

NOISE AND ACOUSTIC STATEMENT

**Retrospective change of use from
Class B8 Storage to Class E Barber Shop**

at
**32A Ardler Road,
Caversham,
Reading,
RG4 5AE**

Planning Application: PL/26/0814

September 2026

1. Introduction

This section has been prepared in response to the Planning Officer's request for further information concerning potential noise arising from the existing barber shop use and the acoustic relationship between the commercial premises and the residential accommodation within the site.

The applicant acknowledges the concerns raised and has considered the nature and scale of the activities undertaken within the premises.

The proposal is for a small-scale barber shop operating within an existing enclosed commercial building of approximately 70 m².

The use does not involve industrial processes, significant mechanical plant, machinery, amplified entertainment or other activities inherently associated with significant noise generation.

2. Nature of the Use

The principal activities undertaken within the premises comprise:

- Hair cutting and styling;
- Customer consultation;
- Normal conversation between staff and customers;
- Use of standard barbering equipment; and
- Television/audio equipment operated for the benefit of customers.

The barbering equipment used within the premises is typical of a small personal-service business and does not generate significant external noise.

There are no workshops, power tools, manufacturing processes or other industrial activities associated with the use.

The television screens observed during the Officer's site visit are ancillary to the barber shop use and are provided for customers within the premises.

They do not constitute an independent entertainment use.

3. Hours of Operation

The barber shop operates during the following hours:

Day	Opening Hours
Monday	10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Tuesday	10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Wednesday	10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Thursday	10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Friday	10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Saturday	10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Sunday	Closed

The premises therefore operate only between **10:00 AM and 7:00 PM**, with no Sunday opening.

The operating hours are considered appropriate for a small local personal-service business and limit the potential for disturbance during late evening, night-time and early morning periods.

The applicant is willing to accept a planning condition controlling the hours of operation if the Council considers this necessary.

4. Internal Operation

The commercial activity takes place entirely within the existing building.

There is no external seating area, external entertainment area or outdoor customer facility.

The principal source of activity is therefore contained within the building envelope.

Customers attend the premises for relatively short periods associated with individual hair appointments. The use does not normally result in large numbers of people congregating within or immediately outside the premises.

The business therefore generates a substantially different noise profile from uses such as public houses, restaurants, nightclubs, gyms or entertainment venues.

5. Television and Audio

The television screens observed during the Officer's site visit are ancillary to the barber shop use and are provided for customers within the premises.

The applicant confirms that television/audio equipment is operated at a reasonable internal volume appropriate to the premises.

The equipment is not used for amplified entertainment, live performances or other activities beyond normal ancillary television/audio use associated with a barber shop.

The applicant is willing to accept a planning condition, if considered necessary, requiring that any television or audio equipment remains ancillary to the barber shop use and is operated at a reasonable internal volume.

6. Building Envelope and Acoustic Separation

The barber shop operates within an existing enclosed building.

The existing walls, floors, ceilings, doors and other elements of the building envelope provide physical separation between the commercial premises and the surrounding residential accommodation.

No alterations to the building envelope are proposed as part of this retrospective application.

The applicant understands the importance of maintaining the existing separation between the commercial and residential uses.

Where the Council considers additional acoustic measures necessary, the applicant is willing to consider reasonable measures to improve acoustic separation between the commercial unit and residential accommodation.

7. Management of the Premises

The applicant is committed to operating the premises responsibly and to minimising any potential disturbance to neighbouring residents.

The following measures will apply:

- Television/audio equipment will be operated at a reasonable internal volume;
- No external amplified music will be permitted;
- No external entertainment or customer seating is proposed;
- Doors and windows will be managed appropriately to minimise unnecessary transmission of internal noise;
- Customers will not be encouraged to congregate outside the premises; and
- Staff and customers will be expected to respect neighbouring residential occupiers when arriving at and leaving the premises.

8. Customer Movements

The applicant acknowledges the Officer's wider concern regarding movements into and out of the site.

The barber shop is a relatively small operation and customer visits are distributed throughout the operating day.

Customers generally attend individually or in small numbers and remain at the premises for the duration of their appointment.

There is no significant external waiting area or customer congregation.

Vehicle movements associated with customer visits are similarly limited and distributed throughout the day.

The applicant will continue to manage the business so that customers do not unnecessarily wait or congregate immediately adjacent to the residential accommodation.

The fact that the premises close at **7:00 PM each day and remain closed on Sundays** also limits the potential for customer movements and associated activity during periods when residential occupiers are more likely to expect a quieter environment.

9. Noise Assessment

Given the small-scale nature of the use, the restricted hours of operation and the absence of significant fixed plant, industrial processes or external entertainment, the applicant considers that the potential for significant noise effects is limited.

The principal potential noise sources are normal conversation, barbering equipment and ancillary television/audio within the enclosed premises. There are also notices installed at the premises asking customers and visitors to respect neighbours and keep noise to a minimum.

Applicant made steps to reduce the sound system from four speakers to just one speaker, which is kept at a low volume and positioned away from the neighbouring side of the premises.

The use is therefore fundamentally different in its noise characteristics from commercial uses involving amplified music, mechanical equipment, food preparation, deliveries, late-night activity or entertainment.

On this basis, we believe a specialist acoustic assessment would be disproportionate to the scale and nature of the use at this stage.

However, the applicant is willing to cooperate fully with the Council and Environmental Health Officer should a specific acoustic concern be identified or should the Council consider that targeted acoustic measures are necessary and is continuing to explore proportionate measures for internal acoustic insulation.

10. Residential Amenity

The applicant recognises that the site contains residential accommodation and that appropriate consideration must therefore be given to residential amenity.

The commercial use is small in scale, operates within an existing building and does not introduce activities that are inherently noisy.

The restricted operating hours of **10:00 AM to 7:00 PM Monday to Saturday**, together with closure on Sundays, further limit the potential for disturbance during late evening, night-time and early morning periods.

The applicant is committed to operating the premises responsibly and to taking reasonable measures to ensure that the barber shop does not cause unreasonable disturbance to neighbouring residents.

11. Conclusion

The proposed barber shop is a small-scale Class E personal-service use operating entirely within an existing approximately 70 m² building.

The activities associated with the use are inherently low-noise and comprise normal barbering activities, conversation and ancillary television/audio.

There is no external entertainment, amplified music, industrial activity or significant mechanical plant.

The premises operate only between **10:00 AM and 7:00 PM Monday to Saturday and are closed on Sundays.**

The applicant therefore considers that the use can operate without giving rise to unacceptable noise impacts on the residential accommodation.

The applicant is nevertheless willing to implement reasonable operational controls and, if considered necessary by the Council's Environmental Health Officer, to consider proportionate acoustic mitigation.

The applicant respectfully requests that the above information is taken into account when assessing the retrospective application.