



READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Planning department
via email

20 April 2023

To whom it may concern,

RE: Jackson's Corner refurbished dwellings – Explanation of BREEAM Score Achieved

The BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment assessment for Jackson's Corner has undergone extensive review and the achieved score as awarded by the BRE is 58.8%. This credit score equates to a BREEAM certification level of 'Very Good' with a 3.8% margin.

This represents a slight reduction from the originally targeted score of 62.5%. This is mostly due to timing of the appointment of the BREEAM Assessor, as well as certain technical and procedural details, which are explained in this letter. However, this decrease in credit score has not had an impact on the overall certification level which remains at the targeted 'Very Good', with some additional margin.

TIMING OF APPOINTMENT AND EVIDENCE PROCUREMENT

As the assessors, we were appointed to facilitate the full BREEAM certification on the 25th of November 2020. The appointment followed on from an initial appointment to undertake the BREEAM pre-assessment in 2017 prior to the planning application submission, but crucially with no appointment made of a BREEAM Assessor in the interim stages. While there is no strict requirement to have a BREEAM Assessor on board throughout the design and construction stages, doing so is a good safeguard against loss of credits due to changes in design, site constraints, and/or detailed BREEAM requirements to be followed with regards to site procedures and on-going collation of evidence.

Project Practical Completion was achieved March 1st, 2021.

Due to this delayed appointment, many critical meetings did not occur, and certain design decisions did not account for the BRE evidentiary requirements necessary to compile a robust set of evidence as proof of adherence to the BRE's Environmental Assessment Methodology. The BRE requirements clearly dictate the necessity for certain credits to be evidenced early in the concept design stage and do not accept backdated information. Once the BREEAM assessment was re-addressed at the end of 2020, many of the credits had unfortunately fallen out of reach in the interim time between the pre-assessment stage and the final assessor appointment.

The bulk of final evidence collated for the development has been the result of communications with the team in the most recent 12 months. However, given the necessity to adhere to the BRE's strict methodological requirements and detailed evidence information, certain follow-up queries for further clarification in the evidence submitted were not possible to be met by the team since the project had been completed on-site at this time.

TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS

Outside of the strict timing of evidence procurement, there were additional technical constraints which resulted in credits being lost throughout the assessment over time. This pertains especially to the site procedures, and NOx emissions (where paradoxically the site has been penalised for switching to a combustion-free energy strategy). On the other hand, in the Health & Wellbeing, Water and Pollution categories it was found that additional credits could be awarded compared to the original target score. Further detailed analysis is given overleaf.

DETAILED SCORE OVERVIEW

The following table summarizes at high-level what changes happened to the assessment resulting in the slightly reduced score. This overview is broken down by credit category.

Category	2017 Credits Targeted	2023 Credits Achieved	Reason for Difference in Score
Management	8	4	Insufficient evidence was available that the appropriate appointments and actions were taken at the early stages as required by the strict BRE methodology.
Health and Wellbeing	6	9	Score found to be higher than initially targeted due to sound insulation values exceeding Part E requirements. Additionally, credits were picked up following the provision of evidence indicating that the installed ventilation system meets all of the requirements of Part F.
Energy	19.5	19.5	N/A, targeted credits were achieved.
Water	3.5	4.5	Score found to be higher than initially targeted due to the specification of BREEAM-compliant water meters.
Materials	18	0	Appropriately evidenced information from the construction stage was not received. Evidence which was supplied lacked clarity and robust detail to maintain credit. The BRE require very specific details and calculations on which to base the materials' environmental impact. For this reason, these credits are difficult to evidence at the Post Construction Stage, requiring detailed collation of delivery tickets and technical data sheets as well as further supporting evidence such as sourcing and testing at the product manufacturing stage. It was found that there was not sufficiently robust evidence available to award these credits at the post construction stage.
Waste	4	2	The BRE requirements were not monitored throughout the construction process, and waste credits related to the site waste management could not be awarded.
Pollution	6	1	The original assessment assumed there would be low NO_x gas boilers, however, the final build comprised an all-electric system. At the time of the production of the 2014 BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment (DR) manual (still the most current assessment version for domestic retrofits), electric systems were penalised due to high NO_x emissions from the generation of the national grid electricity. Therefore, the all-electric system was unable to achieve the low NO_x credits. This discrepancy has been amended in more recent BREEAM versions for New Construction, however given this project is assessed against BREEAM DR 2014, it is these credits to which the evidence must adhere. One credit for Pol02 was picked up as there was no change in the size of the building footprint or hardstanding as a result of the refurbishment. However, the other credits from this section were lost as it required the appointment of a flood risk consultant to confirm appropriate management of the run-off from site and whether recommendations from the flood risk assessment were implemented and evidenced, which was not viable at this stage in the project.

In conclusion, the team supplied the maximum evidence available at the time of assessment, which was submitted as sufficient evidence to achieve a BREEAM certification level of 'Very Good' with a 3.8% margin.

The assessment was submitted to the BRE for quality assurance review, and on the 20th March 2023, and the BRE awarded the project a BREEAM 'Very Good' certification with no comments.

Kind regards,

LOUISE F. WILLE
ASSOCIATE, BREEAM ASSESSOR