

Design Officer Comments

HGY/2024/0450

707-725 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N22 5JY

Demolition of the existing building and redevelopment to provide affordable homes, purpose-built student accommodation, and flexible ground floor commercial (Class E) floorspace within buildings ranging between 3 – 9 storeys, public realm and landscaping works, cycle parking, and associated works.

Applicant: Fusion

Agent: DP9 Ltd.

Architects: Corstophine & Wright

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Summary

This proposed development is for a mixture of Purpose Built Student Housing (PBSA) and general needs affordable housing, with additional town centre commercial use at the ground floor main street frontage of the PBSA, as well as a new public pocket park and connections into the existing local street network. As such it has the potential to extend and reinforce the important metropolitan centre of Wood Green, with density, intensity of use, commercial activity and much needed housing suited for the town centre. It is anticipated that this will be the first of several major developments, some of which will be considerably taller and higher density than this, and is of an acceptable and appropriate height and density for its metropolitan centre location.

Its height will drop down to more compatible heights to its existing neighbours in some directions, particularly to the south where it will adjoin the Noel Park Conservation Area, where its architectural character, proportions, materiality and detailing will share some of the richness and liveliness of this well regarded Victorian estate. The PBSA and town centre uses to the north of the site will be of a much more civic, urban character, and will mark the edge of the town centre with a greater step up in height, but is designed to be very elegantly proportioned, and of high quality materials characteristic of the emerging language of major developments in and around Wood Green. The quality of accommodation proposed for both students and general housing, is always good and often excellent.

The project has been reviewed a number of times by the Council's Quality Review Panel (QRP), which eventually supported the proposals. A number of concerns and suggestions of both the QRP and officers have been addressed successfully through the pre-application process, including subsequent to the final RP review. These include support for the height and massing, as well as concerns that have been comprehensively addressed on day and sunlight to proposed and existing neighbouring accommodation and spaces, as well as designs of entrances, circulation and materiality. As such, the proposals can be considered very well designed and promise to be a high quality scheme.

Context, & Structure of the Application

1. The site is located in the centre of the borough, on the edge of the Metropolitan Centre of Wood Green, which is the main town centre of the Borough and one of the most vibrant commercial centres in North London. It is a very short distance from Wood Green Underground Station. Lordship Lane is one of the main streets connecting Wood Green with Tottenham to the east, and the site is on the south side of the street. The site currently contains a large floorplate, single storey commercial building containing a Mecca Bingo entertainment business, fronting Lordship Lane, with large areas of surface parking to its west and south covering the rest of the site.
2. To its west, the site borders the side of Omnibus House, a fairly recent flatted block of six to eight storeys, containing a commercial gym on the ground floor, parking underneath and residential flats above. Windows and a small first floor podium garden face the site, with their mutual boundary running diagonally from Lordship Lane to Redvers Road, a smaller street to its west, so that the south-western corner of this application site also touches Redvers Road. A standard prefabricated substation in galvanised steel fencing also faces Redvers Road between this site and Omnibus House, which has a short ramp to its basement parking at its southern end, off Redvers Road.
3. The Western half of the southern boundary of the site is formed by Wellesley Road, a short cul-de-sac that ends with an entrance to the car park on this application site. The south side of Wellesley Road contains a terrace of recent, white rendered two and three storey town houses. Beyond the end of Wellesley Road, the site extends further south to the brick wall of back gardens to two storey terraced houses on Moselle Avenue to the south. This boundary is also the northern boundary of the Noel Park Estate, a late nineteenth century philanthropic dwellings company estate that is also a Conservation Area of the same name.
4. To the east the site backs onto the back of the Vincent Square Estate, a 1950s council housing estate of one four storey and three three storey flatted blocks, the four storey block fronting Lordship Lane behind an attractively landscaped garden, The other three forming a quadrangle garden open to Vincent Road to its east, with an estate access road and residents parking running around, including along the boundary of the application site, which is separated by a tall brick wall. The site slopes from north (higher) to south, with the Lordship Lane frontage being about 2.9m higher than Wellesley Road.
5. There are two and three storey Victorian and Edwardian terraced and semi-detached houses, with short front gardens, along the north side of Lordship Lane facing the site, but this is a busy street with heavy vehicular and pedestrian traffic, frequent buses including busy bus stops opposite the site, and rapidly becomes a retail fronted town centre street just west of Omnibus House, with the junction of Wood Green High Road, where Wood Green Tube Station is sited, just 180m to the west. West of Redvers Road, on the south side of Lordship Lane, The Vue Cinema site, which also contains several large retail, eating and drinking venues, faces a wide and very busy public plaza onto Wood Green High Road, but presenting a blank, inactive face to its other three sides, onto Lordship Lane, Redvers Road and to its south, Buller Road. Nevertheless, this site is also considered likely to be redeveloped in the short term (see para. 13 below).
6. The large number of very frequent bus routes serving Wood Green include several terminating there, that generally turn around, and when required, park up, on Buller and Redvers Road, further contributing along with the blank frontages of the Vue Cinema block, to these parts of these streets having an alienating character to pedestrians. However, fairly recent houses on the south side of Buller Road and west side of Redvers Road south of Buller Road, similar to those on the south side of Wellesley Road, are more pedestrian friendly, and make a good potential connection from the site into the residential hinterland of the Noel Park Estate to the south. Noel Park itself is characterised by long terraces of two and three storey, red bricked houses in an attractive, Arts and Crafts influenced designs, characterised by striking gables and superbly detailed decorative brickwork.
7. The wider context includes commercial buildings forming vibrant continuous retail frontage along Wood Green High Road, three to five storeys immediately west and south of Vue Cinema, rising to eight to ten storeys at The Mall. As the High Road rises to the north of the Lordship Lane, there is a cluster of seven to ten storey office buildings, along with a large bus depot. The wider context north of Lordship Lane includes streets of two and three storey terraced houses north of

Lordship Lane, of a similar scale to Noel Park to the south, but less consistent, with occasional taller buildings. Along Lordship Lane a short distance to the east, sit the monumental, approximately six storey Wood Green Crown Court.

Planning Policy Context

8. The whole of the site forms the whole of a Site Allocation in both the adopted Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD; adopted July 2017), and the last draft Wood Green Area Action Plan DPD (AAP; preferred option consultation draft, February 2018). It is expected that the borough's new Local Plan will retain and further develop a stand-alone site allocation for this site; if this application had not come forward, most likely by updating the more recent AAP site allocation. Both are known as "Mecca Bingo" & are labelled SA9 in the Site Allocations DPD & WG SA6 in the Wood Green AAP.
9. The adopted 2017 site allocation reads:
Redevelopment of bingo hall for town centre uses with residential above.
The AAP adds the words "*and employment uses*" between "*residential*" and "*above*".
10. Site Requirements in the adopted allocation comprise; no buildings needing to be retained, the alignment of Wellesley Road extended, with townhouses on the southern side of the road, the culvert of the Moselle along the south edge of the site should be investigated, and potential deculverting facilitated, the site should preserve the setting of the adjoining Noel Park conservation area and its significance, and to have regard to the opportunity to deliver the objectives of the Thames River Basin Plan, in accordance with Regulation 17 of the Water Environment Regulations 2013. The draft AAP added requirements that Wellesley Road provide servicing access for the site, a mix of residential and employment above ground floor, new employment floorspace either Grade A office or co-working SME office.
11. Development Guidelines include; heights in the south of the site should be respectful of the existing properties on Moselle Avenue, development should front onto Lordship Lane, with heights rising from east to west to match the buildings on either side, development should demonstrate no adverse impact on the adjacent residential properties, parking should be minimised on this site due to the excellent local public transport connections, potential for being part of a decentralised energy network, understand potential contamination. The draft AAP added guidance that the site is within an area considered to be generally less suitable for family housing.
12. The only other policy context on the site itself are that it is included in the Wood Green Metropolitan Town Centre, Wood Green Growth Area, and Wood Green / Haringey Heartlands Potential Location Suitable for Tall Buildings (Development Management DPD policy DM6, adopted July 2017). However, these are significant planning designations, signalling a recognition that the site is one of several expected to be developed at greater height and density than its existing condition, as part of an expectation that considerable growth of both housing and employment can be accommodated in such sustainable locations with ready access to vibrant town centre facilities and excellent public transport connections. Nevertheless, the site is also crossed by one of Haringey's Locally Significant Views (policy DM5), View 19, Lordship Lane at Bruce Castle - - - > Alexandra Palace, that places a ceiling on possible height, to be determined by testing of the proposal in modelled views.
13. However, bordering and nearby there are several others, including the Secondary Retail Frontage along Lordship Lane, ending at the eastern edge of the Vue Cinema site, the northern boundary of the Noel Park Conservation Area on the southern boundary of the site, which is also a designated Blue Ribbon due to the culverted River Moselle running under this boundary. The Vue Cinema Site is allocated in the draft Wood Green AAP but not in the adopted Site Allocations DPD, but this is indicative that plans have more recently come forward to consider its development for a more high-density town centre development. There are also development plans for the site allocations on the north-west corner of the Wood Green High Road / Lordship Lane / Station Road crossroads, likely to include one or more very tall (30 storeys+) building(s). This further indicates the changing character of this application site and its context, with the Metropolitan Town Centre, one of only a small number across London, expected to accommodate a significant part of London's housing and employment growth.

Masterplan, Street Layout & Landscaping

14. The proposals are to erect a large Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) building on effectively, the northern half of the site, with town centre employment/commercial uses on the Lordship Lane ground floor frontage. It will be separated from Omnibus House by a new triangular public pocket park, that also provides a new public north-south route along the western front of the PBSA, where the main student's entrance will be. On the southern part of the site, Wellesley Road will be extended east, into the site, lined with new residential blocks on both sides, and connected to the north-south route through the park.
15. The extended Wellesley Road and new north-south public path through the park will extend the public street network, providing welcome new linkages and a more pedestrian friendly walking route than the northern part of Redvers Road. This should ensure the residential part of the proposed development will be well integrated into the neighbouring residential hinterland, as well as having good access to the town centre and public transport interchange. The good, well planned street links should also ensure that the new pocket park will be easily accessible to both the residential hinterland and town centre visitors, both of which, despite their many qualities, are both lacking in sufficient landscaped public space.
16. Wellesley Road will terminate in a dead end, not continuing eastwards, where it would have to link into the currently private estate roads of the Vincent Square Estate if it were to be a through route. Instead, it terminates in a second small pocket landscaped space, incorporating space for vehicles to turn as well as clearly separated landscaped spaces for amenity and children's play. Although in principle a through route would be preferable, it will only have a very short dead-end, beyond the link through the pocket park to Lordship Lane, and the intensity of landscaping with which it is designed should give it the character of a court rather than a street.
17. The Pocket Park will be the greatest contribution the scheme makes to the public good, as well as filling a significant part of the need for breathing space, recreation, some play space, significant biodiversity and pleasure for the development.
18. In addition to the pocket park, the residential streets to the south of the site are also to be lushly landscaped and designed to not just act as streets for access of both vehicles and pedestrians but also as amenity and playspace. These are carefully separated in a detailed landscape design that In further animation of the street and to increase privacy, ground floor flats and maisonettes of the flatted blocks and the terraced houses in the development will have short landscaped front gardens. In addition the townhouses will have private back gardens, backing onto private sides of the neighbouring housing and over the culverted Moselle, adding to amenity and connecting the intended biodiversity corridor along the culverted river, and the flatted blocks will have private communal podium gardens to their rears, providing a small breathing space and doorstep play.
19. There is no requirement for the site to be masterplanned or to accommodate the needs of any neighbouring site, but the proposed street layout and public landscaping should provide a good integration of the development into its surroundings.

Height, including Tall Buildings

20. The proposals include an ambitious increase in height over the two and three storey neighbours to the immediate north, east and south. To the Lordship Lane frontage, the proposed PBSA block is of nine storeys, with a recessed tenth floor bulled in about 1.5m from the northern and western edge and considerably more from the eastern edge and north-eastern corner. The significant ground slope is mostly accommodated in the PBSA block, where the ground floor of the student entrance and amenities that occupy the middle of the block will have a ground floor level over 2m below the ground floor level of the commercial units on Lordship Lane, with two floors of residential and ancillary or service accommodation fitting into the same height as the high-ceilinged student amenity spaces.
21. The two flatted residential blocks, Block B on the south side of the pocket park, and Block C south of the PBSA block, are of six storeys, with Block B stepping down to five storeys at its western end at the corner of Wellesley Road with Redvers Road. In Block C the top floor is slightly set back and then pitches further back, save for three slightly projecting gabled bays on the Wellesley Road elevation. The two remaining residential blocks, at the western end and southern side of Wellesley Road, are three storey town houses.

22. The town houses match the height of the existing town houses on Wellesley Road and of the flats in Vincent Square to the east, whilst being a very modest single-storey increase over the two storey terrace that backs onto their southern boundary. This is a wholly acceptable, very cautious height, reflecting more that three-storeys being the preferred maximum for single family dwellings. However, as the part of the proposed development closest to existing neighbouring houses with private back gardens, including those in the Conservation Area, it is good that their height relationship is so compatible to cause no concerns.
23. The flatted blocks, B and C, approximately match the height of the lower southern end of Omnibus Court, again a highly compatible relationship. They will represent a considerable height increase over the three storey terraced town houses across Wellesley Road. They will therefore represent a confident step up in height, with the street marking the boundary between the edge of the higher density town centre of Wood Green and the lower rise residential hinterland to the south and east. In terms of amenity impacts this is aided by the taller flats here being to the north of the lower houses, and being street facing elevations holding fewer privacy concerns than rear garden elevations would. At six storeys, the flatted blocks would not be considered *tall buildings*, but *mid-rise*, or *mansion blocks*.
24. The PBSA block is either just below or just above the Haringey Local Plan adopted definition of a *tall building*, depending on whether it is considered to be of nine or ten storeys (both could be argued), but more recent government guidance requires that the definition of tall buildings be set at over six storeys. It also meets the Haringey definition of a tall building by being a significant step up in height from its immediate neighbours. Nevertheless, it is within an area recognised as suitable for tall buildings within Haringey's adopted Local Plan, and Haringey officers are satisfied that the height proposed is justified and has demonstrated compliance with the criteria for tall buildings in the council's adopted Local Plan, as explained in detail in the paragraph 26.
25. It should also be noted that the eastern side of the PBSA block drops a floor at each corner (to eight storeys) and a further floor for the longer length of its middle (to seven storeys), in a gesture towards transition to the lower height of the existing Vincent Square to the east and the six storey proposed Block C to the south, and the very subsidiary character of this façade, being onto a footpath and private estate access road.
26. Considering each criterion from Haringey's tall building policy is set in SP11 of our Strategic Policies DPD (adopted 2013 (with alterations 2017) and DM6 of our Development Management DPD (adopted 2017), skipping the 3rd & 4th bullets from the Strategic Policies, that reference the other document and the document used in preparing DM6:
 - The site is within the areas of the draft Wood Green AAP, which supports the principle of taller buildings in this location. The draft AAP, which has undergone two rounds of public consultation and is being incorporated into Haringey's emerging new Local Plan (expected to be consulted on later this year), recognises the key crossroads of Wood Green High Road with Lordship Lane / Station Road as one of four suitable locations for a cluster of tall buildings, with the large cluster of allocated sites on the north-west corner, which are outside of protected view corridors and large enough to establish their own context, suited to one to three tall buildings of no height limit. It then considers the rest of that cluster of sites, to the north and west, and the smaller cluster of sites on the south-eastern corner of the crossroads comprising the Vue Cinema site and this application site, being suitable for gradually less tall development, diminishing to six to ten storeys as typical of *mansion blocks* rather than *point blocks*. The nine to ten storey PBSA block in this development can be considered to comply with that strategic vision;
 - The council prepared a borough-wide Urban Characterisation Study in 2016, which supported tall buildings in this location, as part of and originating the four-cluster model of tall building clusters across Wood Green;
 - High quality design especially of public realm is promised in these proposals, including the streetscape and most importantly the pocket park. Heritage assets and their settings are covered by the Conservation Officer's comments;
 - This proposed PBSA block will be capable of being considered "Landmarks" by being wayfinders or markers within the masterplan, marking the station and closing vistas of the

east-west streets, the main north-south street, marking the new development with its new park from the south, west and east, and marking White Hart Lane station from the north;

- They should also be capable of being considered a “Landmark” within the local context of views along Lordship Lane east and west and from its immediate context on Wellesley and Redvers Roads just to the south, marking the edge of the town centre. This design officer also considers the design of the proposed PBSA building can be considered elegant, well proportioned and visually interesting when viewed from any direction;
- Consideration of impact on ecology and microclimate encompasses daylight, sunlight and wind, examined in detail below. Impact on ecology could also include impact on the flight of birds and other flying creatures, but this is only likely to be relevant adjacent to open countryside, a large open space or open waterway, which is not the case with this site;
- The proposed taller PBSA building is not and will not in future be close enough to any other tall or taller buildings, such that it is unlikely to ever form such a tight cluster that they would visually coalesce.

Form, Elevational Composition and Materiality

27. The architectural design of the proposals can be considered appropriate and well composed, in form, elevational composition and materiality. In form, the PBSA block will have a civic, urban character, as a monumental, rectilinear, courtyard block of rhythmic, gridded facades expressed base, middle and top, chamfered corners, and clarity of expression of front and back. The large faceted north-western corner expresses the primacy of this corner, forming the junction of the primary street of Lordship Lane with the new north-south connecting path through the new pocket park, and entrances are located and clearly indicated in the architecture on the north (commercial units) and western (student housing) facades, with pretty much the whole of the ground floor being lofty, predominantly glazed and animated shopfront design.
28. The eastern side of the PBSA block is treated as a very subsidiary façade, with one and two fewer floors, a somewhat quieter grid, a less active base, albeit still animated with doors to some of the larger duplex student flats, and a door and generous glazing onto the back of the student communal amenity complex, but will not be considered a formal access, and the facet at the north-eastern corner of the block will be much smaller than that at the north-western corner, expressing its lesser significance. But this “civic” form and elevational composition is considered to relate to other recent higher density developments in the “Heartlands” area of Wood Green and to be eminently suited to future higher density developments the Council would wish to see in the centre.
29. The central courtyard of the PBSA block forms the next-most-significant formal space of the PBSA Block, with the tiered courtyard forming a wide, spacious central podium garden with a smaller ground floor light-well at its centre. Elevations to the podium are simple grids of windows, with the emphasis placed wholly on the landscape. Similarly, the southern side of the PBSA block is treated as a rear, onto a utilitarian private courtyard, not expected to be seen from anywhere within the public realm. The block form, whilst describable simplistically as a courtyard block, is inflected at its southern end, with the centre of that side of the block recessed behind a small podium, that meshes with the C-block plan form of the flatted Block C to form a private inner block podium courtyard.
30. Proposed materials for the main outer facades of the PBSA Block (west, north & east) comprise a simple palette of a main red brick for most of the elevations, a contrasting white brick used for the base, details around special feature windows, cills generally, and emphasised upper (second-top) floor, and a “muted gold” metal to windows and doors, spandrels and other panels and most of the set-back top-most floor. The red brick contrasting with white features references many buildings along Lordship Lane with white rendered or painted stone cills, lintels, door surrounds and bay windows, as well as the architects preferred contemporary references for rhythm and scale.
31. Block C itself completes the urban block with the PBSA Block, and as such can be said to follow its urban form, in contrast with the other residential blocks; Block B, between the pocket park and streets to its south and west being more a free-standing object or pavilion type of block, and the terraced houses, grouped as Block D in the applicants descriptions, following the terraced

houses forms of much of their existing surroundings. At the same time, the three residential blocks share an architectural language of elevational composition, related more to referencing the heritage context of the neighbouring Noel Park Estate, setting up a dialogue of contrast with the PBSA Block and other buildings within Wood Green Town Centre.

32. The common language of the elevational composition of the flatted blocks and town houses uses predominantly bricks, in two contrasting but complementary red colours, with a variety of different decorative treatments to support and enliven the design and modelling of the blocks. These materials and this proportioning and decoration, specifically reference the houses of the neighbouring Noel Park Estate, a notable and very attractive Victorian philanthropic dwellings company estate that is also designated a Conservation Area. Window proportions, treatment of the bases of buildings with rustication and darker bricks, chevron and diagonal patterns in parapets and gables, including use of green glazed bricks all echo specific features and general character traits of the neighbouring historic estate and increase the proposed development's compatibility with and appeal to its existing neighbour's character.

Residential Quality (Aspect, Daylight, and Sunlight)

33. The quality of accommodation within the Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) is demonstrated by the applicants to be comparable with the best recent PBSA build elsewhere in London, providing small, but spacious enough private student rooms, Shared communal indoor amenity facilities are concentrated on the ground floor and comprise an impressive and reasonably generous suite of fitness and leisure facilities, comparable with other good quality purpose built student housing built recently. The applicants have demonstrated that it is not practical to respond to Haringey's Quality Review Panel (QRP) request that
34. The quality of accommodation of the proposed residential blocks and houses is evidently high. As is to be routinely expected, all room and flat sizes meet or exceed statutory minima and are provided with plentiful private external amenity space. Ground floor flats have their own front doors off small front gardens providing defensible space and privacy to ground floor windows. It will be important, though, that the residential quality of the proposed flats, maisonettes, houses, streets, and spaces are protected in implementation, preferably by retaining the current architects and landscape architects.
35. The applicants provided Daylight and Sunlight Reports on levels within their development and the effect of their proposals on relevant neighbouring buildings, prepared broadly in accordance with council policy following the methods explained in the Building Research Establishment's publication "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice" (3rd Edition, Littlefair, 2022), known as "The BRE Guide".
36. The assessment methodology for the proposed development is convincing, but that on existing residential neighbours take an unusual line of comparing daylight levels achieved to those considered acceptable in the neighbouring Omnibus House development. This was approved on appeal (APP/YS420/A/OS/1182583 [not found on the Planning Inspectorate web site!], 1188340 [also not found!] & 1198147 [also not found!]) at which the inspector for that appeal allowed much lower daylight levels, considering it's (and this application site's) town centre location and primary objective of maximising housing density, can be considered an example of the special circumstances noted in the BRE Guide as a reason to be flexible in application of its standards.
37. The BRE Guide recommends a 27% Vertical Sky Component (VSC) as the standard for a window providing good daylight, but states that it is written with low density, suburban patterns of development in mind, and in the case of higher density developments in more urban locations, its standards should not be slavishly applied. The Mayor of London's Housing SPG acknowledges VSC values in excess of 20% are considered as reasonably good, and that VSC values in the mid-teens (i.e.15%+) are deemed acceptable; paragraph 2.3.29 of the GLA Housing SPD supports this view as it acknowledges that natural light can be restricted in densely developed parts of the city. The applicants cite the daylight levels achieved on the lower floors of the west side of Omnibus House (facing the Vue Cinema) of 10%+ (not their windows onto recessed balconies, which are lower), and describe VSCs of 5 – 15% as "low daylight levels commensurate with an urban locale". Through their report's subsequent assessment of their impact on neighbours, their assessment of results is placed in context with those low levels commensurate with an urban locale at Omnibus House.

38. Their assessment finds that most of the proposed general needs housing and a reasonable amount of the student housing can achieve good levels of daylight and sunlight to most floors, but that it will be more difficult to achieve in many of the lower floors of the student housing. Daylight assessment for the student housing show that 62% of the 658 rooms would receive at least the levels of daylight recommended in the BRE Guide for living-dining-kitchens (200lux Median Daylight Illuminance or MDI, or 150lux for living rooms or studios), with a further 87 meeting the standard for bedrooms (100lux), which in the past has been the standard accepted for all student housing, given the availability of other, well-lit communal amenity rooms and spaces, meaning 75% meet that standard. 51% would receive the BRE recommended sunlight (1.5 hours at the spring or autumn equinox). The majority of the rooms not meeting the daylight and/or sunlight targets are in the courtyard, where window sizes are maximised, and this can be considered a reasonable level of daylight and sunlight to the student housing.
39. As for the general needs housing, 54% of the habitable rooms (60% of living rooms) in the flats in Blocks B and C meet the BRE Guide standard for their room type (200lux for living-dining-kitchens, 150lux for living rooms, 100lux for bedrooms), whilst a further 11 living-dining-kitchens would meet the standard for living rooms. Many of the rooms that do not meet the standard have balconies or access decks above their windows, which reduce daylight but provide access and dual aspect with cross ventilation, or, more advantageously to residents, private outdoor amenity space. These can be considered reasonably good results given the urban setting. For sunlight, 61 of 70 relevant rooms (87%) achieve the recommended levels, a very good result, and the townhouses in Block D achieve excellent results for both day and sun light, 80% getting sufficient daylight (the majority that do not being kitchens), and all relevant rooms receiving enough sunlight.
40. For open spaces within the development, their assessment finds that the fully publicly accessible Pocket Park and the amenity spaces within and off the residential street (extending Wellesley Road) between Blocks C & D would all receive plentiful sunlight. The more internal spaces within the courtyard of the purpose-built student housing and the podium communal private gardens to Blocks B and C do not receive sufficient sunlight, although the podium to Block B does receive a fair amount of sunlight and all will receive a little, at least at selected times of the summer. Given that all residents will have the option of access to sunny outdoor amenity space or a more private but less sunny space, and the urban character of the location, this can be considered good.
41. The assessment on neighbours finds a range of effects, with most existing residential neighbours not being adversely affected or only to a minor degree, but some close neighbours being significantly affected. Daylight is assessed for 595 windows serving 310 rooms in 49 surrounding residential properties, a good and comprehensive range of potentially affected neighbouring dwellings. The most dramatically affected are the ground floor windows of 692 – 702 Lordship Lane, the ground & some 1st floor windows of 3-13 Wellesley Road, all the west facing windows of 17 – 22 Vincent Square and several windows on the east side of Omnibus House. These all directly face and are in close proximity to this proposed development, and would see VSC reduced down to, but never below the applicants self-defined “daylight levels commensurate with an urban locale” (i.e. 5-15%).
42. Nevertheless, many of these windows would receive higher daylight, and many, including all those on Lordship Lane, Wellesley Road and in Vincent Square are onto rooms in dual aspect dwellings who’s other aspect will be unaffected by this proposed development. It is also worth noting that, at present, most of the neighbours benefit from the site being unusually under developed, with a low rise warehouse style Mecca Bingo building and extensive surface car parking on the site at present, whilst the proposed development will present a much more attractive outlook to them, especially to the flats in Omnibus House, that will look onto the new pocket park. Other neighbouring houses and flats, including those on Moselle Avenue backing onto the site, those on Redvers Road facing the site and the majority of the flats in Vincent Square, will retain good levels of daylight.
43. In contrast to the mixed results on daylight to neighbours, the proposals are found to have virtually no detrimental effect on sunlight to relevant habitable rooms in neighbouring existing development, in accordance with the BRE Guide. Many existing neighbours are south of the development, and therefore unaffected, or like the houses on the north side of Lordship Lane have bay windows which give them angled views retaining the sun. Some windows defined as relevant in the BRE Guide, in Omnibus House and Vincent Square, would receive a noticeable

detrimental loss of sunlight, but these are all within recessed balconies and are in rooms well sun lit by other windows.

44. The proposals would also not have a detrimental effect on any neighbouring existing amenity spaces. The central square in the Vincent Square estate and the podium garden in Omnibus House would only lose a very small amount of sunlight, whilst the rooftop terrace to Omnibus House and the communal garden behind the Wellesley Road houses would see no loss of sunlight.
45. Overall, although there would be some significant losses of daylight to some windows in some neighbouring existing dwellings, there are mitigating factors in the affected dwellings either having dual aspect with other unaffected rooms, or a much improved outlook, as well as retaining good access to sunlight in both rooms and outdoor spaces. This is notwithstanding the strong argument that the site is currently significantly under-developed for a highly urban site in a metropolitan centre planned for significant growth and greater density, as well as the applicants more tendentious argument, which still has some merit, that the Omnibus House development itself was permitted with worse sun and daylight.

Richard Truscott

Urban Design Officer

21/06/2024