

Mr D Glasgow  
London Borough of Camden  
5 Pancras Square  
London N1C 4AG

24 April 2017

**By email only**

Dear Mr Glasgow,

**Re: (ROL7643) Proposed Redevelopment of Castlewood House, London – Daylight/Sunlight**

Anstey Horne has been instructed to review the daylight and sunlight report produced by Point 2 Surveyors regarding the Castlewood House site. We have been provided with the daylight and sunlight report produced by Point 2 Surveyors dated April 2017 version 2. We have reviewed the content of this report, without the benefit of any checking of the technical assessment model, and set out below our summary and thoughts on the level of the effects on the neighbouring residential properties.

**Executive Summary**

The technical assessment results show there to be breaches of the BRE guidelines to the two properties tested, these being Centre Point House and 1-53 Matilda Apartments. The results can be summarised as follows:-

- The effects on Centre Point House are, in our opinion, acceptable as although there are some breaches of the BRE guidelines it can be seen that good levels of daylight are maintained in the proposed condition.
- With regard to 1-53 Matilda Apartments, the affected windows/rooms are already inhibited in the quality of light, primarily as a result of its design and proximity to the neighbouring office block to the east. The proposed design has sought to set back from the Earnshaw Street elevation, such that the north facing flats maintain good levels of daylight, but it is the oblique light reductions that are where the main breaches of the BRE guidelines occur. In our opinion, on balance, flexibility should be applied to the guidelines and should you consider that the scheme proposals have adequately responded to the townscape considerations along Bucknall Street then there is good reason to support this application in terms of the daylight effects.

- Sunlight is not a material consideration in this instance because the two affected properties are located south of the development site, with no expectation of sunlight from over the development site.

### **Effects on the neighbouring properties**

With regard to the average daylight factor assessments, Point 2 Surveyors do not set out the parameters they have undertaken for the glazing transmittance and internal reflectance, which we would normally want to review to see whether the standard variables were applied, which we would expect for testing adjoining properties. This would be more relevant to the assessment for Centre Point House as we see the average daylight factor levels meeting or exceeding the guideline targets. This is not so relevant for the Matilda Apartments as in both cases the existing and proposed conditions fall well below the BRE guidelines for the majority of the east facing apartments. Verification of these values would be useful for clarity, but not essential when considering the overall effects and being able to summarise this report.

#### **Centre Point House**

We have assumed that the correct floor levels for residential use has been assessed, with the third floor level being the lowest habitable floor level (Point 2 Surveyors' drawings refer to sixth floor levels) with further residential above. The plans appended to the daylight and sunlight report appear to have been consistently modelled and tested for the daylight distribution assessments.

This property does have a series of overhead obstructions from balconies that partly inhibits light to the windows and within the rooms. However, we can see that the balcony effects are not a significant factor in the overall level of adherence, because even where there are no balcony restrictions, the daylight assessments still show the effects from the proposed development similar to the windows that do have balcony obstructions. Therefore we would not necessarily consider it to be appropriate to test this property with and without the balcony effects.

The Vertical Sky Component (VSC) assessments show there are breaches of the BRE guidelines, primarily where the windows/rooms are directly opposite the proposed development. The breaches are quite marginal when comparing the existing and proposed conditions, with transgressions ranging from just over the 20% reduction threshold, up to 26.6% at its worst. We consider this is a relatively modest reduction in terms of the VSC.

With regard to the daylight distribution assessment, again we see daylight reductions beyond the BRE guideline threshold of 20% to those rooms which are opposite the proposed massing. The daylight distribution effects are more noticeable to the lowest two habitable floor levels, which Point 2 Surveyors refer to as 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> floor levels. Here the daylight distribution levels range from circa 23% reduction up to circa 46%, which are more material impacts. The greater daylight distribution impacts are to the rooms where there are recessed balconies or overhead obstructions, so some consideration needs to be borne in mind when evaluating the overall effects. Whilst there are some more material daylight distribution effects, it can be seen that the front portion of the rooms still maintain good levels of daylight and it is more to the back of the rooms where the effects will be more noticeable. Given the inner city context and balcony effects, these levels of daylight distribution are not uncommon.

The Average Daylight Factor (ADF) assessment has also been undertaken and the results demonstrate a very high level of adherence is achieved, with only one living/kitchen/dining

(LKD) room at 6<sup>th</sup> floor level falling below the BRE guideline target. This room (R12/66) achieved an ADF value 2.64% in the existing condition, and reduces to 1.62% in the proposed. Whilst the room does not achieve the 2% ADF value in the proposed condition, it does exceed the 1.5% target value for a living room, which demonstrates that there still maintains a reasonable level of daylight to this room, notwithstanding the fact that this room also is affected by its own recessed balcony design.

On balance, whilst there are breaches to the daylight tests, good levels of daylight are maintained in the proposed condition in our opinion. The proposed design does set back from Earnshaw Street, so there has been an attempt by the application to mitigate the effects to a reasonable degree.

### 1-53 Matilda Apartments

As a general observation about this property, the main effects are on the east facing elevation, which is already inhibited in obtaining daylight as a result of the office block located to the east, circa 7/8m away from the residential elevation. Therefore daylight levels are already lower than the BRE guidelines suggestions and therefore further light reductions will show up as much more sensitive to change. Those windows/rooms facing north primarily see good levels of daylight in the proposed condition and this is as a result of the proposed development being set back from Earnshaw Street. Therefore there is only a small proportion of the overall properties being affected by the proposed development.

From an overview perspective, it would have been of assistance to have seen some of the other east facing apartments tested for daylight adequacy in the Matilda Apartments (which are unaffected by the proposed development) as this would allow for a reasonable comparison of the quality of daylight that is enjoyed within the property in its current state. There are flats where we see recessed balcony design, which would be a useful comparator for the light levels retained in the proposed condition with the Castlewood House effects in place. The floor plans provided for the Matilda Apartments also demonstrate that there are kitchens/dining rooms that have no light at all which shows that the expectation of daylight within this block should not necessarily be the same levels as the BRE guidelines recommend.

With regard to the Vertical Sky Component assessment, there are high levels of reductions when compared against the existing condition, but these are limited to the area of Matilda Apartments on the north-eastern corner and that the majority of the effects are to windows that serve the same room.

The daylight distribution assessment shows that the number of rooms affected is quite limited, with only 7 rooms exceeding the 20% reduction threshold, with levels between 23.1% and 47.5%. The contour plans clearly demonstrate that the light reductions are from a more oblique/angled perspective and that in many cases the existing condition has pools of light which are quite narrow streams from each of the windows. Therefore it is questionable the quality in light there is to some of the rooms and whether it would be truly noticeable. There would of course be reflected light off the reveals of each of these windows, which would uplift the general light levels, but these technical assessments do not take this into consideration.

With regard to the Average Daylight Factor assessment, we see that the existing and proposed conditions fall well below the target levels set out by the BRE guidelines, which is a result of the poor quality of daylight to the windows. There is more than sufficient glazing to the rooms so it is only as a consequence of low daylight levels reaching each of the windows as to why the existing and proposed Average Daylight Factor assessments do not perform so well.

We raise the effects to level 01, with the kitchen/dining room R3/501 adhering to the BRE guidelines tests. Given the repeated poor levels of daylight to the second floor level and above in the same area, it is surprising to see such a good level of light being maintained here. It would be of use to have clarification for this room and for us to see the daylight distribution contour plans for this room, so as to understand how it adheres to the guideline tests. Whether this room does fully adhere to the guidelines, or whether there might be reductions does not make an overall difference to our summary, it is more of a point of clarification.

When considering the overall daylight effects from the proposed development, it can be seen that the proposals have sought to set back the design from Earnshaw Street to minimise the effects on the north facing elevation of the Matilda Apartments. The light losses are more oblique and affect the east facing elevation, which is already significantly inhibited from receiving daylight due to the office building to the east. Point 2 Surveyors has raised the question of a mirrored massing approach, which is not an unreasonable point to raise when neighbouring affected properties have built close to their own boundary and are more reliant on light from over neighbouring, undeveloped land. It is clear that the existing building on the Castlewood House site has limited massing fronting Bucknall Street so therefore a comprehensive redevelopment of this site is inevitably going to have some effect. We do not consider that the mirrored massing argument would necessarily fit with fully mitigating the effects as we would see that proposed massing emulate the upper floor level setbacks which can be seen to the office block to the east of Matilda Apartments. That said, it is evident that the set backs on Earnshaw Street and minor set backs on Bucknall Street have been implemented in the proposed design, thus reducing some of the overall effects.

As is highlighted by the BRE guidelines in its introduction, flexibility needs to be applied when new developments are seeking to match buildings of similar height, especially in an inner city environment and the townscape considerations should be a factor in applying the flexibility. We are not specialised in giving an opinion on whether the townscape considerations have been fully met, and we consider it would be appropriate for others to comment on whether they feel the proposed design has appropriately addressed the townscape considerations. From our perspective, we can see that there has been some mitigation applied through the design to limit the effects on the Matilda Apartments and that it is only by virtue of relatively a narrow gap in the existing condition which allows for light to permeate into the east facing elevation rooms. It is our opinion, that on balance, the proposed development is acceptable. If there were height reductions on the Bucknall Street elevation this might not necessarily alter the levels of impact to the east facing elevation rooms, especially to the lower floor levels. It would be unreasonable to expect there to be little or no development on the Bucknall Street elevation for the Castlewood House site, which is why we have concluded that the proposed development has mitigated, as best as possible, the effects. You will have to balance this out with your understanding of the proposed massing/design on the Bucknall Street elevation.

## Summary

We have reviewed the effects from the proposed Castlewood House development on the neighbouring residential properties and consider that Point 2 Surveyors' daylight and sunlight report provides sufficient information to summarise our thoughts.

The effects on Centre Point House, whilst breaching the BRE guidelines in places, are minor and the development maintains good levels of daylight in the proposed condition.

1-53 Matilda Apartments does have more material impacts on the east facing elevation, but we consider that on balance, the design and proximity of the office development to the east is the main factor in the lower daylight levels and that, from our perspective, a reasonable attempt has been made by the developers to mitigate the overall impacts on the Matilda Apartments. Whilst we have seen no contextual assessments of other flats within the Matilda Apartments on the east facing elevation, it is likely to be the case that comparable, lower levels of daylight will be experienced by the current occupants, which we have borne in mind when evaluating the flexibility that needs to be applied if you are to recommend approval for the proposed development with regard to these daylight effects.

Ultimately it is for the local authority to consider whether to support this planning application with a recommendation for approval, but from our perspective the proposal has balanced the design against the overall daylight effects around the development site. If for instance the massing is reduced to mitigate the east facing elevation of the Matilda Apartments, then the massing is likely to be re-distributed to affect the north facing elevation of the Matilda Apartments and Centre Point House. This is why we consider the balance has been addressed sufficiently.

We trust the above is clear, but should you have any further questions regarding this please do not hesitate in contacting us.

Yours sincerely



Matthew Craske