Dear Hayley

Thank you for consulting the Environmental Control & Protection Team with regard to the above planning application. My apologies for the delay in responding but this consultation has only just been referred to me.

Road traffic noise is clearly the significant issue and confirmed by the acoustic consultant. Their acoustic assessment has a reference: R7186-2 Rev 0 dated 24th September 2020 on the front page but 24th September 2021 on page 2. Whilst reviewing this report, I have discovered that the acoustic reports that have been submitted by the applicant over a number of years for this piece of land, have not always been in line with the proposal being submitted.

It also appears the reference numbers and version numbers of the reports have not always been amended so cannot be relied upon, when referring to them, that it is the same, identical report being viewed

This report is no exception and unfortunately there are various issues with it. It has clearly been amended over the years with the different proposals but much of it remains unchanged including parts where it should definitely have been amended. It has the same reference number R7186-2 Rev 0 as the one submitted for application 2021/10103 but is not a completely identical report.

The main problem is that the design and layout shown in the report, and on which base the consultant has made their assessment and mitigation recommendations does not reflect the proposed design and layout given in the current application, 2023/10963:

- Page 16 of the report is missing. This would be where fig 2 would be, if past versions of the report are anything to go by and would show the proposed layout and acoustic barriers. Figure 2 does not feature anywhere in the report, though reference is made to it 5.2 (page 12).

- Pages 17 and 18 show figures 3 and 4 respectively. These both relate to a previous design and layout, submitted I believe for, not the latest application for this site, but for application 2021/10103.

Other points to note include:

- 2.3 (page 4) refers to the proposal as "*a single residential property, with garden and separate workshop"*

- 3.17 (page 9) refers to campsites and yet there is no proposed campsite (and I believe hasn't been since application ref 19/044/77)

- 5.3 (page 12) refers to external noise levels in private gardens (as opposed to one garden) and amenity areas. Clearly not amended for this application.

In addition, some of the guidance referred to and used in the report is out of date and the road traffic data on which the assessment is based is from 2017.

I would like to draw attention to the fact that points 5.5 and 5.6 (page 13) of a previous version of the report ref R71861 Rev 0, dated 15th December 2017 (originally submitted in March 2018 for application 18/02398) submitted in April 2021 for application 2021/04275 have been removed from the current submitted report. I would expect these two points potentially to remain at least largely relevant. They stated:

5.6 "*It is recommended that bedroom windows for the property are not included in facades facing the A36. Depending on property's design, non-habitable tooms (e.g. kitchens, bathrooms, corridors) should instead be located facing the A36. This will help to reduce the need for specialised acoustic glazing and ventilators"*.

5.7 "*Should bedrooms be located facing the A36, specialist acoustic glazing and acoustically attenuated passive wall vents would be required, whereas on facades away from the A36, standard double glazing and acoustically attenuated trickle vents could be used. As an alternative to an acoustically attenuated ventilation, a "whole house" mechanical ventilation system could also be used"*.

It should also be noted five pages (pages 17 to 20) of the report R71861Rev 0 when submitted for 18/02398 were completely removed for the submission for 2021/04275.

I note the applicant states on page 3 of the Baxter Green Architects' Design and Access Statement that the acoustic assessment for the previous application was accepted. However, in fact the report was rejected for the previous application 2023/07301.

Whilst I appreciate that planning permission has now been granted for a dwelling (2021/10103) so I assume the principle of a dwelling being allowed in this location is probably unlikely to change, it is the detail of the design and site and internal layouts that dictate the necessary mitigation measures that will be required, and can be crucial in terms of the impact on the amenity of future residents.

The applicant needs to submit a new, genuine, acoustic report that reflects the new design and layouts of the current proposal otherwise the mitigation recommendations and conclusions of the acoustic report are irrelevant and must not be relied upon.

New uptodate sound level measurements should be produced and recommendations based on these unless it can be justified, with evidence, that traffic levels have not increased, nor any other adjacent new noises introduced, since 2017.

The new report MUST also be based on uptodate current guidance.

The ProPG on Planning and Noise (which provides guidance on new residential development) states at 2.23 that planning applications for new residential development should include evidence that various aspects of **good acoustic design** have been properly considered. One of the first on the list of "aspects of good acoustic design", it states to consider is, "options for planning the site or **building layout**".

It also states that "good acoustic design is not just compliance with recommended internal and external noise exposure standards. Good acoustic design should provide an integrated solution whereby the optimum acoustic outcome is achieved, without design compromises that will adversely affect living conditions and the quality of life of the inhabitants or other sustainable design objectives and requirements".

At 2.22 it is stated that "…..occupants generally prefer the ability to have control over the internal environment using openable windows, even if the acoustic conditions would be considered unsatisfactory when open. Solely relying on sound insulation of the building envelope to achieve acceptable acoustic conditions in new residential development, when other methods could reduce the need for this approach, is not regarded as good acoustic design".

The noise exposure hierarchy table in the PPG Noise document paragraph: 005 (Reference ID: 30-005-20190722 Revision date: 22 07 2019) concurs with ProPG on Planning and Noise when it comes to the need to close windows in order to achieve a satisfactory noise climate within habitable rooms. It identifies having to keep windows closed most of the time, where there is no alternative ventilation, to reduce noise levels as a significant adverse effect.

It states, where the noise causes a material change in behaviour such as keeping windows closed for most of the time or avoiding certain activities during periods when the noise is present the planning process should be used to avoid this effect occurring, for example, through the choice of sites at the plan-making stage, or by use of appropriate mitigation such as by **altering the design and layout** and that ”it is undesirable for such exposure to be caused.

The Council has adopted the following noise limits for residential properties impacted by transport noise:

- Bedrooms (night-time - 23.00 - 07.00) 30 dB LAeq (individual noise events should not normally exceed 45 dB LAFmax by more than 10 times)
- Living Rooms (daytime - 07.00 - 23.00) 35 dB LAeq
- Gardens and terraces (daytime) 50 dB LAeq

Internal noise levels should be calculated using the methods provided in BS 8233:2014 and/or BS EN 12354:3. In accordance with the PPG Noise (Reference ID: 30-005-20190722 Revision date: 22 07 2019) including the hierarchy in section 5 The acoustic design scheme shall aim to achieve the internal noise levels with windows open.

The Council will not accept a mitigation strategy that includes closed windows for road traffic noise unless the site and internal layouts have been FULLY considered and, where possible, implemented. In such circumstances, the number of closed windows should be restricted to a minimum of habitable rooms and designs that result in whole dwellings needing windows closed to mitigate transport noise should be avoided.

Without a new acoustic report there is insufficient information to ensure future residents’ quality of life will not be adversely affected and I would have to object to this application.

Kind regards

Annabel

Mrs Annabel Wilkinson
Environmental Health Officer
Environmental Control & Protection Team

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