



Groves Town

Planning LTD

Chartered Town Planners and
Local Government Management Consultants
www.grovestownplanning.uk

Client	Residents and owners of Beech Court, Willow Bank, Fallowfield M14 6XN
Document Title	Objection statement
Version/Date	V3 30 December 2025
GTP ref	2512005
Application reference	144359/FO/2025
Applicant	G&O Securities Ltd
Site	Beech Court, Willow Bank, Fallowfield M14 6XN

1 Introduction

1.1 Groves Town Planning is engaged by a number of leasehold owners and occupiers of the flats contained within the existing building known as Beech Court.

1.2 Owners benefit from a 999 year lease of the 16 flats within the existing development.

1.3 The freeholder, G&O Securities Ltd is the applicant. The application is made without the agreement of the leasehold owners. It is acknowledged that this raises matters outside the remit of the Council acting as Local Planning Authority. These matters are being pursued elsewhere as appropriate. It would appear that the freeholder is a Surrey based company controlling multiple freeholds across the Country.

1.4 This submission will consider the following matters

- The location of the application site
- Flaws in the submission of the application
- The form and nature of the proposed development
- National and development plan policy
- Considerations material to the proposed development

2 The location of the application site

2.1 The application site is located in an area typical of the late 19th and early 20th century suburbs south of the city centre of Manchester. Whilst much altered over time the area continues to exhibit a leafy, spacious environment, with significant street trees providing a setting for even more recent developments. Those more

recent additions, of which Beech Court is one, have been existence for more than 50 years and have established their own maturity and setting. This is evidenced by satellite and street view images.





2.2 Beech Court and the similarly designed Willow Court become more apparent as their frontages are reached and views open into the site via access and parking areas.

2.3 Whilst these blocks have limited intrinsic architectural merit, materials, scale and setting contribute to the mature and settled environment and character of the area.

2.4 It is only buildings closer to the junction of Willow Bank with Wilmslow Road that detract from this mature and established character with ill informed architectural treatments. Nevertheless the sylvan setting away from the arterial road frontage ensures retention of that leafy, suburban environment.

3 Flaws with the submitted application

3.1 The application as submitted is clearly presented with knowledge and consideration of material considerations.

3.2 It is however of concern that process of notification of the application to owners is flawed and has created disadvantage to the leasehold owners of the flats in the building.

3.3 It is worthy of note that notices relating to ownership were served on 14 October 2025. It is unclear as to whom the notices were served. Certificate B indicates that notice was served on a single address, not on separate leasehold owners. The application forms are then dated 16 October 2025. The Council's website then notes that the application was received on the 24th October - 8 days later.

3.4 For undisclosed reasons the application was then not registered by the Council until the 1st December 2025 presumably as it was not valid. As a consequence no details of the application were available on the Council's website.

3.5 Owners have consequently been disadvantaged. It is not clear if all necessary owners were contacted – the application forms suggest not. Had owners been notified the application was still not submitted to the Council for a further 8 days. Given that the application was not considered valid, the Council did not publish any details of the application until it was registered on the 1 December 2025.

3.6 Notice number 1 - Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 Article 13, clearly states that notified owners have 21 days to respond to the notice. They were unable to do so because of the timing issues set out above. It is questioned on this basis as to whether the application is valid.

3.7 It is accepted that the Council then carried out further notification with a date for response of 31 December. It is understood that letters were sent to the occupiers of each flat in Beech Court. There is no certainty that owners would have become aware of the application through this process.

3.8 The list of property addresses on the Council's website which is assumed to relate to neighbour notification includes all 16 flats in Beech Court, a generic address of Beech Court and 19 Willow Bank.

3.9 19 Willow Bank appears to be in the southern most part of the gated group of dwellings at the end of Willow Bank.

3.10 The apparent failure to notify the occupiers of the remaining properties on Willow Bank and those on Wynnstay Grove which share a boundary with the

application site also seems to represent flawed process. This would appear contrary to the adopted Statement of Community Involvement of August 2025.

3.11 It is worthy of note that a previous application relating to alteration to the entrance to Beech Court was notified to more than 180 local residents.

3.12 It is considered that these flaws in process could give rise to the scope for challenge to any decision reached with this application. At the very least clarification of the processes for the notification of owners and neighbours should be secured and fresh notification processes undertaken.

4 The proposed development

4.1 The applicants describe the proposed development as

Addition of a single-storey extension comprising residential units on the existing detached block of flats, associated parking, storage and landscaping following demolition of single-storey outbuilding.

4.2 This description is disingenuous and fails to accurately relate to the actual scale and form of development.

4.3 The Council has understandably amended that description. It is unclear if that change is made with the agreement of the applicant.

Erection of rooftop extension comprising 4 No. 3 bed residential units to the existing detached block of flats, associated parking, storage and landscaping following demolition of single-storey outbuilding.

4.4 Submitted plans show that the parapet of the existing building stands 11m above adjoining ground level. The structure added increases the height of the building to 14.55m above ground level.

- 4.5 Each elevation of the new group of flats includes habitable room windows looking in all directions from the higher building.
- 4.6 The new accommodation is set back from the edge of the existing roof and parapet.
- 4.7 It is not entirely clear as to how the new structure is supported on the top of the existing buildings, leaving some uncertainty as the physical ramifications of the proposed development and the extent to which proposals may require further modification to become capable of practical implementation.
- 4.8 This uncertainty also relates to the ability to adequately provide for drainage connections to the new units and to extend the lift shaft and lift to a new floor.
- 4.9 Plans are not entirely clear when presenting information about the proposed demolition of a single storey building but this would appear to relate to the removal of an existing bin store and replacement by open car parking.
- 4.10 Waste disposal containers are placed within new structures on the site. No details are provided for this store or the proposed cycle store.
- 4.11 The description of development includes reference to landscaping. This appears to be limited to hedge planting around bin and cycle stores and hedge trimming to improve visibility at access to the site from the highway.

5 Planning history

- 5.1 The only previous application relating to the site is 130293/FO/2021 - Elevation alterations to main entrance (Approved – 29th June 2021).

6 Policy considerations

6.1 There are no essential differences with the applicant in terms of setting out policy considerations of relevance to the determination of this application, albeit that there are differences in the interpretation and application of those policies.

6.2 For the sake of brevity those policies are not repeated here, it being accepted that section 3 of the applicants' planning statement sets out the relevant national and development plan policy.

7 Appraisal

Principle

7.1 It is accepted that in the broadest of terms there is no objection to the strategic principle of residential development in this location.

7.2 It is however considered that any limited addition to housing supply provided by the development should be given only limited weight in terms of balance against negative impacts of the proposed development.

7.3 Policies of the National Planning Policy Framework and Places for Everyone relating to housing supply relate to broad, strategic level objectives, which can never be taken as overriding concerns over impact on amenity or the character of a particular location. Neither JP-H4, the supporting text in paragraphs 7.8 or 7.10 or policies H1 and H2 of the Core Strategy support development at any cost.

Housing

7.4 The housing market for south Manchester is dynamic. Housing need is to some extent a reflection of demand. There is no dispute over the scope to identify both demand and need in the area which includes the application site.

7.5 It is however worthy of note that a core principle of Places for Everyone is to use planning controls to shift supply away from overheated area of the housing market and to meet need in currently less attractive parts of Greater Manchester, particularly areas to the north and east of the city. This aligns with objectives relating to managed growth and regeneration and related infrastructure delivery.

7.6 Paragraph 4.16 of PfE notes

Our spatial strategy responds to this variation, whilst also recognising both the commonalities between places and the diversity within each of them. This is essential to delivering inclusive growth that secures greater prosperity and quality of life for everyone in the city region.

7.7 In many respects this can be interpreted as policy which resists the increasing exploitation and overdevelopment of more prosperous areas to the south of the City, and the use of planning controls to deliver development in areas which would normally be less attractive. Policy JP-Strat6 reflects this position.

7.8 In short strategic policy relating to housing supply is not focused on delivery at any cost, but directed and targeted delivery to reflect wider strategic objectives.

Quality of accommodation

7.9 There is no dispute that the development proposed will deliver accommodation which meets Nationally Described Space Standards.

7.10 Guidance relating to housing design and layout is dated – referencing SPD adopted in 2007. More up to date guidance from other local authorities commonly references the need to demonstrate compliance with Building Regulation Requirement M (2) relating to adaptability and accessibility. There is no evidence that the design of the building work proposed meets these standards.

Amenity

7.11 The failure to provide effective notification of the proposed development to the occupiers of adjoining sites is of concern in that the scope for the occupiers of properties on those sites to raise issue has been severely limited.

7.12 There is no contention over the detail submitted within the report relating to daylight and sunlight. It is unclear how judgements have been made in respect to the uses of various rooms in adjoining properties.

7.13 The submitted Planning Statement dismisses potential impact on privacy by simply suggesting that "sufficient" separation distances are maintained. There is no indication or reference as to how sufficiency might be defined. The City Council has previously relied on a document entitled Citywide Development Control Policies to provide guidance of the adequacy of separation/previous distances.

7.14 This provides for separation between habitable room windows in a manner common with most other LPAs. This is noted as being between 21 and 22m. It is common in applying such guidance to increase separation by 3m for each floor above 2 storeys. In this case, with the proposals introducing a 5th level, separation should achieve a minimum of 31m.



7.15 The use of formulaic assessment in terms of separation distances, daylight and sunlight brings some risk of failure to consider prevailing character and circumstances and the nature and impact of change. In this case the illustration provided above shows the extent to which the scope for inter looking between residential properties is clearly demonstrated. It is noted that the planning statement prepared for the applicant makes overt reference to the maximisation of windows to the proposed flats. There will be a consequent loss of amenity. The proposed development would fail to meet the requirements and objectives of the development plan, notably DM1 of the Core Strategy.

Scale, massing and appearance

7.16 The application statement notes that height of the existing building will be increased by approximately 3m. Plans show an increase of 3.55m.

7.17 To assist in illustration of the impact of the proposal objectors have commissioned photomontages to show the development in situ.



View from south east – Willow Bank



View from south –Willow Bank



View of west wing of Beech Court with Willow Park



View from south west – Willow Bank

7.18 These images clearly illustrate the impact and unsuitability of the addition proposed.

7.19 The existing building has limited architectural merit, but it does have a scale and proportion suited to its setting, its relationship to the street scene and to other buildings in the immediate locality. The addition of a monosyllabic block to the top of the building destroys existing balance and proportion. The proposed development provides neither a sympathetic contemporary addition nor attempts to take on board any current merits of features of the existing structure. The choice of materials exaggerates and emphasises the miss-match of proposed and existing.

7.20 Illustrations show how the set back of the new accommodation from the existing parapet is not read from ground level, causing the addition to be viewed as ungainly and over dominant.

7.21 The applicant quotes PfE policies JP-H4 and JP-P1 and Core Strategy SP1 and EN1 as supporting high quality design and well designed development which enhances places. The development does meet the objectives of those policies and is thereby contrary to the provisions of the development plan.

7.22 More recent editions of the NPPF have increased emphasis on quality of design and delivery of well designed places. Paragraph 131 notes that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 135 notes the planning decisions should ensure that development is visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.

7.23 For the reasons outlined above it is considered that the proposed development fails to meet these fundamental objectives.

7.24 The applicant seeks acceptance for the proposal on the basis of development which has been permitted at 7 Wynnstay Grove. 119205/FO/2018

7.25 It is considered that there is clear scope for distinction between this previous decision and the development now proposed. The host buildings are very different in design and scale. The approved addition is far more modest and less imposing than that now proposed. It is set back further from the edge of the roof and is read in an entirely different context to the current proposal.



7.26 The image above illustrates the difference in scale and form of the additions to 7 Wynnstay Grove

7.27 It should also be noted that this scheme was approved in 2018 prior to the current version of the Framework and the adoption of PfE.

7.28 For these reasons development at Wynnstay Grove should not be considered to set any form of precedent for the development now proposed, which must be considered on its own merits.

Operational detail

7.29 It is of concern to objectors that the practicality of the proposed development is flawed in a number of ways

7.30 The garaging on the site was designed to meet the requirements prevailing in the 1970's when the block was first built. Dimensions do not meet current standards, dictated by general increases in vehicle size, and many are not used as a result. Positioning also means that a number of the garage spaces are not easily accessible or access is constrained by the position relative to trees or the main building on the site. As a consequence parking provision is lacking with visitor spaces used by residents. The provision proposed would not enable adequate overall parking provision.

7.31 Current arrangements for bin storage and collection work, with collection vehicles able to enter the site, empty the bins and leave. Proposals would not facilitate this arrangement with residents having to take refuse to a less convenient bin storage space and then move the bins for collection. There is further concern that proposed arrangements for bin storage would reduce rather than increase capacity for storage – leading to the potential need for outside storage of some receptacles.

7.32 The proposals make no clear provision for works needed to enable the building to be made safe in terms of fire regulations. These would change as the building would exceed 11m. There is similarly no indication as to how foul water systems would accommodate the addition level and 4 new flats. Whilst this may not provide obvious reasons to object to the current application, there is a distinct possibility that the development as tabled could not be implemented in accordance with the current plans or delivered at all in the current form.

8 Conclusions

8.1 It is concluded that the proposed development fails to comply with national and development plan policy in a number of regards.

8.2 Foremost of these matters is the clear and obvious detrimental impact that the development would have on the appearance of the existing building, the character and setting on the street scene and local environment.

8.3 A range of other material considerations are highlighted. These cumulatively add to the principle concern noted above to demonstrate a clear and rationale, policy based justification to enable refusal of the application.