

GBC – VALE ROAD – DAYLIGHT/SUNLIGHT - SUMMARY NOTE

I am pleased to summarise our discussion with the planning officer last Friday in conjunction with the appointed daylight/sunlight consultant, Matthew Jones (Right of Light Consulting). The focus of the discussion related to windows 31, 32, 40 and 41 at 105 Vale Road which fall short of the Vertical Sky Component test. However, there are mitigating factors for these short falls which were discussed in detail.

Windows 31 & 32 are secondary, flank windows serving the ground floor living room of 105 Vale Road. This room is also served by a large rear facing window 33 which is unaffected by the development. The proximity of windows 31 & 32 to the common boundary is also a mitigating factor as it raises questions about if the neighbouring building is itself a good neighbour, standing a reasonable distance from the boundary and taking no more than its fair share of light. In such cases the BRE guide allows alternative targets to be set using the mirror-image methodology and the results confirm windows 31 & 32 surpass the alternative targets (appendix 4 of the D & S report). On this basis, we are of the opinion that the daylight reduction to windows 31 & 32 will not be noticeable, and the living room will remain well served for daylight.

Windows 40 & 41 serve the first floor bedroom at 105 Vale Road. These windows are also flank windows but are the sole windows that serve the bedroom. The results show that these rooms fall just short, achieving ratios of 0.75 & 0.71 against the target of 0.8 and also retaining values of 22.8% and 21% against the target of 27% as such, these are relatively borderline shortfalls. Typically, bedrooms are also regarded as less important than and less weight is given to these compared to living rooms or kitchens on the basis that bedrooms are likely to be used less than living rooms during daylight hours.

We also discussed the morphology of the site and whether this is an urban or suburban scheme. One of the key identifiers of an urban location is the presence of terraced properties and we note that just to the south (within 100m) there are terraced properties along Vale Road and Park Avenue. This lends credence to the idea that the surrounding area is more urban than suburban. Notwithstanding, we are primarily focused on the flank windows and therefore a more micro scale rather than the area as a whole. The distances between properties on Vale Road is tight and akin to a relatively dense urban location. Windows 40 & 41 retain VSC values in excess of 20% (21% & 22.8%) which is considered reasonably good level of daylight.

Ultimately, 107 Vale Road is a relatively underdeveloped site as the existing property is a small bungalow whilst the adjacent properties are houses with larger footprints. The neighbouring VSC values, before the development, are higher than would usually be expected as the windows look out over a relatively undeveloped plot. Therefore, the ratio reductions are greater than expected because the proposed development is reducing the VSC values to more typical levels. The proposed development will have a relatively low impact on the light receivable by its neighbouring properties.

The above logic also extends towards outlook, whilst the current outlook is better than we would usually expect for flank windows it will be reduced to levels that are more reasonable for windows looking directly over the common boundary. It should also be noted that although there is no technical test for outlook, the VSC test measures visible sky and the results show that significant portions of the sky will remain visible to windows/rooms.