



40 Oxford Road, Reading – Prior Approval Noise Statement

DATE:	19 May 2020	CONFIDENTIALITY:	Public
SUBJECT:	40 Oxford Road Noise Statement		
PROJECT:	70070653	AUTHOR:	Toby Lewis
CHECKED:	Sarah Whydle	APPROVED:	Toby Lewis

INTRODUCTION

WSP has been instructed by Aston Rose to undertake a noise assessment to inform the Prior Approval process in connection with the proposed conversion of the upper storeys of 40 Oxford Road, Reading into residential use. Only commercial noise sources need to be considered in Prior Approval determinations so assessments of noise from transportation and infrastructure sources are not necessary.

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time of the instruction it has been agreed with the Reading Borough Council (RBC) Environmental Health Officer (EHO) that the assessment should be undertaken via desktop study with plant noise conditions proposed to ensure that adequate protection is provided for future residents during the conversion. The email exchange with the RBC EHO is presented at Appendix A.

40 Oxford Road is a four-storey mid-terraced building on the north side of Oxford Road. There is a commercial food premise at ground floor (most recently Red Planet Pizza) and ancillary storage uses on the floors above. Adjoining the unit to the west is number 42 which is occupied by a barber's shop (no. 42a) at ground floor with a former private members club (The Comrades Club (no. 42) and residential uses above. The current use of the first floor of no. 42 is unknown but the RBC Licensing Officer has confirmed that the licence for the Comrades Club was surrendered in 2016 and that there is currently no premises licence at the address (see email exchange at Appendix A).

Number 38 Oxford Road, which adjoins the unit to the east, comprises retail use at ground floor with the upper floors in the process of being converted into residential flats.

EXISTING NOISE CLIMATE

It is expected that noise levels incident on the front (south) elevation of the building will be dominated by road traffic noise arising from Oxford Road and the A329 Caversham Road which is around 80m to the west. A review of recent noise surveys in the vicinity has identified that Hoare Lee (HL) acoustic consultants made a protracted measurement at the north elevation of the proposed Broad Street Mall in June 2018 with the monitoring location just 14m away from the exposed elevation of no. 40 as shown in Figure 1 below. The details are set out in the HL report '*Argos Corner Planning Condition 8 Report*' dated 16 October 2018.

The HL measurement was made over a period of five days and nights between Friday 13 June and Wednesday 18 June 2018 under acceptable conditions with the monitoring location designed to be representative of the nearest residential receptors identified as the flats above 42 Oxford Road. The noise levels at the measurement location were described as '*dominated by road traffic along Oxford Road, as well as distant traffic from the surrounding road network*'. The measurements were '*not unduly affected by existing building services plant*'. A summary of the noise monitoring results is set out in Table 1 below.

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Figure 1 – Aerial Photograph Showing the HL Noise Monitoring Location

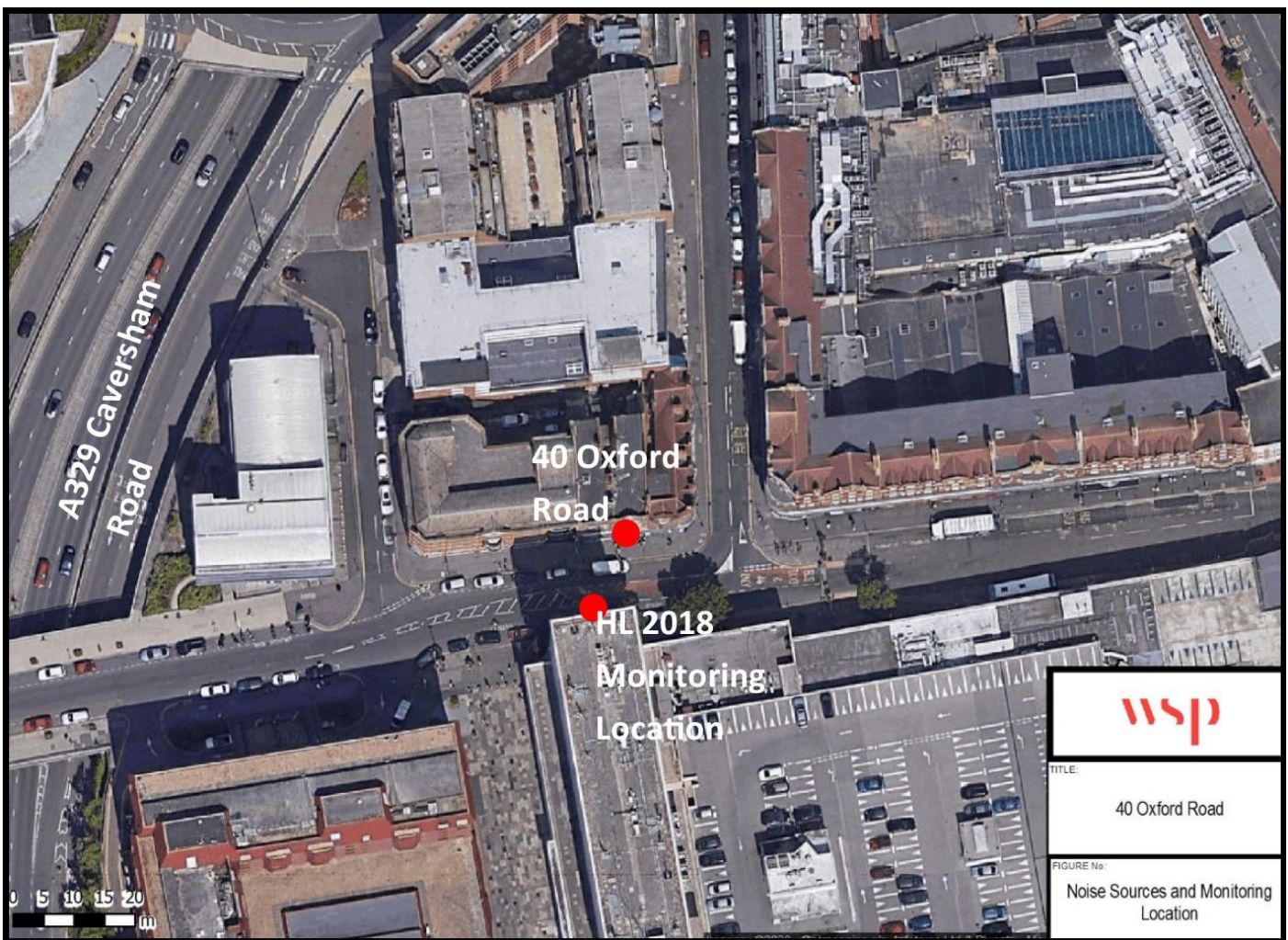


Table 1 – Summary of Noise Monitoring Data at HL 2018 Monitoring Location

Period	Representative Average Sound Level $L_{Aeq,T}$, dB ¹	Representative Background Sound Level, $L_{A90,T}$, dB ²
Daytime 07:00 – 23:00	67	62
Night time 23:00 – 07:00	61	50

- 1 Logarithmic average of $L_{Aeq,T}$ sound levels logged during all respective periods.
- 2 Mode value of aggregated 15-minute measurements logged during all respective periods.

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As demonstrated by the summary data in Table 1, the ambient noise environment in Oxford Road is relatively high during both the daytime and night time, predominantly due to noise from road traffic.

LOCAL COMMERCIAL NOISE SOURCES

Local sources of commercial noise have been identified via the desktop study. The potential for these sources to be of relevance to the determination of the application has been evaluated based on the type of use, their proximity and juxtaposition with the application site and the prevailing ambient and background sound levels.

- 38 Oxford Road.** The ground floor use comprises a small retail unit with the upper floors understood to be in the process of conversion to residential use. As such, no commercial noise sources with the potential to affect the proposed development have been identified at this premise.
- 40 Oxford Road.** The established ground floor use is as a hot-food takeaway, currently a pizzeria, which is understood to open until 01:00 during weekend periods. Whilst noise from customers outside the premises is considered to be part of the town centre residual noise climate, noise from inside the premises should be considered in this noise assessment.

It is known that the interior of the pizzeria benefits from a suspended ceiling with acoustically absorbent tiles which will reduce noise levels inside and add to the acoustic performance of the floor structure which separates the ground and first floors. Under these circumstances and given the relatively high level of masking noise from non-commercial residual sound levels, customer noise is not expected to result in adverse impacts inside the first floor of the building.

As shown in Figure 2, however, the kitchen extraction hood does connect to ductwork which runs above the suspended ceiling to the rear (north) elevation of the building. As shown in Figure 3, the ductwork exits the north wall and runs up the exterior of a two-storey section of the façade that is without windows. The section of the building to which it is affixed will comprise kitchens and bathrooms at the first and second floor flats respectively. The angled louvre at the top of the duct is orientated towards a pitched roof which rises towards the windows which will eventually serve the third-floor flat kitchen/diner.

It is recognised that structurally borne noise from the extraction ductwork could potentially re-radiate into the new flats and that airborne noise from the louvres at the flue terminus could be material outside the windows serving the third-floor kitchen/diner.

- 42 Oxford Road.** The ground floor use of 42 Oxford Road is a barber’s shop. Operational noise from this use is not expected to comprise a constraint. As stated above, the former use of the first floor as a private club has ceased and the upper stories are assumed to now comprise residential

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and/or storage ancillary to the ground floor use, neither of which would be anticipated to cause any significant noise.

- 43-45 Oxford Road.** The use is a restaurant and it is understood that this is currently occupied by the China Palace. It is around 25m to the south from the application site, on the other side of Oxford Road. There is no external seating, plant or louvres evident on the north elevation and any noise ancillary to its use is expected to be significantly below ambient noise levels at the application site. It is therefore thought that noise from this source could not result in any measurable impact at the application site.
- 47 Oxford Road.** The Broad Street Mall occupies this unit. The literature review indicates that this site is under redevelopment with an Iceland store proposed for the north elevation although this may now be complete. A review of the planning application and noise assessment indicates that no plant or significant noise sources will be located on the north, Oxford Road, frontage and no noise impacts are expected to result from this use at the application site.

Figure 2 – The Kitchen Extraction and Internal Ductwork in the Pizzeria at 40 Oxford Road



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Figure 3 – The External Ductwork on the North Elevation of 40 Oxford Road



NOISE ASSESSMENT

As stated above; insofar as the ambient noise around the development site is dominated by noise from transportation and passers-by, it does not require assessment as it is not relevant to the prior approval application.

The relatively high ambient levels, which reflect the city centre nature of the location, do provide masking to specific noise sources of all types which, in turn, results in impacts from discrete commercial sources being less likely.

This desk-based assessment has not identified any commercial noise sources which are likely to cause adverse impacts at the application site other than the commercial kitchen extraction system which serves

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the pizzeria at the ground floor of 40 Oxford Road. It has been recognised that structurally borne and airborne noise transmission could be material in the proposed flats.

Given that a practical assessment of the noise from the extraction system is not possible due to the restrictions and atypical conditions currently resulting from the Covid-19 crisis, it has been agreed with RBC that noise from the extraction system can be dealt with via a suitably worded condition which requires an assessment with a scheme of mitigation to be agreed and implemented if necessary.

At this stage, it is anticipated that any noise reduction that did prove to be necessary would be easily achievable via a number of different mitigation options. For example, improving the acoustic isolation of the internal ductwork from the floor structure above could minimise structural transmission. Fitting silencers or acoustic louvres into the duct flue could minimise airborne transmission. Increasing the insulation of the first-floor flat via the installation of additional flooring or the provision of uprated acoustic glazing to the north elevation of the third-floor flat could be undertaken in the alternative or in addition to the above.

A draft condition is proposed below for the consideration of RBC.

‘An assessment of the potential for structurally borne and airborne noise from the operation of the kitchen extraction system serving the ground floor of number 40 Oxford Road to cause noise impacts in the proposed flats will be submitted to, and approved by, the Council in writing. The assessment will include any recommendations identified as necessary to protect the future occupiers from noise from the extraction system. The recommendations will be fully implemented prior to first occupation.’

CONCLUSION

This desk-based noise assessment has not identified any commercial noise sources that would warrant further consideration in the context of a prior approval application other than that from the kitchen extraction system serving the ground floor of number 40 Oxford Road.

It has been agreed with RBC that the extraction noise can be dealt with via a condition and a draft condition has been recommended for consideration by RBC.

Subject to the inclusion of the recommended condition or similar it is suggested that commercial noise does not need to be considered further in the prior approval for the conversion of the upper stories of 40 Oxford Road to residential use.

Toby Lewis MSc LLM CEnvH CSci FIOA MCIEH MEnvSci MIAQM
Technical Director, Acoustics



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APPENDIX A – EMAIL EXCHANGES WITH RBC

From: Masson, Connor <Connor.Masson@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 07 May 2020 10:06
To: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Subject: RE: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

I can confirm there is no current license for the address

Kind Regards

Connor Masson
Business Support Officer
Licensing Department | Directorate for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

From: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Sent: 06 May 2020 14:12
To: Masson, Connor <Connor.Masson@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

Many thanks for the email Connor. Are you able to confirm that there is no current premises licence at that address please?

Toby Lewis
Technical Director, Acoustics
My normal working days are Monday to Thursday

From: Masson, Connor <Connor.Masson@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 06 May 2020 13:54
To: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Subject: RE: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

Hi there,

I can confirm that the license was surrendered on 10/11/2016
Please don't hesitate to contact me with any further queries.
Kind Regards



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Connor Masson

Business Support Officer

Licensing Department | Directorate for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

From: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Sent: 05 May 2020 15:26
To: Licensing <Licensing@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

Good afternoon,

I was given this email address by Rebecca in Environmental Health who has very kindly been helping with a noise assessment.

I am seeking confirmation that the Comrades Club, Reading, which formerly occupied the first floor of 42 Oxford Road, Reading is no longer a going concern and that there is now no licenced use at the premises (other than the barbers on the ground floor).

I'd be very grateful if you are able to offer me confirmation that the premises licence has been surrendered and/or expired and that to your knowledge the premises no longer has a premises licence or is an entertainment venue. If it is still current I'd be very grateful if you could send me the premises licence and application form.

Many thanks and regards
Toby

Toby Lewis *MSc LLM CEnvH CSci FIOA MCIEH MEnvSci MIAQM*

Technical Director, Acoustics

My normal working days are Monday to Thursday

From: Moon, Rebecca <Rebecca.Moon@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 05 May 2020 15:18
To: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Cc: Lewis, Catherine <Catherine.Lewis@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

Hi Toby



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Their email address is licensing@reading.gov.uk.

Thanks
Rebecca

From: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Sent: 05 May 2020 15:14
To: Moon, Rebecca <Rebecca.Moon@reading.gov.uk>
Cc: Lewis, Catherine <Catherine.Lewis@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

Dear Rebecca,

Many thanks for your help with this thus far.

I'm now seeking information about the Comrades Club which I believe formerly occupied the first floor of no. 42 Oxford Road. We've drawn a blank on planning history so I was hoping you'd be able to put me in touch with your licensing officer so I can hopefully get confirmation that the club use has been discontinued. Are you able to provide me with contact details please?

Thanks and regards
Toby

Toby Lewis
Technical Director, Acoustics

From: Moon, Rebecca <Rebecca.Moon@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 15 April 2020 14:19
To: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Subject: Re: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

OFFICIAL

Hi Toby

That sounds reasonable, thanks.



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Regards
Rebecca

From: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Sent: 15 April 2020 11:26
To: Moon, Rebecca <Rebecca.Moon@reading.gov.uk>
Cc: Lewis, Catherine <Catherine.Lewis@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

Hi Rebecca,

Many thanks. The plant is existing and I understand comprises an extraction hood and duct work inside the ground floor and external duct and fan/filtration housing on the rear external elevation. As such we'll recommend a condition to ensure that sufficient isolation/insulation is in place to minimise transmission from inside and outside the building. For this reason – external limits referenced to background won't really work. I'd propose designing to a suitable NR curve but criteria can be agreed as part of the submitted scheme.

Kind regards
Toby

Toby Lewis
Technical Director, Acoustics
My normal working days are Monday to Thursday



T+ 44 (0)1223 558066
M+ 44 (0)7469 402305

From: Moon, Rebecca <Rebecca.Moon@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 15 April 2020 09:37
To: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Cc: Lewis, Catherine <Catherine.Lewis@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

OFFICIAL

Hi Toby

Sorry for the delay.



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Can you please just clarify what you are proposing regarding the plant? Are you saying mitigation would be put in place to ensure no adverse impact on the residents but that you wouldn't include it in the assessment, it would be assessed at a later stage and controlled via condition? This should be acceptable. Please note that we require 10 dB below background for new plant. What level would you be proposing?

I am sorry, I can't check complaints currently as I can't access our complaints database from home.

Thanks,
Rebecca

From: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Sent: 15 April 2020 07:44
To: Moon, Rebecca <Rebecca.Moon@reading.gov.uk>
Cc: Lewis, Catherine <Catherine.Lewis@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

Dear Rebecca,

I hope you enjoyed the bank holiday weekend?

Sorry to chase for a response but our client is anxious for us to progress this asap.

For your information – we have agreed noise related conditions on similar prior approval applications in other areas so I believe that a plant condition is a viable option. If you could just confirm about that and advise regarding any recent complaints please I'd be really grateful.

Many thanks and kind regards

Toby Lewis
Technical Director, Acoustics

From: Lewis, Toby
Sent: 08 April 2020 15:23
To: Moon, Rebecca <Rebecca.Moon@reading.gov.uk>
Cc: Lewis, Catherine <Catherine.Lewis@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

Dear Rebecca,



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I've discussed this again with the client and we've agreed that we could assess most aspects adequately via a desktop assessment. However, we were hoping that you would agree that the extraction plant/ductwork serving the ground floor use of the application building could be dealt with via a suitable 'scheme to be agreed and implemented' condition so that we would ensure that any necessary mitigation was put in place pre-occupation.

Also, could you please just confirm that you don't have any current noise complaints relating to adjoining or adjacent premises?

Many thanks and regards
Toby

Toby Lewis
Technical Director, Acoustics

From: Moon, Rebecca <Rebecca.Moon@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 April 2020 10:52
To: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Cc: Lewis, Catherine <Catherine.Lewis@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

OFFICIAL

Hi Toby,

In the circumstances I think it would be reasonable to carry out a desk study noise assessment for this application. I assume you will take into account the commercial use which will remain on ground floor too. You would need to be as accurate as possible about the surrounding uses - would you use Streetview? - and then propose reasonable worst case typical noise levels from these. There may be mechanical plant at the rear, I am not sure if this is visible on satellite imagery?

There is a significant development pending across the road, whereby a cinema and new residential are being built on top of the Broad Street Mall. The cinema will have an outdoor balcony. There will have been noise assessments carried out for those developments if you are able to track them down on the planning portal.

I hope this helps,



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Regards

Rebecca

Rebecca Moon

Senior Environmental Health Officer
Environmental Protection and Nuisance
Regulatory Services | Directorate of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services
Reading Borough Council
Civic Centre
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

From: Lewis, Toby <Toby.Lewis@wsp.com>
Sent: 07 April 2020 16:23
To: Lewis, Catherine <Catherine.Lewis@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: Prior Approval 40 Oxford Road, Reading

This is an EXTERNAL EMAIL. STOP. THINK before you CLICK links or OPEN attachments.

Dear Catherine,

I hope you're well?

We've been asked to consider any commercial noise sources that could be material in a prior approval application for the conversion of the upper storeys of the above into residential accommodation. The ground floor commercial use of no. 40 would remain unchanged.

Unfortunately, due to the current COVID restrictions I am unable to visit the site so wondered if you would accept a desktop study? I believe EH and Licensing had some involvement with the China Palace, which is almost opposite no. 40, a couple of years ago but understand that it does not have a late licence or play loud music. On that basis I would not expect commercial noise to be a blocker to the conversion. Could I please invite your agreement or any comments you have with reference to commercial noise?

Do please just give me a call if that's easier.

Kind regards
Toby

Toby Lewis *MSc LLm CEnvH CSci FIOA MCIEH MEnvSci MIAQM*
Technical Director, Acoustics