



Unlocking potential for a better built environment

DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT

IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING
PROPERTIES REPORT

Thamesfield Retirement Village

Retirement Villages Group (RVG)

01 September 2025

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DISCLAIMER:

N.B This report has been prepared for Retirement Villages Group (RVG) by GIA as their appointed Daylight & Sunlight consultants. This report is intended solely for Retirement Villages Group (RVG) and may contain confidential information. No part or whole of its contents may be disclosed to or relied upon by any Third Parties without the express written consent of GIA. It is accurate as at the time of publication and based upon the information we have been provided with as set out in the report. It does not take into account changes that have taken place since the report was written nor does it take into account private information on internal layouts and room uses of adjoining properties unless this information is publicly available.



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GIA have assessed the Design Engine scheme at the Thamesfield Retirement Village, Henley-on-Thames to understand the potential changes in light to the relevant sensitive receptors.

- 1.1 GIA have been instructed by Retirement Villages Group to advise on impacts to daylight and sunlight in relation to the established and operational Thamesfield Integrated Retirement Community in the village of Remenham.
- 1.2 The Proposed Development is to include part demolition of an existing building and replacement with a three-storey extension to provide extra-care units ("The Proposed Development").
- 1.3 GIA have undertaken technical assessments on daylight and sunlight to understand the potential effect of the development on the amenity of the relevant neighbouring receptors.
- 1.4 The technical analysis has been considered by reference to the criteria and methodology within the Building Research Establishment (BRE) Guidance (BR209, 2022) which when published, recognised that it *"is advisory and the numerical target values within it may be varied to meet the needs of the development and its location"*¹.
- 1.5 Upon successful completion of the Proposed Development, four of the six properties assessed will meet the national numerical values identified in the BRE Guidance for daylight and sunlight.
- 1.6 For daylight, 55/64 (86%) of windows will meet the BRE's recommendations for Vertical Sky Component ("VSC"), whilst 29/30 (97%) of rooms will meet BRE guidance for No Sky Line ("NSL").
- 1.7 GIA considers there to be 19 windows across the four of the existing properties which face within 90° due south of the Site relevant for sunlight assessment. When assessed against Annual Probable Sunlight Hours ("APSH") methodology, 18/19 (95%) windows demonstrate BRE compliance.
- 1.8 The Proposed Development shows a high level of compliance against the BRE's daylight and sunlight tests. Where transgressions of the BRE Guidelines occur, it is in very isolated and constrained locations and entirely in line with what can be expected when delivering new development.
- 1.9 The main focus of the impacts associated with the Proposed Development are to the existing Thamesfield Retirement Village property, whereby the impacted windows are oriented directly into a courtyard, which makes achieving BRE recommended levels of light challenging in the proposed conditions. In this situation, dual aspect rooms have allowed for light to enter the rooms from alternative façades and therefore continues to provide the occupants with sufficient daylight amenity.
- 1.10 Having considered the relevant local policies and the Governments recognition for increased flexibility on daylight and sunlight matters, it is our view that the isolated daylight and sunlight impacts rising from the proposal are not detrimentally impacting the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, and therefore should be considered acceptable in context.
- 1.11 This report is supported by several documents, drawings and results which are all enclosed within the Appendices as listed on the Contents Page. All assumptions used in collating this report can be found in Appendix 01.

1 Littlefair, P. (2022). Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice. Hertfordshire: HIS BRE Press, p 85 para F1

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2 THE SITE & PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

GIA have been instructed to review and advise on the daylight and sunlight impacts associated with the implementation of the Proposed Development at Thamesfield Retirement Village, Henley-on-Thames.

THE SITE

- 2.1 The application Site is located within the village of Remenham, directly opposite Henley-on-Thames. The site is bordered by the River Thames to the south west, and Wargrave Road to the north east.
- 2.2 Thamesfield is an established and operational Integrated Retirement Community (IRC) providing extra care retirement accommodation and associated communal facilities. The Site currently comprises 37 extra care units (use class C2).
- 2.3 A detailed description of the Site and surrounding area is provided within the Design & Access Statement and not repeated herein.
- 2.4 Figure 01 below illustrates the Site in the existing scenario.



Figure 01: 3D model of the site and Existing Property

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.5 The Design Engine Architects proposal seeks “Part demolition of existing building and replacement with a three-storey extension to provide extra-care units (Use Class C2), with associated soft and hard landscaping works; provision of additional vehicle parking, bin stores and ancillary structures; and alterations to existing basement”.

2.6 Figure 02 below illustrates the Site in the proposed scenario.



Figure 02: 3D Perspective View of the Proposed Scheme

3 POLICY & GUIDANCE

3.1 Below we have detailed sections from the following documents as they are, in our opinion, the most pertinent in relation to daylight and sunlight matters and how we have approached the effects of the Proposed Development on the relevant neighbouring properties:

- National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023);
- Planning Practice Guidance (July 2019);
- Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (January 2010); and
- Building Research Establishment Guidelines 2022.

3.2 The key headlines from each of the documents can be summarised as follows:

- 1 The NPPF highlights the Government's recognition that increased flexibility is required on daylight and sunlight in response to the requirement for higher density development. By stating that *"when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards)"*¹ (our emphasis).
- 2 The PPG outlines that all developments should *"maintain acceptable living standards"* and that assessing appropriate daylight and sunlight amenity *"will depend to some degree on context"*².
- 3 Policy CP3 – General Principles for development of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (January 2010) states that:

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

a) Are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.

- 4 Finally, the BRE Guidelines 2022 offer a numerical methodology to calculate changes in Daylight condition and are widely used in the industry. The key criteria within the BRE (Vertical Sky Component "VSC", No Sky Line "NSL" and Annual Probable Sunlight Hours "APSH") have been used to understand and compare the existing and retained levels of light once the Proposed Development has been implemented. A summary of the BRE Guidelines 2022 are provided within Appendix 02.

1 MHCLG. (2019). National Planning Policy Framework (2021), p 37, para 125(c)

2 MHCLG. (2021). National Planning Policy Guidance (2021), para 66-007-20190722

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4 DAYLIGHT & SUNLIGHT IMPACTS TO NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES

This section details the daylight and sunlight impacts in relation to the relevant properties neighbouring the Site.

MODELLING

- 4.1 A three-dimensional computer model of the Site and surrounding properties was produced based on a full measured survey undertaken by GIA on the 27th of June 2023. Where available we have included floor plans of the relevant properties and this context model has been used to carry out the technical assessments. All relevant assumptions made in producing this model can be found in Appendix 01.

TWO-STAGE APPROACH

- 4.2 We have considered the relevant neighbouring properties in two stages:

Stage 1 - Is there a strict compliance with the BRE Guidelines?

- We apply the national numerical assessments for daylight and sunlight as outlined in the BRE Guidelines. Where properties, windows and/or rooms meet the recommendations of the BRE Guidelines, these are not discussed further.

Stage 2 - Is there a detrimental impact to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers?

- Where properties, windows and rooms do not meet the recommendations of the BRE Guidelines, we examine wider material considerations to determine whether there is a detrimental impact to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

RELEVANT NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES

- 4.3 GIA have identified the following properties as relevant for daylight and sunlight assessment. The location of the below listed properties are identified in Figure 03 overleaf with the associated land use of each property. All results can be found in Appendix 04:
- Thamesfield Retirement Village
 - 1 - 5 Remenham Row
- 4.4 The following properties will meet the numerical recommendations set out within the BRE Guidelines (Stage 1) and are not discussed further:
- 1, 3, 4 and 5 Remenham Row

- 4.5 The remaining properties which do not meet the numerical recommendations set out within the BRE Guidelines are considered in further detail.

- 4.6 To assist the readers understanding of the surrounding properties and window locations, we have produced window maps which are enclosed at Appendix 05 of this report.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

- 4.7 In order to establish whether the Proposed Development will result in unacceptable harm (Stage 2), we have examined and applied the following material considerations (where relevant):
- 1 If there is a loss of light to a window (VSC), but the room has one or more windows, an overall VSC can be derived to consider if the room as a whole would meet the guidelines, in accordance with paragraph 2.2.8 of the BRE Guidelines;
 - 2 If architectural features (e.g. protruding side returns) exist which would restrict daylight or sunlight to rooms lit by windows beside them in accordance with paragraph 2.2.14 of the BRE Guidelines; and
 - 3 Where windows and rooms overlooking the site currently benefit from high levels of daylight and sunlight, some degree of impact must be expected for any meaningful development of the site to come forward.



Figure 03: Sensitive receptors map by use

THAMESFIELD RETIREMENT VILLAGE

- 4.8 The existing Thamesfield Retirement Village is an established and operational IRC, distributed across two blocks of part two-storey and part three-storey residential apartments (see Figure 04).
- 4.9 The existing blocks are within the site boundary and gives the Proposed Development it's name. These blocks will be retained as part of the development and as such are relevant for assessment.
- 4.10 Internal layouts have been acquired from Design Engine Architects and can be found within Appendix 06 of this report. These layouts confirm that a total of nine flats face the site.
- 4.11 Existing buildings on the site which are to be demolished are currently single-storey. Consequently any windows and rooms overlooking the Site will currently benefit from high levels of daylight and sunlight. As such, some degree of impact must be expected if there is an increase in massing beyond what currently exists.

Stage 1 - Is there a strict compliance with the recommendations in the BRE Guidelines?

No. of Windows	No. of Rooms	Compliant for VSC	Compliant for NSL	Compliant for APSH
37	19	28/37 (76%)	19/19 (100%)	8/9 (91%)

- 4.12 When assessed against the VSC methodology for daylight, 28/37 (76%) windows assessed will meet BRE criteria.
- 4.13 When assessed against the NSL methodology for daylight, all rooms assessed will meet BRE criteria.
- 4.14 GIA have considered nine windows within Thamesfield Retirement Village that face within 90° due south of the Site relevant for sunlight assessment. When assessed against APSH sunlight methodology, eight of the nine windows (91%) assessed will satisfy BRE recommendations.



Figure 04: Site plan showing location of Thamesfield Retirement Village

Stage 2 - Is there a detrimental impact to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers?

VSC

- 4.15 The nine windows falling short of guidance for VSC are located across six flats within the Thamesfield Retirement Village. Four of the windows will experience minor VSC alterations between 21%–29% (against a BRE recommendation of 20%) and two windows (in Flat 10 and Flat 6) experience moderate VSC alterations 35% and 31% respectively. The remaining three windows located in Flat 9 will experience VSC alterations in excess of 40%. Flats 6, 9 and 10 are located to the north-east of the Development Site and can be seen in Figure 05 (overleaf).
- 4.16 When considering the supplementary VSC to the room assessment, three of the flats (Flats 6, 17 and 35) will remain BRE compliant for VSC.

APSH

- 4.17 The single window falling short of guidance for sunlight is located in Flat 9 (W14/F01). Annual sunlight levels to the window will reduce to 20% (against a BRE recommendation of 25%) and will remain BRE compliant for winter sunlight. When we consider the change of sunlight to the room, the room will remain BRE compliant for annual and winter sunlight.

Conclusion

- 4.18 In consideration of the above, although the nationally applicable BRE Guidelines are not met in relation to daylight upon nine windows, we do not consider that the daylight amenity of this property would be detrimentally impacted. The NSL daylight test demonstrates that all of the rooms will retain good levels of daylight and will remain BRE compliant.
- 4.19 It is GIAs opinion that the isolated impacts are considered to be within the intention and flexible application of the BRE Guidelines and considered acceptable from a daylight and sunlight perspective.

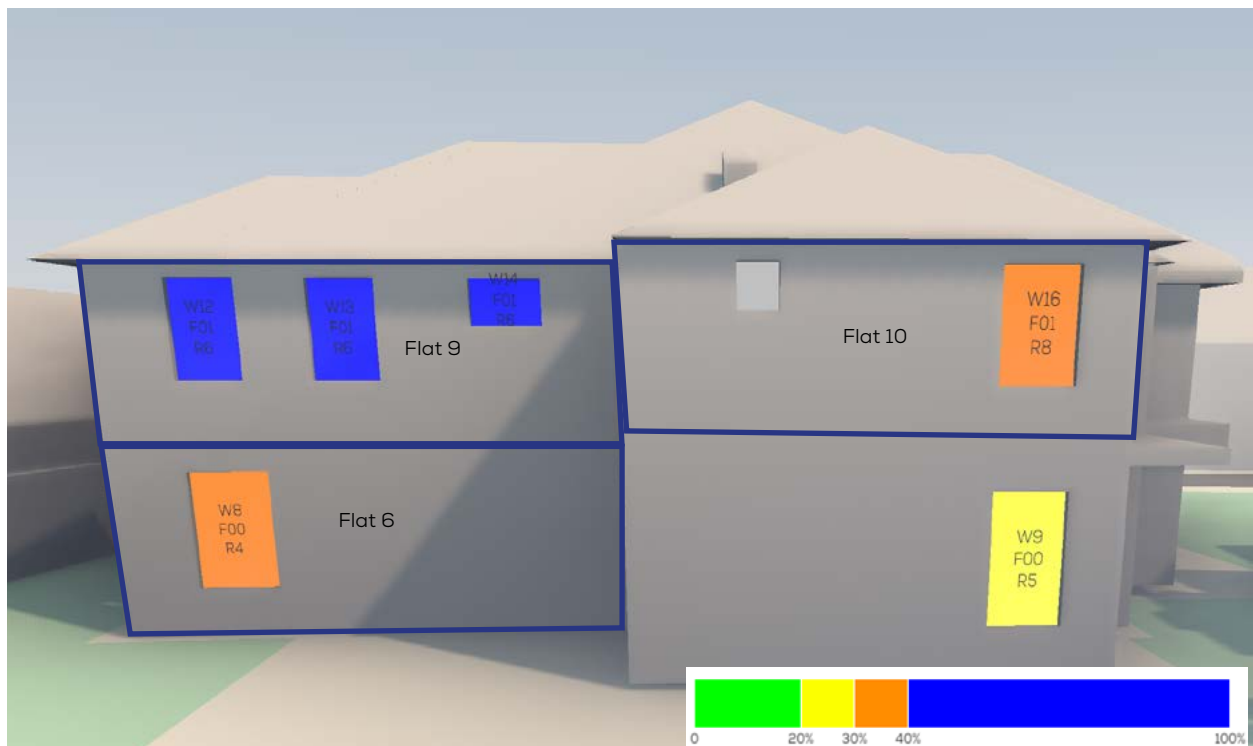


Figure 05: VSC % Change Window Map of Thamesfield Retirement Village

2 REMENHAM ROW

- 4.20 2 Remenham Row is part of a terrace of purpose built assisted living residential homes/apartments accessed via Wargrave Road. This property is located to the north-west of the development (see Figure 06). GIA have been able to obtain floor plans for this property and have incorporated them in our model.
- 4.21 When undertaking our technical analysis, GIA have found there to be four windows serving two rooms relevant for assessment.

Stage 1 - Is there a strict compliance with the recommendations in the BRE Guidelines?

No. of Windows	No. of Rooms	Compliant for VSC	Compliant for NSL	Compliant for APSH
4	2	4/4 (100%)	1/2 (50%)	2/2 (100%)

- 4.22 When assessed against the VSC methodology for daylight, all four windows assessed will meet BRE criteria.
- 4.23 When assessed against the NSL methodology for daylight, one of the two rooms assessed will meet BRE criteria.
- 4.24 GIA have considered two windows within 2 Remenham Row that face within 90° due south of the Site relevant for sunlight assessment. When assessed against APSH sunlight methodology, both windows assessed will satisfy BRE recommendations.



Figure 06: Site plan showing location of 1 Remenham Row.

Stage 2 - Is there a detrimental impact to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers?

NSL

- 4.25 The single room falling short of guidance for NSL has been identified as a ground floor living room (F00/R2) and will experience a minor alteration of 22% (against a BRE recommendation of 20%). The living room will continue to retain a high level of sky visibility of 76%.

Conclusion

- 4.26 It is GIAs opinion that the isolated daylight impact to one room considered to be within the intention and flexible application of the BRE Guidelines and considered acceptable from a daylight and sunlight perspective.

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5 CONCLUSIONS

GIA have undertaken a daylight and sunlight assessment in relation to the Proposed Development at the Thamesfield Retirement Village, Henley-on-Thames. The technical analysis has been undertaken in accordance with the BRE Guidelines.

- 5.1 GIA have completed a comprehensive technical analysis of the daylight and sunlight impacts produced by the Proposed Development at the Thamesfield Retirement Village, Henley-on-Thames.
- 5.2 When constructing buildings, alterations in light to adjoining properties are often unavoidable and the numerical guidance given in the BRE document can be treated flexibly in consideration of site specifics.
- 5.3 Upon successful completion of the Proposed Development, four of the six properties assessed will meet the national numerical values identified in the BRE Guidance for daylight and sunlight.
- 5.4 Our technical analysis demonstrates that the overall compliance rates for the surrounding properties are excellent with 86% for VSC and 97% for NSL (daylight). Where transgressions in daylight occur, most are considered minor in nature or retain daylight levels sufficient in this context.
- 5.5 When assessed against the APSH sunlight methodology, annual sunlight transgressions are isolated to one window. However, when we consider sunlight to the rooms, all rooms will remain BRE compliant against this assessment.
- 5.6 Having considered the relevant local policies and the Governments recognition for increased flexibility on daylight and sunlight matters, it is our view that the isolated daylight and sunlight impacts rising from the proposal are not detrimentally impacting the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, and therefore should be considered acceptable.



What we do:

Building Surveying
Daylight & Sunlight
Light Obstruction Notices
Measured Surveys
Party Wall & Neighbourly Matters
Rights of Light
Solar PV
Wind Analysis

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