

Ref: NDT5132/16376

Date: 18 October 2016



Mr N Wallwork
Wallmer Asset Management
49 London Street
Reading
RG1 4PS

Dear Mr Wallwork

**PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT - CLASS O
IMPACT OF NOISE FROM COMMERCIAL PREMISES
9 SOUTHERN COURT, SOUTH ST, READING, RG1 4QS**

I understand you intend submitting an application to convert the above office (Class B1a) building to residential (Class C3), under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class O of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (as amended) .

Statutory Instrument, no. 332, requires that applicants apply to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for determination as to whether the prior approval of the LPA will be required as to *"impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development"*.

Commercial Premises is a tightly defined term in the Regulations. It means *"any premises normally used for the purpose of any commercial or industrial undertaking, which existed on the date of application...and includes any premises under the Licensing Act 2003(a) or any other place of public entertainment"*.

Therefore, this means that if a site is affected by industrial noise, noise from air conditioning plant relating to a commercial or industrial undertaking, or music from a venue for example, that the LPA could expect an acoustic assessment as part of the Permitted Development determination process. It is significant that the Regulations do not always require an assessment, as many sites would not be affected by commercial noise. It is also significant that if the noise sources affecting a site are not from commercial premises, as defined, then they need not be considered. This means that noise from transportation sources (road, rail, air etc) do not need to be assessed.

Wallmer Asset Management Ltd has instructed us to visit the above site and advise whether noise from commercial premises should be a material factor in the consideration of this prior approval application.

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application is for the creation of new dwellings in existing office accommodation in 9 Southern Court, South St, Reading. The building (9-10 Southern Court) is currently used as offices, and the dwellings will be in number 9 only.

The site is in a side street, which is largely in office and residential use. South Street Arts Centre is opposite the site.

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At the rear of the site is a large car park, serving Southern Court and other commercial buildings. There is a school beyond the car park.

The rear wall of the site has several condensers. The condensers serve 9 and 10 Southern Court, though I note you will be removing those related to No. 9 as part of these proposals. There are also condenser units for No 8 adjacent.

At the rear of the site noise from the condensers, dominated by those serving No 10, was audible.

South Street Arts Centre is a place of public entertainment and as such noise from the venue also requires consideration under the PD regulations. It describes itself: *"The small-scale programme focuses on critically acclaimed touring theatre, music, comedy & spoken word."*



Fig 1: Site from South St (No 9 on left, No 10 on right)



Fig 2: View of site from the rear. (No 10 on left, No 9 on right)

2. ASSESSMENT

Noise levels at the rear of the site from the mechanical plant were low during the survey, and so difficult to robustly quantify. However, indicative measurements taken when the condensers serving No 10 were running suggest that noise levels outside the property are less than $L_{Aeq,T}$ 48 dB. This means that if residents opened their windows, the internal noise level in their dwelling would be less than $L_{Aeq,T}$ 33 dB from this plant, which is within the desirable standard for living areas during the day ($L_{Aeq,T}$ 35 dB, with $L_{Aeq,T}$ 40 dB considered reasonable). As these condensers serve a commercial property, we would not expect them to operate at night, but if they did, this noise level is within the reasonable standard recommended by BS8233 for bedrooms at night ($L_{Aeq,T}$ 30 is considered good, with 35 dB considered reasonable). Whilst noise levels from these units may vary depending on demand, this does indicate noise levels are within a reasonable range. A detailed survey, with the condensers confirmed as operating at full load would be required to provide a more thorough assessment. However, it would be the dominant source for residents, and so consideration should be given to relocating the wall mounted units for No 10 and No 8, away from the windows and perhaps confirming their time of operation.

It will be necessary, as part of this scheme, to ensure the separating wall between the remaining office use (No 10), and the new dwellings (No 9) meets current Building Regulations, and as such would provide reasonable sound insulation between the office (not expected to be notably noisy) and the dwellings. This is not expected to be a matter for planning.

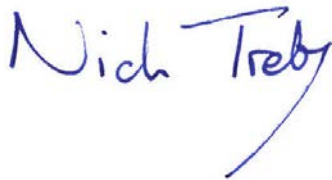
Noise from South St Arts Centre is difficult to quantify. It is assumed that each production would generate varying levels of noise, and so it would not be possible to robustly quantify any noise emission from the venue. It may be that noise is not audible at all at the proposed development site. As described above, there are existing dwellings in South St, and so arts centre activities cannot generate significant noise levels in any event, even without the PD scheme. The venue also describes its repertoire as small scale, and so

therefore, we would not expect noise from these activities to be significant in relation to the proposed scheme.

It is therefore our opinion that on balance, the likely impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development is not sufficient to constitute a material factor in this case. Therefore, we conclude that the use of planning is unnecessary and that the LPA can approve your application accordingly.

Please get in touch if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Treby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Nick Treby
Principal Consultant