



READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE)
(ENGLAND) RULES 2000
SECTION 78 APPEALS**

SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE ON DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT

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Appeal by: Aviva Life and Pensions UK Ltd

Appeal Site: Vastern Court, Reading

**Appeal Against: The failure of Reading Borough Council to determine within
the prescribed period a planning application**

Planning Inspectorate Reference: APP/E0345/W/21/3289748

Reading Borough Council Reference: 200328

March 2022

1 SUMMARY PROOF

- 1.1 My name is Paul Jeffrey Littlefair and I have worked on daylighting and related issues at BRE since 1979. I have a PhD in daylighting and am a Fellow of the Society of Light and Lighting. I have published over 100 papers on daylight and related issues, and wrote 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice', which is widely used by developers and planning authorities to help determine the loss of light to existing buildings. I have carried out over 400 studies of the loss of light to existing buildings.
- 1.2 This proof has assessed the daylight and sunlight impact of the appeal proposal on existing and proposed dwellings, and daylight and sunlight provision within the proposed scheme. The assessment has been carried out against the guidelines in the BRE Report 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice'.
- 1.3 Loss of daylight to some windows and rooms at 87-97 Caversham Road would be outside the guidelines, though the retained levels would be only just outside the recommended values, except for some bedrooms where daylight distributions are affected. This would count as a minor adverse impact. The proposed development to the south (Hermes/Reading Metropolitan) would cause an additional cumulative reduction, but not by much. Loss of sunlight would meet the BRE guidelines.
- 1.4 Loss of daylight to 17-49 Caversham Road would be outside the BRE guidelines. This is classified as a major adverse impact to numbers 21-49 as all the windows at the front of the houses are affected including main living rooms, and the loss of light is well outside the guidelines. For numbers 17, 19 and 51 the loss of daylight is assessed as a moderate impact. There would be little or no cumulative impact from other proposed schemes, except for number 51 where the combined impact would be major adverse. Loss of sunlight would meet the BRE guidelines.
- 1.5 The Environmental Statement cumulative assessment did not consider loss of daylight to the Hermes/Reading Metropolitan scheme, or loss of daylight and sunlight to the SSE site across Vastern Road. James Crowley has provided coloured plans indicating daylight and sunlight levels on the facades, but these are not clear and omit one of the blocks on the Hermes scheme that would be affected. More detailed

results should have been provided, particularly for the SSE scheme for which full plans are available. Overall, it can be concluded that the proposed Appeal Scheme will have some impact on the Hermes and SSE developments, but it is not possible to tell how large that impact will be, or whether future residents of those sites would have adequate daylight with the Appeal Scheme in place.

- 1.6 Results from the SSE (55 Caversham Road) planning submission indicate that some of the living rooms in that development would not meet minimum recommendations for daylight or winter sunlight, once the Appeal Scheme was built.
- 1.7 A large number of living rooms in the proposed development are predicted to have limited daylight. CHP Surveyors have analysed worst case rooms on the lower floors of Blocks B and C. With the Hermes/Reading Metropolitan scheme in place, 112 (62%) of the 180 living rooms would not meet the minimum recommendation for daylight provision. This is unusually poor. For bedrooms, compliance rates are better, with 23 not meeting the recommended 1%.
- 1.8 In principle it could be possible to improve daylight provision on these lower floors by altering the design. However given the height of the blocks and the levels of mutual obstruction it is not clear whether this would be possible without compromising other requirements, such as those for privacy or private amenity space.
- 1.9 Sunlight provision in these rooms on the lower floors would be poor, with just 21 (12% of 180) living rooms and studios analysed meeting the BRE/BS sunlight recommendations with the 80 Caversham Road scheme in place. Without removing balconies, or making major changes to the massing, it would be difficult to improve these figures significantly.
- 1.10 There are no existing gardens in which sunlight could be affected by the proposed development. Sunlight provision in open spaces in the proposed scheme itself varies, with most of the roof terraces and the courtyard to Block B appearing to meet the recommendation, while the courtyard and a roof terrace to Block C would not. Sunlight in the open spaces between Blocks A and B and between Blocks C and D would meet the recommendation; the space between Blocks B and C would probably not, but in the illustrative scheme it is planned to be a street thoroughfare for which sunlight provision would be less important.

1.11 The council's seventh reason for refusal is: *'The proposed development would result in unacceptable loss of daylight to existing residents at 17-51 Vastern Road, and has not demonstrated whether acceptable living conditions (daylight and sunlight) could be achieved for occupants in the new development. In addition, it has not been adequately demonstrated how an acceptable level and quality of private and communal amenity space could be achieved for all future occupiers, whilst meeting appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight penetration. The proposal submission does not also include an assessment of the cumulative impact on the adjoining RMG site and the loss of daylight sunlight to the SSE site. Therefore, the development would be contrary to NPPF, The National Design Guide, National Model Design Code Parts 1 and 2, Reading Borough Local Plan Policies (2019) CC7, CC8, H10 and CR10.'*

1.12 It can be concluded that this reason for refusal is justified because:

- a. There would be a major impact on daylight to many of the dwellings at 17-51 Vastern Road;
- b. Analysis of an indicative scheme suggests widespread non-compliance with minimum recommendations for daylight and sunlight in the proposed dwellings;
- c. Most of the amenity space in one of the blocks, Block C, would be inadequately sunlit;
- d. The original submission did not include an assessment of loss of light to the RMG and SSE sites. Some data have now been provided but they are not clear.

1.13 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal reference APP/E0345/W/21/3289748 in this summary proof of evidence is true, and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.