

Project	The Heights School, Reading		
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Noise Assessment Addendum Report

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This addendum report provides an update to the original noise assessment report, prepared by RPS Group (Ref JAE10329-REPT-00-01 dated 28/03/2018). The noise assessment was prepared to support a planning application for an extension to an existing approval for a temporary school building, comprising a two-storey modular block unit and temporary annex of part of the adjacent recreational ground (planning application ref: 180552). An additional technical document was issued by RPS (Ref JAE10329_Memo-00-01 dated 27/06/2018) to support the application to annex part of the adjacent recreational ground for use during break times (planning application ref: 181035).
- 1.2 RPS has previously undertaken noise assessments for the site in 2014 and 2015. Long-term baseline noise monitoring was originally undertaken in 2014, with a short-term validation survey being undertaken in 2018.
- 1.3 The latest temporary permission (planning application ref:180552) was granted in September 2018 for extension to the existing planning approval (ref 151283), and the erection of a new build two storey, six classroom modular unit to allow the school to expand towards a capacity of 325 pupils on the temporary school site until 31st August 2020.
- 1.4 It is understood that the school currently has 328 pupils in attendance and 37 full time equivalent (FTE) staff.

Proposed Development

- 1.5 The proposed development benefits from an existing temporary permission to operate as a school, whilst a permanent school site is developed elsewhere. The current permission expires on 31st August 2020, and a further one-year extension is required until 31st August 2021.
- 1.6 It is understood that the proposals will not result in any additional buildings on the site. There will be a small uplift of 25 pupils and 3FTE members of staff. This is only a small uplift and unlikely to result in a significant increase in the noise levels. It is therefore considered that any future impact will be similar to what is currently experienced at nearby receptors.
- 1.7 The findings of the previous assessment concluded that noise from the school was unlikely to result in an adverse impact at nearby sensitive receptors. Given that there have been no complaints made to the EHO relating to noise over the previous twelve months, and no noise issues were raised during the pre-planning application public consultation, it is considered that the findings of the previous noise assessments were appropriate. It is worth noting that a complaint has previously

been received regarding the fire alarm, but it is understood that this is a mechanical issue and the school has been made aware.

- 1.8 The site location plan is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan



2.0 Consultation

- 2.1 Consultation was undertaken with Rebecca Moon, Senior Environmental Health Officer at Reading Borough Council, to agree that the previous noise assessments undertaken to support the planning applications remain valid.
- 2.2 A response was received on 10th March 2020 stating that the Environmental Protection Team were unable to provide pre-application advice without a formal pre-application enquiry. However, informal discussions with the Local Authority indicated that a technical review of the existing information should be undertaken. Therefore, a technical review has been undertaken of the work undertaken to date to ensure the findings remain valid.

3.0 Relevant Standards and Guidelines

The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB): Volume 11: Environmental Assessment

- 3.1 Section 3 Part 7 of this document is pertinent to noise and vibration and was first published by the Department of Transport in 1993 with subsequent amendments, the latest of which is December 2019 (reference LA111 Revision 0). This document sets out procedures for undertaking the environmental assessment of new road schemes, including the assessment of noise impacts from road traffic. Section 3 Part 7 also describes a method for assessing the severity of a noise impact, in terms of the number of people who will be bothered by any noise increases/decreases due to a new road scheme. When undertaking a DMRB assessment, the methodology contained within

the Department for Transport 1988 document Calculation of Road Traffic Noise (CRTN) should be used to calculate levels of road traffic noise.

Reading Borough Local Plan

- 3.2 Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in November 2019. The plan details a number of policies, including CC8, which relates to safeguarding amenity. The policy states that *'development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties...'* This applies to a number of factors, one of which is noise.
- 3.3 No other changes in technical guidance are known to have occurred.

4.0 Changes to Baseline Conditions

- 4.1 A long-term baseline noise monitoring was originally undertaken in 2014, with a short-term validation survey being undertaken in 2018. The results of the validation survey indicated that there was a strong correlation between the long-term and short-term noise levels.
- 4.2 Given that the existing noise sources were noted to be road traffic on Gosbrook Road, overhead aircraft and birdsong, and that the validation survey indicated a strong correlation with the original survey, it is considered that the current noise levels on the site are unlikely to have changed significantly in the intervening time. Therefore, the results of the baseline noise survey are considered to be representative of the current noise climate on the site.

5.0 Assessment

Building Façade Specifications

The building façade specification was based on the long-term monitoring undertaken in 2014, which was validated in 2018 and is showed to be representative of the existing noise climate. It is considered that the noise levels in the intervening time are unlikely to have changed significantly, and therefore the assessment and conclusions remain valid, whilst the internal ambient noise levels are within acceptable limits.

Noise Impact of the Extension on Surrounding Area

- 5.1 As part of the previous noise work, modelling was undertaken to predict the noise level from the annexed play area at the nearest noise sensitive receptors. The results of the assessment indicated that the relocation of the annexed play area and the additional pupils as a result of the previously consented extension may result in higher noise levels during break times, however it was considered unlikely that this would result in a significant impact due to the short time period the noise would occur.
- 5.2 The assessment also considered $L_{A_{Fmax}}$ levels associated with the annexed play area and concluded that the proposals were unlikely to change the existing noise climate, which included noise from children associated with the adjacent St. Anne's Catholic Primary School.
- 5.3 It is understood that the proposals will not result in any additional buildings on the site. There will be a small uplift of 25 pupils and 3FTE members of staff. This is only a small uplift and unlikely to result in a significant increase in the noise levels. It is therefore considered that any future impact will be similar to what is currently experienced at nearby receptors. Given that there have been no noise complaints made to the EHO relating to noise in the previous twelve months, it is considered that the results of the previous report remain valid.

Road Traffic Noise

- 5.4 The previous report indicated that there would be a negligible change in the long-term. Although, the proposals include a small uplift in the numbers of pupils and staff, this is unlikely to generate significant additional traffic. Therefore, it is considered that the assessment remains valid.

6.0 Summary

- 6.1 A previous noise assessment was prepared by RPS to support the temporary planning application for a school and erection of a new build element. The current permission expires on 31st August 2020, and a further one-year extension is required until 31st August 2021.
- 6.2 The findings of the previous assessment concluded that noise from the school was unlikely to result in an adverse impact at nearby sensitive receptors. Given that there have been no complaints relating to noise over the previous twelve months, and no noise issues were raised during the pre-planning application public consultation, it is considered that the findings of the previous noise assessment remain valid.
- 6.3 It is also considered that the proposals are in accordance with policy CC8 of Reading Borough Councils Local Plan in relation to noise.