



**Reference:** Eaton Court, 104 – 112 Oxford Road, Reading

**Project No:** 1818348

**Date:** 30 January 2023

## Technical note

### Re: Noise Assessment – Eaton Court

Sharps Redmore has previously carried out an assessment for a planning application (Reference 210639) for demolition of existing site known as Eaton Court, Oxford Road Reading.

The site consists of part two and three storey office building and a decked car park. The main office entrance is accessed from Oxford Road.

An application for full planning permission was originally submitted to Reading Borough Council in April 2021 for demolition of existing buildings on site and construction of a residential-led mixed use redevelopment to provide three buildings comprising 131 residential units (Use Class C3), one ground floor unit comprising flexible commercial floorspace (Use Class E & F2) and one ground floor unit comprising flexible commercial and residential floorspace (Use Class E, F2 & C3), along with car parking, cycle parking, servicing bay and associated landscaping, amenity space, plant and refuse areas, and access arrangements.

The assessment dated 30 March 2021 considered the impact of noise from road traffic noise and adjacent commercial premises (including the Face Bar night club). The report concluded subject to mitigation measures suitable internal living environment could be provided for future residents.

The recommendations were considered by the Environmental Health Officer, Rebecca Moon, at Reading Borough Council who in her consultation response dated 21 June 2021, confirmed that she had no objections to the assessment subject to following pre-commencement conditions.

### Noise impact on development

*“No development shall commence on site until a detailed scheme, informed by a noise assessment of the current noise environment, for protecting buildings from external noise environment had been submitted and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme itself shall be designed, specified and constructed so that sound insulation performance of the structure and layout of the dwellings are such that indoor ambient noise levels do not exceed 45 dB  $L_{A_{fmax}}$  more than 10 times a night. Where opening windows will lead to an external noise level increase of 5dBA or greater above BS 8233:2014 recommended internal levels, the scheme shall include provision of alternative mechanical ventilation with minimum performance equivalent to mechanical heat recovery (MVHR) system with cool air bypass as an alternative means of cooling and ventilation. Noise from the system should not result in BS 8233 internal levels being exceeded.”*

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### **Noise generating development**

*“No mechanical plant shall be installed until a noise assessment of the proposed mechanical plant has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The assessment shall be carried out for in accordance with BS 4142:2014 methodology. The predicted specific sound level ( $L_{Aeq\ TR}$ ) (with reference to BS 4142) as measured at a point 1 meter external to the nearest noise sensitive façade shall be at least 10dB below the pre-existing background sound level  $L_{A90,T}$  when all plant/equipment is in operation. The predicted rating level  $L_{Ar}$ , (specific sound level plus any adjustment for characteristics of the sound) as measured 1 metre external to the nearest noise sensitive façade (habitable window of a dwelling) shall not exceed the pre-existing background sound level,  $L_{A90,T}$ , when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation. The plant shall thereafter only be installed in accordance with the assessment and shall thereafter be maintained so that it operates to the same standard.”*

SR agrees with the principle of using conditions to control noise from and on the development, however it noted that the recommended condition on noise generating development above refers to two different standards i.e. noise levels should be 10 dB below background levels or should not exceed background levels.

BS 4142 was revised in 2014 to take into account the policy aims of the NPPF and unlike previous versions which referred to 10 dB below background, rated the sound from plant based on its significance, with a rating level 10 dB above background defined as ‘significant’, a rating level around 5dB above background as ‘adverse’ and where the rating level is below the background the impact can be considered to be ‘low.’

It is therefore considered appropriate to adopt a standard of the rating level from plant not to exceed background level. This can be enforced through a suitably worded planning condition similar to the above.

A revised application was submitted in March 2022, which reduced the overall number of residential units from 131 to 122, a reduction in massing of Block 3, reduction in non-residential use, minor to unit mix and other minor alterations to the design. In terms of noise the proposed changes had no impact.

Further changes to the development are now proposed, including omission of the podium and undercroft car parking, re-arrangement of the central landscaped courtyard, further activation of the Eaton Court ground floor frontage, reduction and rearrangement of car parking, amended footprint to Block and a minor change to the units mix.

In terms of noise the changes to proposed scheme do not make any changes to the noise assessment or conclusions of the noise report. Therefore, it is not considered necessary to carry out any updated noise assessment as any impact of noise on and from the development can be controlled through condition similar to those previously recommended by the Environmental Health Department.

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