

Laura Crawford

From: Carl Shoesmith
Sent: 28 April 2025 13:28
To: Planning
Cc: Matt Grant;
Subject: ROL01680 - 53 Causeway Street affected by development at 57-59 Causeway Street, Portrush, BT56 8AD
Attachments: ROL01680_53 Causeway Street_Daylight and Sunlight_28.04.2025.pdf

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached a letter for your consideration in respect of the proposed development at 57-59 Causeway Street and its impact upon 53 Causeway Street, BT56 8AD.

Kind regards,
Carl

Carl Shoesmith
Senior Surveyor
Rights of Light



Rights of Light \ Party Wall \ Building Surveying
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Ref: ROL01680

28 April 2025

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Local Planning Office
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
Coleraine
BT52 1EY

By email: planning@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT 57-59 CAUSEWAY STREET, PORTRUSH, AND ITS IMPACT UPON 53 CAUSEWAY STREET, BT56 8AD – DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT

We write in relation to the recent planning application at 57-59 Causeway Street, Portrush, BT56 8AD, and the potential impact of the proposed development on the daylight and sunlight availability to our client's adjacent property at 53 Causeway Street, BT56 8AD.

Our client has raised concerns regarding the effect of the proposed development on the daylight and sunlight levels received by their property. Furthermore, given the scale of the development and its proximity to the boundary, our client is also concerned about the loss of sunlight to their rear garden.

It is our understanding that the planning application, listed under application number LA01/2022/0791/F, entails the demolition of the two terraced properties on the site and the redevelopment of the site to comprise 6 no. apartments, along with associated landscaping and ancillary works.

Anstey Horne has reviewed the relevant planning documentation associated with the application available on Northern Ireland's Public Planning Register. This includes the submitted Daylight and Sunlight Report which has been prepared in support of the application by the applicant's appointed daylight and sunlight consultant, dated 6 March 2025.

Further to our review of the relevant documentation, we set out below the following reasons for objecting to the proposed development in accordance with the relevant planning policy and guidance.

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Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS, 2015)

PPS7 (Addendum): Quality Residential Environments

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) set out the policies of the Department of the Environment on particular aspects of land-use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Their contents will be taken into account in preparing development plans and are also material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

This PPS sets out the Department's planning policies for achieving quality in new residential development and advises on the treatment of this issue in development plans. It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and the Quality Initiative.

Policy QD1 'Quality in New Residential Development' states the following:

"Planning permission will only be granted for new residential development where it is demonstrated that the proposal will create a quality and sustainable residential environment. The design and layout of residential development should be based on an overall design concept that draws upon the positive aspects of the character and appearance of the surrounding area."

"In established residential areas proposals for housing development will not be permitted where they would result in unacceptable damage to the local character, environmental quality or residential amenity of these areas."

"All proposals for residential development will be expected to conform to all of the following criteria:

...(h) the design and layout will not create conflict with adjacent land uses and there is no unacceptable adverse effect on existing or proposed properties in terms of overlooking, loss of light, overshadowing, noise or other disturbance"

Under 'Privacy' Paragraph 4.38 states:

"The protection of the privacy of the occupants of residential properties is an important element of the quality of a residential environment. It is a particularly important consideration where new development is proposed adjacent to existing properties. Proposals should therefore seek to provide reasonable space between buildings in order to minimise overlooking. This will also assist in providing acceptable levels of daylight to properties."

BRE Guidelines

The BRE Guidelines, as set out in the *BRE Report 209: Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice* (2022), provide a nationally recognised framework for assessing the impact of new developments on natural light levels to surrounding properties. This document is widely recognised by Local Planning Authorities as one of the key points of reference for assessing the impact of proposed developments on natural light levels to surrounding properties.

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The Guidelines set out a range of technical assessments to ensure that new developments do not unduly harm the residential amenity of existing occupiers through significant reductions in natural light.

The BRE provides three tests for daylight and sunlight to existing dwellings, and a further test regarding sunlight to existing outdoor amenity areas. The tests as identified by the BRE are as follows:

1. **VSC (Vertical Sky Component)** daylight test – a measure of direct sky visible at the centre of a window. VSC may be adversely affected if the retained value is less than 27% in absolute terms and is less than 0.8 times its former value.
2. **NSL/DD (No Sky Line / Daylight Distribution)** daylight test – a measure of direct sky visible within a room at desktop height. NSL/DD may be adversely affected if the retained value is less than 0.8 times its former.
3. **APSH (Annual Probable Sunlight Hours)** sunlight test – a measure of probable direct sunlight visible at the centre of a window and within a room. APSH may be adversely affected if: less than 25% APSH is retained annually, with less than 5% retained during the winter months (September to March); and it is reduced to less than 0.8 times its former value; and includes a loss of APSH over the whole year greater than 4% in real terms.
4. **Sun Hours On Ground (SHOG)** overshadowing test – a measure of direct sunlight visible at ground level to an amenity space on 21 March (spring equinox). SHOG may be adversely affected if: less than 50% of total area receives 2hrs of direct sun; and is reduced to less than 0.8 times its former value.

Daylight and Sunlight

A review of the Daylight and Sunlight Report prepared by the applicant's appointed daylight and sunlight consultant confirms that three of the four relevant tests outlined above have been undertaken – namely the VSC and NSL/DD daylight tests, and the APSH sunlight assessment. In total, the Report discusses the potential effects to 16 windows serving eight habitable rooms within our client's property.

With respect to the VSC daylight test, the Report indicates that six out of the eight ground floor windows assessed will meet the criteria set out in the BRE Guidelines. Two ground floor windows – serving the kitchen and the boot room – fall short of the BRE's recommended threshold. These windows will retain 0.74 and 0.77 times their former VSC values respectively, with absolute retained VSC values of 25.40% and 25.61%.

In relation to the DD/NSL daylight test, the Report states that all eight site-facing rooms assessed will comply with the BRE criteria. In relation to the APSH sunlight test, the Report outlines that the development will have no significant impact on the APSH values for our client's property by reference to the BRE Guidelines. However, it is important to highlight the limitations of the BRE APSH assessment method itself, which relies on theoretical models of sunlight exposure, based on probability, sun path, and sunspots, rather than on the actual lived experience of sunlight within a space. While the APSH test shows compliance by reference to the BRE guidelines, it must be noted that the kitchen will still experience a loss of 14% in relation to annual sunlight, and a reduction of just below 50% during the winter months. This would undoubtedly be noticeable, despite the room remaining compliant according to the BRE suggested APSH test.

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Additionally, the APSH test, while useful in providing an indication of potential sunlight availability, is rudimentary and does not fully account for the nuanced impact of changes in the built environment, particularly with respect to how sunlight may be perceived in reality. For instance, while the Report may show no significant effect on APSH values, the actual lived experience of sunlight in the kitchen of our client's property will be diminished due to shading from the development. This reduction in sunlight, as indicated in the photographs within our client's detailed planning objection published on 21 January 2025, will result in a less pleasant and less well-lit living environment, which is not adequately represented in the APSH test.

While our client is not fully opposed to the development, they wish to protect their daylight and sunlight amenity. To mitigate the negative impacts on their property, they request the scheme be scaled back or reduced in height, as outlined in their previously submitted planning objection. This reduction would better safeguard their residential amenity, ensuring that the proposed development's overbearing nature and its subsequent effects on sunlight are reduced to acceptable levels.

Overshadowing

In addition to the above, the applicant's appointed daylight and sunlight consultant's Report does not address the potential impact of the proposed development on sunlight access to our client's rear garden. Our client has expressed concern regarding potential reductions in sunlight availability to this space, which is used regularly and is considered an important amenity area. Given the relationship between the two sites and the scale and massing of the proposed development, there is a reasonable likelihood that the garden may experience reductions in sunlight beyond BRE-recommended levels. In the absence of a dedicated assessment, the potential extent of this impact remains unclear. We would therefore expect a sunlight analysis of the rear garden to be provided to ensure the amenity value of this space is properly considered.

Therefore, a comprehensive Sun Hours on Ground overshadowing assessment in accordance with the BRE Guidelines should be undertaken to show the scheme's impact on our client's amenity space. Otherwise, it is our view that a properly informed decision cannot be made.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In summary, we consider the current proposal to be excessive in terms of its size, scale, and proximity to the boundary. The combination of these factors results in a built form that is unneighbourly and overbearing, with a clear potential to undermine the residential daylight and sunlight amenity of our client's home, both indoors and outdoors. Therefore, a more appropriately scaled scheme that responds sensitively to the surrounding context would achieve a better balance between development and residential amenity.

Our client remains concerned about the reduction in sunlight to their kitchen. While the technical APSH assessment concludes that there is no significant impact in accordance with the BRE Guidelines, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this method. As previously noted, APSH relies on theoretical models of sunlight exposure, which do not necessarily reflect the actual lived experience or the qualitative impact of reduced natural light within a space. As outlined and evidenced in our client's

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earlier objection, the proposed development will lead to a noticeable reduction in sunlight to their kitchen window.

In addition to the above, the proposed development is likely to reduce sunlight availability to the rear garden, which forms a valued and regularly used amenity space. Despite this, the application fails to include sufficient analysis, such as an overshadowing assessment, to confirm whether the impact on this outdoor space would remain within acceptable limits under the BRE Guidelines.

We therefore request that an overshadowing assessment in relation to our client's rear garden be provided in accordance with the 2022 BRE Guidelines, to enable a full and transparent understanding of the likely impacts.

In conclusion, we summarise that the proposals, in their current form, risk causing a detrimental impact on the amenity enjoyed by our client, and may be contrary to the principles set out in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS, 2015). We respectfully ask that the Local Authority take the concerns outlined in this letter into careful consideration when determining the application.

Yours sincerely,

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Anstey Horne

28 April 2025

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