subdivided flats housing vulnerable tenants, with issues of antisocial behaviour and a visible decline in site maintenance. Its continued presence does not serve the community nor protect the heritage value of the area.

3.4 The building adjacent to the appeal site, immediately next to the driveway entrance, is of modern grey brick construction and has a commercial “office-like” appearance. This structure is starkly out of character with the traditional architectural vernacular and provides an important contextual reference. In contrast, the appeal proposal uses traditional red brick, slate-effect roofing, gabled elevations, and recessed porches to integrate positively with the Conservation Area.

3.5 The proposed development follows the suburban grain of Whalley Range, offering generous spacing between dwellings, substantial green space, and domestic scale. The site's design consciously mirrors historic form and proportions while providing contemporary energy-efficient housing.

3.6 The Council's cited policies (DM1, EN3, SP1, DC18) require that proposals preserve or enhance the Conservation Area. The current scheme enhances it by removing a blight and replacing it with well-considered, traditionally styled dwellings. The appellant remains open to further dialogue regarding final detailing and materials to ensure a fully sympathetic design.

3.7 This position is supported by case law. In *Bedford BC v SSCLG* [2013], it was held that where heritage harm is outweighed by public benefits, permission can be granted. In *R (Forge Field Society) v Sevenoaks DC* [2014], the courts upheld the NPPF balancing approach to heritage impact.

3.8 The public benefits here are clear and include:

- Delivery of much-needed family housing in a sustainable location
- Removal of a harmful, dilapidated building
- Visual enhancement of the streetscape and Conservation Area

4.0 RESPONSE TO REASON FOR REFUSAL 2 – IMPACT ON STREETSCENE AND VISUAL AMENITY

4.1 The second refusal reason suggests that the proposed dwellings would appear incongruous in the street scene and harm visual amenity.

4.2 The proposed dwellings are entirely in keeping with the established residential scale and character of Whalley Range, comprising two-storey detached houses with varied yet coherent architecture. The scheme utilises stepped massing, articulated elevations, and a mix of soft landscaping to avoid visual monotony.

4.3 The proposed building line follows the established pattern on Wood Road, with generous setbacks and front gardens, maintaining the suburban spaciousness characteristic of the area.

4.4 The National Design Guide emphasises the importance of contextual design. The appeal scheme is the product of expert input, having been revised following earlier refusals. It reflects the local pattern of development, provides visual interest, and avoids any sense of overdevelopment.

4.5 The Council's assertion that the scheme would be incongruous lacks clear evidential basis. In contrast, the current building detracts from the streetscene due to its poor condition, vandalism, and lack of relationship to surrounding built form. The proposed development would significantly enhance visual quality, security, and place-making.

5.0 RESPONSE TO REASON FOR REFUSAL 3 – LOSS OF TREES AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

5.1 The third reason for refusal relates to the loss of trees and the associated impact on local amenity and green infrastructure.

5.2 The supporting arboricultural assessment confirmed that several existing trees are of low quality and nearing the end of their lifespan. However, three trees on-site are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). These trees are to be retained and protected throughout construction. The appellant has committed to full compliance with British Standard BS5837 and will implement protective fencing and root zone safeguarding.

5.3 Where tree loss is unavoidable, mitigation is proposed through the planting of native species and, where appropriate, semi-mature replacements. This will ensure no net loss of tree coverage or biodiversity.

5.4 The landscaping scheme promotes ecological value, in line with Policies EN15 and JP-G8, and aligns with both the Manchester Tree Strategy and Greater Manchester Environment Plan.

5.5 Contrary to the Council's concerns, green infrastructure will be enhanced through hedgerows, boundary planting, permeable surfaces, and wildlife-friendly features.

6.0 HISTORY OF ENGAGEMENT AND EVOLUTION OF THE SCHEME

6.1 The site has a well-documented planning history (Refs: 136679/FO/2023, 113501/FO/2016, 11506/FO/S1, 107496/FO/2014/S1). These schemes illustrate a consistent intention to bring the site into beneficial use.

6.2 Earlier proposals included extensions to the existing building. However, the Council discouraged such approaches, stating a preference for redevelopment to remove the unsightly structure. It is contradictory that, now a sympathetic redevelopment is proposed, the Council resists it without offering viable alternatives.

6.3 The appellant has engaged in pre-application dialogue and design refinement but has not received constructive input or feedback from the Council, which has failed to engage meaningfully. The decision-making process has lacked transparency, undermining collaborative design-led planning.

7.0 THE PLANNING BALANCE

7.1 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This applies to both plan-making and decision-taking.

7.2 This proposal achieves the three dimensions of sustainable development:

- Social: Provides high-quality family homes in a desirable, well-connected neighbourhood.
- Economic: Stimulates construction employment and long-term local economic activity.
- Environmental: Enhances the Conservation Area, improves biodiversity, and removes a degraded structure.

7.3 The heritage harm identified is “less than substantial” and is clearly outweighed by the proposal’s public benefits, as endorsed by national policy and case law.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The proposed development is wholly consistent with national and local planning policy. It represents sustainable development as defined in the NPPF.

8.2 The design is contextually appropriate and enhances the Whalley Range Conservation Area, both visually and functionally.

8.3 Existing TPO trees are retained and protected. Tree loss is minimal and effectively mitigated with high-quality landscaping and replanting.

8.4 The current building detracts significantly from local amenity. Its removal and replacement with well-designed homes will improve safety, character, and housing quality in the area.

8.5 The appellant has demonstrated a clear willingness to engage and evolve the design in line with policy and design best practice, but has been met with a lack of engagement from the Council.

8.6 For the reasons set out above, we respectfully request that the Planning Inspectorate allow the appeal and grant planning permission.

Prepared on behalf of Mr. Mohammed Chunara compiled by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'N. Millin', written in a cursive style.

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