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18 July 2019

Ms K Henry
Senior Planning Officer
Regeneration & Planning
London Borough of Camden
5 Pancras Square
London N1C 4AG

Dear Ms Henry

**St Pancras Campus, St Pancras Way, London NW1
Daylight and Sunlight Review**

In accordance with instructions, I have reviewed the daylight and sunlight report prepared by Point 2 Surveyors submitted on behalf of Westminster Real Estate for the redevelopment of St Pancras Campus, St Pancras Way, London NW1. This review is undertaken on behalf of the London Borough of Camden. We have been asked to review the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing assessment to advise on the suitability of the methods of assessment, the criteria used for the study and the conclusions derived from those criteria and the results obtained. This is to assist the Council in understanding the technical conclusions of the report, and the implications of these results on planning policy.

This review does not extend to a detailed technical analysis. We have not constructed a 3D computer model nor run our own calculations. This report assumes that the study undertaken by the applicants is accurate and simply reports on the results and the conclusions and recommendations given.

London Borough of Camden Requirements

The London Borough of Camden requires that the assessment of daylight and sunlight effect should be undertaken in accordance with Camden Planning Guidance CPG6 and by reference to the Building Research Establishment (BRE) report "Site Layout Planning for Daylight & Sunlight : A Good Guide to Good Practice 2011". The scope of the assessment should include those windows/rooms in the existing neighbouring properties to the development which are likely to be affected by that development (as defined in the BRE Guidance). These will principally be main habitable rooms to residential properties.

For daylight, the following parameters should be calculated:

1. Vertical sky component (VSC); and
2. No skyline/contour (NSL)

These should be used as the primary methods of measurement and should be presented on an absolute scale followed by a comparative scale measuring the percentage reduction.

Average daylight factor (ADF) can also be calculated. This should be presented on an absolute scale for testing the adequacy of proposed new dwellings and can also be submitted to supplement, but not in place of, VSC and NSL for measuring the impact on neighbouring properties. In calculating the ADF values, the input variables for glazing transmittance, reflectance values and frame correction factors should be agreed with the London Borough of Camden beforehand.

For sunlight, the Applicant should calculate the annual probable sunlight hours (APSH) for windows of main habitable rooms of neighbouring properties that face within 90° due south and are likely to have their sunlight reduced by the development massing. The results should be presented on an absolute scale followed by a comparative scale measuring the percentage reduction.

For the shadow assessment, gardens to residential properties and public amenity areas should be assessed. The BRE report suggests that for a garden or amenity area to appear adequately sunlit throughout the year, at least half of the area should receive at least two hours of sunlight on 21 March. If as a result the new development and existing area which can receive direct sunlight on 21 March does not meet the above and is reduced to less than 0.8 times its former value, then this further loss of sunlight will be significant.

Appropriate Standards

I have reviewed the methodology and significance criteria set out in the daylight sunlight and overshadowing report. I do have issues with some of the methodology and application of standards in the report. The key issues are as follows:-

The report does not set significance criteria for the daylight and sunlight assessment. Whilst significance criteria are more appropriate for an environmental statement, it is helpful for the daylight report to summarise the impacts of the development on the neighbouring residential properties for the assistance of the Planning Committee. We therefore believe that the following significance criteria should be used. This applies to VSC where VSC is reduced to less than 27%, to NSL, and to APSH where the APSH is reduced to less than 25% and/or less than 5% in the winter months.

- Reduction of 0% of 20% negligible impact
- Reduction of 20% to 30% minor adverse impact
- Reduction of 30% to 40% moderate adverse impact
- Reduction of more than 40% major adverse impact

This criteria should however be considered by reference to the overall impact on an individual dwelling or block of dwellings rather than necessarily related to one window alone. Where I have expressed an opinion on impacts in this report, it is by reference to these criteria, as they apply to buildings as a whole or in relation to individual parts of the buildings.

The daylight report explains the recommended standards set by the Building Research Establishment for VSC and NSL. However, the report does not identify that in order to meet the required BRE recommended standard it is necessary for both the VSC and NSL standards to be met for any particular room. Failure for that to be made clear to members of the planning committee has led to two recent successful judicial review decisions.

In Paragraph 4.2 of the daylight report, Point 2 state that *"in accordance with BRE guidelines the balconies, where present have been removed from calculations."* The report does not identify where any balconies have been removed for the assessment. This approach is incorrect. The BRE guidance identifies that there can be occasions where the primary cause of obstruction to a window is a balcony above it, which is contributing to a disproportionate percentage loss of daylight or sunlight. In such cases, it may be appropriate to carry out an additional analysis with the balconies omitted in order to see whether the results indicate that the balconies are the prime obstruction to sky visibility and, as a result, the proposed development is not actually causing an adverse impact on its own. This alternative method should only be used in order to assess whether that interpretation of impact is correct not as a primary method of assessment. Therefore, if Point 2 have omitted balconies in their analysis then the reported results cannot be accepted as the correct assessment of actual impact on neighbouring properties. I therefore recommend that Point 2 be asked to identify where balconies have been omitted from their analysis. For those properties, results should be provided for the properties with balconies in place and, if they propose to put forward an argument that the balconies impose an inappropriately harsh burden on the development, then that should be stated in the report as mitigating explanation rather than used as the primary assessment.

The tables in the appendices to the report provide the detailed results for daylight and sunlight. However, the NSL results do not give the percentage reduction in NSL for the neighbouring rooms. As the NSL standard only measures the percentage reduction in room area that can see direct sky visibility, the tables cannot be fully understood by the

committee members without that additional information being included. The tables should therefore be updated with the percentage reduction figures.

It would also be very helpful if the tables could include a pass/fail column. The Applicant may argue that this does not take into account the mitigating arguments in their text that the retained levels of daylight and sunlight, where BRE standards are not met, should be considered to be acceptable. However, those mitigating arguments cannot be easily considered without understanding the actual pass and fail results in the individual properties.

In 7.13 of the daylight report Point 2 surveyors have produced a section drawing measuring the development angle of the ground and first floor windows on the north east elevation of 124 Pratt Street, across St Pancras Way. They have produced this to put forward an argument based on BRE guidance that this represents a prevailing massing in the immediate area and that the daylight currently enjoyed by the St Pancras Way elevation of 124 Pratt Street sets a target value that should be considered reasonable for this area. This leads to a suggestion that a general VSC target of 15% is appropriate. However, 124 Pratt Street is not completely typical of the prevailing massing in this area. It is the case that it is consistent with the massing along the canal on the opposite side of St Pancras Way from the development site. However, the prevailing massing in the area is of lower height than this such as the residential properties to the north of the site on Royal College Street. I do not disagree that urban areas such as London Borough of Camden cannot be expected to maintain the 27% VSC level recommended by the BRE and I would usually consider that a retained VSC of 18% or more should be considered to be a good level within the Borough. I do not agree, however, that a VSC target of 15% can necessarily be considered acceptable in this location based only on the section through 124 Pratt Street. It is a relevant consideration that the existing site is very low level, however, and strict adherence to the BRE recommended standard would be likely to limit developments on site to a massing that would be closer to the existing housing on Royal College Street rather than the taller and denser development consistent with that along St Pancras Way.

Daylight – VSC and NSL

The daylight report identifies five properties that will experience reductions in daylight and/or sunlight in excess of the BRE recommended levels. It is therefore appropriate to comment on these individually.

118 Royal College Street

Four of the windows in this property will experience reductions in VSC below the recommended levels. On balance, this is a minor to moderate adverse impact. However, I do agree with Point 2 that the retained levels of daylight are still going to be good for an urban location.

54 Georgiana Street

This property only has one a room that requires assessment, served by three windows. One of these is a roof light. The windows in the elevation experience reductions in VSC of over 40% whilst the skylight is barely affected. The overall impact, including the skylight, is a 20% average reduction which is only minor adverse. In addition, the NSL does not change due to the sky visibility available through the roof light. On balance, therefore, this is a minor adverse impact as a whole.

Star Wharf, 38 and 40 St Pancras Way

This modern block of flats has windows with very good levels of existing VSC. 35 of the rooms assessed will experience reductions in VSC in excess of the BRE recommendations and the levels of reduction mean that this is, overall, a major adverse impact. The daylight report argues that the retained levels of VSC should be considered to be acceptable, principally when living rooms are assessed. On balance, this is a reasonable argument as there are only two living rooms that will have VSC levels below 18% and these are in constrained locations at low level. All of the living rooms will be left with a VSC of 18% or higher which could be considered to be appropriate for an urban location intended to be densely developed. The results for many of the bedrooms will be lower, down to 13.9% VSC which means that they will not appear well lit and it would be appropriate for the committee to consider whether they agree with the arguments put forward in the daylight report that the bedrooms should be considered to be of lesser importance and, if so, whether these results can be considered to be acceptable.

124 Pratt Street

Most of the windows assessed in this property will experience reductions in VSC substantially greater than recommended by the BRE. The reductions are at a level that the overall impact on this building must be considered to be major adverse. In addition, windows on the ground and first floor will be left with levels of VSC below 18% and down as low as 13% reinforcing the major adverse impact. There would also be substantial reductions in NSL to rooms on these lower levels.

The daylight report argues that the retained VSC levels will be broadly comparable to the St Pancras Way elevation of the same building but that is not necessarily a justification for allowing this level of impact to this particular elevation.

88 Royal College Street

10 of the rooms in this property will experience reductions in VSC greater than the BRE recommended levels although, in general, most of the rooms will meet the NSL standard. The percentage reductions would indicate a major adverse impact. However, the retained VSC levels are good and with the exception of the rooms on the first and second floor which range from 17.5% and 19.7% retained VSC, all other rooms will be left with VSC levels above 20%. On balance, therefore whilst this is a major adverse impact the retained levels of VSC could be considered appropriate for a dense urban location.

Sunlight – APSH

124 Pratt Street has no relevant windows facing within 90° due south and does not require assessment.

The results for 18 Royal College Street, 54 Georgiana Street and 88 Royal College Street all meet the BRE recommended levels for APSH.

At Star Wharf, 38 and 40 St Pancras Way, sunlight results are generally good. One living room and two bedrooms do not meet the required sunlight standard but the impacts are relatively marginal and on balance the sunlight impact could be considered to be acceptable.

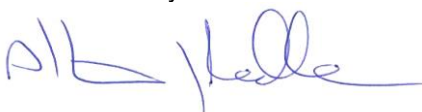
Conclusion

I have identified a number of concerns about the methodology and reporting used for this daylight study. The advice given in this report has not taken account of whether balconies have actually been omitted from the assessment or not as that is not clear from the Point 2 report, and that does require clarification. If balconies have been omitted for the primary assessment then alternative calculations will need to be undertaken and the report updated accordingly. I have also identified other shortcomings that should be addressed.

For the daylight assessment, any large development on this site to cause a large percentage reduction in VSC as a result of the good levels of sky visibility over the existing lower level site. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to require strict compliance with the BRE standards if a scheme of this type of massing is considered desirable in planning terms. Where retained VSC levels are above 18% and certainly above 20%, then these could be considered to be commensurate with prevailing levels of daylight on residential streets in the London Borough of Camden. However, the lower floors of 124 Pratt Street will be left with levels of VSC below this, and experience substantial reductions in NSL, and that is a property that will therefore experience any greatest overall impact.

The sunlight results indicate little material impact and can be considered to be acceptable.

Yours sincerely



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