Victoria Stakes

1 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TH

Noise impact assessment

and recommendations for remedial measures

Prepared by: Richard Vivian, Big Sky Acoustics Ltd

On behalf of: Premium Pubs 1 Limited

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Submitted to:	Niall McCann Keystone Law Limited 48 Chancery Lane London WC2A 1JF acting on behalf of Premium Pubs 1 Limited
Submitted by:	Richard Vivian Big Sky Acoustics Ltd 60 Frenze Road Diss IP22 4PB 020 7617 7069 info@bigskyacoustics.co.uk
Prepared by:	Richard Vivian BEng(Hons) MIET MIOA MIOL

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1.0 Qualifications and experience

1.1 My name is Richard Vivian. I am the founder and director of Big Sky Acoustics Ltd. Big Sky Acoustics is an independent acoustic consultancy that is engaged by local authorities, private companies, public companies, residents' groups and individuals to provide advice on the assessment and control of noise.

1.2 I have a Bachelor of Engineering Degree with Honours from Kingston University, I am a Member of the Institution of Engineering & Technology, the Institute of Acoustics and the Institute of Licensing.

1.3 I have over thirty years of experience in the acoustics industry and have been involved in acoustic measurement and assessment throughout my career. I have designed sound insulation schemes for a wide range of residential and commercial buildings, developed operational procedures for the control of noise from licensed premises, and am skilled in the design, configuration and control of amplified music systems. My professional experience has included the assessment of noise in connection with planning, licensing and environmental protection relating to sites throughout the UK. I have given expert evidence in the courts, in licensing hearings, in planning hearings and at public inquiries on many occasions.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Big Sky Acoustics Ltd was instructed by Niall McCann of Keystone Law Limited, acting on behalf of Premium Pubs 1 Limited, to carry out an assessment of potential noise impact from licensable activities at an established public house known as Victoria Stakes located at 1 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TH.

2.2 A notification letter from Daliah Barrett-Williams, Licensing Lead Officer at Haringey Council, dated 20th November 2025, states that *"The Licensing Authority has been served with the attached application for a review of the premises license by Residents. The review is brought about due to the License Holder failing to uphold the licensing objectives."*

2.3 This report was prepared following discussions with the operations team at Victoria Stakes, examination of the planning and licensing history for the site, a visit to the premises, an inspection of the building, testing of the sound system, and an evaluation of plant noise.

2.4 A glossary of acoustical terms used in this report is provided in Appendix A. All sound pressure levels in this report are given in dB re: 20µPa.

3.0 Criteria

Licensing Act 2003

3.1 The Licensing Act 2003 requires Haringey Council, in its role as Licensing Authority, to carry out its various licensing functions to promote the following four licensing

objectives: The prevention of crime and disorder; public safety; the prevention of public nuisance; and the protection of children from harm.

3.2 Each objective is of equal importance. It is important to note that there are no other licensing objectives, therefore these four are of paramount importance at all times. The Licensing Authority must base its decisions about determining applications and attaching any conditions to licences, on the promotion of these four licensing objectives.

3.3 The Licensing Act 2003 further requires the Licensing Authority to publish a Statement of Licensing Policy (SLP) that sets out the policies the Licensing Authority will apply to promote the licensing objectives when making decisions on applications made under the Act. The current Haringey Statement of Licensing Policy covers the period 2021-2026.

3.4 The SLP seeks to provide a necessary balance between providing a platform upon which responsible business operators may thrive and contribute towards a vibrant business and night-time economy, while ensuring that the quality of life of those who live and work in the borough is protected and enhanced through the licensing system. The SLP encourages premises that will extend the diversity of entertainment and attract a wider range of participants rather than premises mainly or exclusively focussed on the sale of alcohol. The SLP aims to develop a more inclusive night time economy and promote high-quality premises that contribute positively to their neighbourhoods.

3.5 The SLP is clear that it does not override the right of any person to make representations on an application or to seek a review of a licence or certificate where provision has been made for them to do so in the 2003 Act. The Licensing Authority may, at any time, reject any ground for review if it is satisfied that the request for review does not relate to the licensing objectives or is frivolous, vexatious or repetitious.

3.6 The National Licensing Policy Framework[1] sets out the government's strategic vision for a modern, consistent and enabling licensing system for on-trade premises in England and Wales. This framework is non-statutory guidance designed to support consistent, lawful and proportionate licensing. It reaffirms the importance of the four statutory licensing objectives as the foundation of a safe and well-regulated hospitality and leisure sector, but the framework also recognises the need to go further. Licensing policy must reflect the evolving role of hospitality, leisure and entertainment in modern society, and support wider government ambitions around economic growth, public health, and cultural vitality. It is a matter of good practice that licensing authorities work collaboratively with planning teams, responsible authorities, businesses and communities to ensure that licensing decisions support wider local priorities and deliver safe, vibrant places to live, work, study, visit and invest.

[1] National Licensing Policy Framework for the hospitality and leisure sectors, November 2025

3.7 When it comes to the evaluation of noise under the Licensing Act an understanding of the concept of *public nuisance* is essential. Public nuisance is not narrowly defined in the 2003 Act and retains its broad common law meaning.

3.8 Once those involved in making licensing decisions are satisfied of the existence of a public nuisance, or its potential to exist, the question is how to address it. Home Office Guidance[2] is useful in this regard and explains that, in the context of noise nuisance, conditions might be a simple measure such as ensuring that doors and windows are kept closed after a particular time, or persons are not permitted in garden areas of the premises after a certain time, noting that conditions in relation to live or recorded music may not be enforceable in circumstances where the entertainment activity itself is not licensable.

3.9 The guidance is clear that any conditions appropriate to promote the prevention of public nuisance should be tailored to the type, nature and characteristics of the specific premises and its licensable activities. Licensing authorities should avoid inappropriate or disproportionate measures that could deter events that are valuable to the community.

3.10 The guidance also states that any appropriate conditions should normally focus on the most sensitive periods. For example, the most sensitive period for people being disturbed by unreasonably loud music is at night and into the early morning when residents in adjacent properties may be attempting to go to sleep or are sleeping. This is why there is still a need for a licence for performances of live music between 23:00 and 08:00hrs even though it is deregulated at other times.

3.11 As with all conditions, those relating to noise nuisance may not be appropriate in circumstances where provisions in other legislation adequately protect those living in the area of the premises.

Other relevant legislation

3.12 In addition to the protection afforded under the Licensing Act 2003 members of the public are protected from noise that is a nuisance.

3.13 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 part III deals with statutory nuisance which includes noise. This Act allows steps to be taken to investigate any complaints which may then result in the issuing of an abatement notice and a subsequent prosecution of any breach of the notice. A statutory nuisance is a material interference that is prejudicial to health or a nuisance.

3.14 The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 deals with many of the problems affecting the quality of the local environment and provides local authorities with powers to tackle poor environmental quality and anti-social behaviour in relation to litter, graffiti, waste and noise. A fixed penalty notice can be issued when noise exceeds the permitted level at night as prescribed under the Noise Act 1996 as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act. The permitted noise level using A-weighted decibels (the unit environmental noise

[2] Revised Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003, November 2025

is usually measured in) is 34dBA if the underlying level of noise is no more than 24dBA, or 10dBA above the underlying level of noise if this is more than 24dBA.

3.15 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 defines anti-social behaviour as *"conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person"*; *"conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises"*; or *"conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to a person"*. The Act contains a range of powers intended to support Local Authority and partner bodies dealing with anti-social behaviour. These include powers of premises closure in cases of nuisance or disorder, which may support primary legislation.

4.0 Application for a review of the premises licence

4.1 The application for the review is brought by the resident of Unit 1C Muswell Hill, N10 3TH.

4.2 Unit 1C Muswell Hill is one of three live/work units formed from part of the development at the rear of 3 Muswell Hill to the north of the covered rear courtyard of Victoria Stakes.

4.3 Planning permission was granted under Planning Application Reference No. HGY/2003/1552 on 20/11/2003 for the conversion of the existing building and first and second (roof) floor extension to provide three live/work units.

4.4 Around the turn of the millenium there was a notable increase in live/work development applications in the area. Local planners looking to find a way of repurposing derelict industrial units settled on the idea of regenerating redundant commercial buildings for mixed-use roles where purely residential use would not be acceptable due to lack of external amenity space, or availability for parking, and instead promoted a 'no-commute' strategy for artisans and creatives. Being in close proximity to other vibrant minds was supposed to foster an inspirational environment while having co-workers as neighbours engenders community spirit. Live/work spaces aren't forever homes, but they suit creatives and entrepreneurs. They also mirror the short-term aspirations of transient young professionals yet to want (or need) a three-bed semi in the suburbs. However, there are drawbacks and within a decade of introducing this concept, neighbouring Hackney Council claimed residents were ignoring the requirement to work in the places they lived, breaching planning consent by treating these spaces as cheap accommodation[3].

4.5 The desire for live/work units has largely ceased in areas where residential property prices significantly exceed those of a mixed use development in repurposed industrial buildings, and it is of note that current Haringey Planning Policy[4] addresses 'Warehouse Living' as a specific type of land use only in defined

[3] Extract from https://www.uk2.net/blog/the-pros-and-cons-of-live-work-spaces/
[4] Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD) Adopted July 2017, Policy DM39

locations and the LPA now specifically resists proposals for live/work units anywhere else in the Borough.

4.6 Condition 4 of the planning consent for Unit 1C states: *The development hereby authorised shall not be occupied other than as livework units in accordance with the submitted plans. Reason: In order that the Council may be satisfied that the development will provide an appropriate balance between residential and employment uses within the site.*

4.7 Unit 1C consists of an open plan ground and first floor work unit, and second floor (in the roof) living accommodation. The ground floor consists of the open plan reception/kitchen area, and a WC, with stairs leading to the first floor.

4.8 The first floor features a break in the floor slab so that the first floor forms a mezzanine over the reception area with the drop protected by a metal balustrade (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Opening in ceiling connects ground and first floor spaces (shown on right of image above window)

4.9 Unit 1C does not appear to have any external amenity space, garden, balcony or roof terrace. The windows to the bedroom (2nd floor) in the converted roof space are Velux-type roof windows and so do not overlook the covered courtyard of Victoria Stakes. The property last sold in March 2022.

Figure 2: A metal balustrade protects those on first floor from the opening in the floor slab which overlooks the reception area at ground floor level

4.10 The Applicant presents her grounds for the review as all four of the licensing objectives: *Prevention of Public Nuisance;* and *Public Safety;* and *Prevention of Crime and Disorder;* and *Protection of Children from Harm.*

4.11 The Applicant states that she has lived at Unit 1C for several years and had no significant issues with the pub's operations under its former management. She adds that since a change of management in 2024 there has been an ongoing and severe pattern of excessive noise, intensification of use and traffic, disturbance, light pollution and management practices. The applicant also states that she first became aware of a change in management in March 2025.

4.12 The applicant confirms she has made noise complaint reports, submitted via Haringey Council's Noise App, with audio and video uploads; made a formal complaint to Planning Enforcement; and made contact with Councillor Brennan.

5.0 Site visit and inspection

5.1 I was already familiar with the area and general activity in this part of London.

5.2 A Public House at this location is first recorded as being occupied by Mrs Eleanor Chamlet, beer retailer & shopkeeper, in 1851. The pub name commemorates the fact that, until 1970, there was a racecourse nearby in Alexandra Park. The story goes that a lucky punter in the Victoria Stakes race at Alexandra Park used his winnings to buy this very pub and so named it after that race.

Figure 3: Painting believed to be from late 19th century

Figure 4: The view from approximately the same position on the day of my recent site visit

5.3 The premises consists of a ground floor main bar area with tables for diners. To the rear is a covered courtyard area, again with tables for diners. A function room is on the first floor.

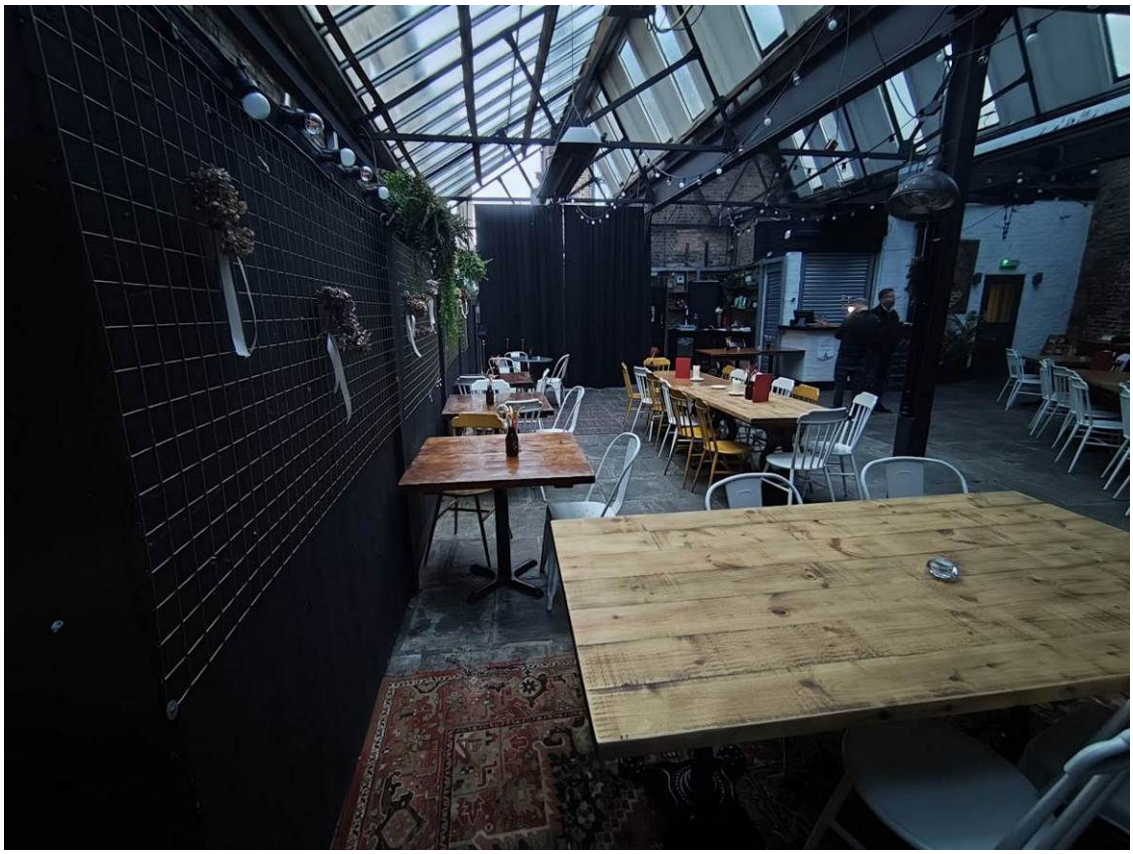

Figure 5: The covered courtyard area at the rear of the premises

Figure 6: Roof over courtyard minimises noise breakout to surrounding area. NB: live/work units are on the right and the upper floor windows are shielded by the roof structure over the courtyard

Figure 7: Signage at the exit route near to live/work units

Figure 8: Signage at the function room emergency exit, note covered courtyard area in the background

5.4 The installed sound system consists of low-power domestic hi-fi components. Passive loudspeakers are powered by two hi-fi amplifiers located behind the ground floor bar. The type and age of these components suggests to me that these have been installed at the premises for a number of years.

Figure 9: Amplifiers for the installed sound system are behind the ground floor bar

5.5 The background music programme selection, and control of operating level, is carried out using a Sonos app. The sound system has been divided into four zones: Ground floor, first floor, bathroom, and yard. During the site visit I tested each zone at maximum level and a summary of these field measurements can be found at Figure 13. The instrumentation record and measurement methodology is provided at Appendix D.

5.6 There is no evidence of music noise breakout from zones inside the building that would give rise to a public nuisance. I did note that noise levels in the WC where disproportionately high and therefore recommended that the gain structure of this zone is modified to attenuate maximum level to < 80dBA.

5.7 Music noise levels in the courtyard were low at 69dB $L_{Aeq,5min}$ and certainly at a level that would be classified as 'background music' and not a licensable activity.

5.8 If required, any element of the sound system could be reconfigured and limited to a defined maximum operating level that is locked and tamperproof. This can be done either through gain limiting in the control software, or physical restrictions (a tamperproof panel) preventing operation of the gain controls on the amplifiers.

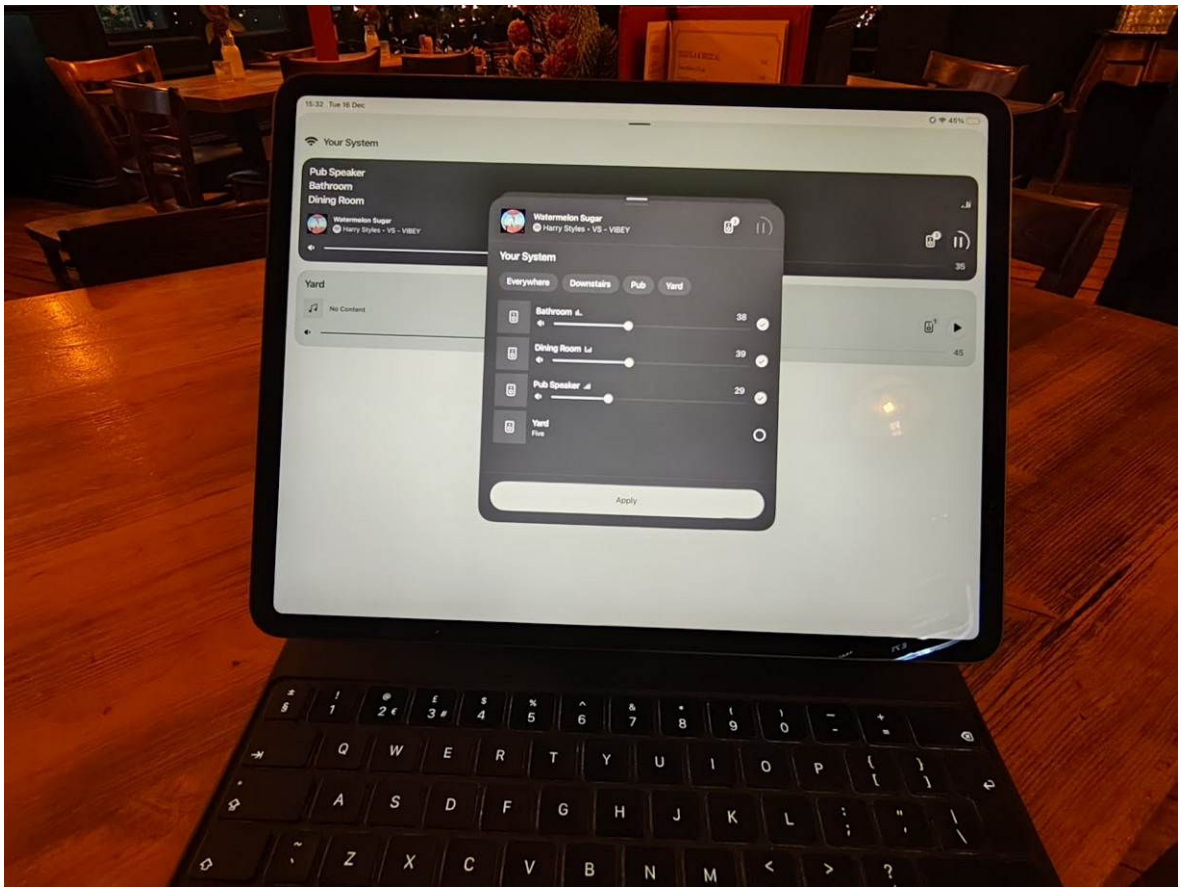

Figure 10: The Sonos control app sets individual operating levels in each of the four zones

Figure 11: A single (domestic) loudspeaker is used for background music in courtyard

Figure 12: There is a sound level meter at first floor level displaying the sound level in the function room

5.9 In the first floor function room there is a permanent sound level meter displaying the measured instantaneous level in the room. This instrument, in conjunction with the noise clauses in the Event Contract (see Appendix E), is used as an effective method of control for maximum operating levels during events on the first floor.

Measurement location	Source	L_{Aeq}	L_{Ceq}	63 Hz	125 Hz	250 Hz	500 Hz	1 kHz	2 kHz	4 kHz	8 kHz	16 kHz	NR	L_{A90}
Courtyard near to Unit 1C	extraction plant, on	52	65	61	58	52	48	48	44	38	28	24	44	46
Courtyard near to Unit 1C	extraction plant, off	54	66	66	60	53	50	50	46	40	30	24	46	46
Ground floor, main bar	music	84	93	85	90	87	81	78	75	72	68	65	75	78
WC	music	90	97	87	93	92	89	83	79	73	70	67	83	83
Courtyard	music	69	79	73	73	68	67	63	60	57	53	51	60	59
First floor, function room	music	78	83	75	74	73	74	76	71	65	62	59	73	68

Figure 13: Field measurement data. All sound pressure levels in dB re: 20µPa

5.10 In summary no music played indoors (at levels amounting to regulated entertainment) resulted in noise breakout that could be considered a public nuisance. Music played in the courtyard is background music only and therefore not a licensable activity. Low-level music playback, in context of the hours of use of the covered courtyard, does not constitute a *statutory* nuisance at this location as long as it is controlled as demonstrated in the field tests.

5.11 In addition to music noise testing the noise from the kitchen extraction plant was evaluated from the rear of the courtyard (as a representative location close to Unit 1C). It was not possible to subjectively identify if extraction plant was on or off and the operation of the extraction plant had no impact on field measurements at this location (see rows 1 & 2 of the measurement data shown in Figure 13).

6.0 Mitigation strategy - operational controls

6.1 Operational management procedures are already in place for the covered courtyard and these will now be formalised in the form of a written policy document incorporating industry best practice management for the use of this space. This, alongside other operational management procedures for the premises, will be live documents and will further evolve over time.

6.2 All noise management procedures will be an integral part of employee training and will be regularly reviewed.

7.0 Mitigation strategy - sound system configuration

7.1 Low-level (background) music in the covered courtyard is not a licensable activity and does not give rise to public nuisance. The existing installed sound system is not new, and pre-dates the current ownership. Basic level limits already exist on all four zones.

7.2 All signal processing equipment is located behind the ground floor bar to restrict unauthorised adjustment of controls. It is recommended that a tamper-proof grill is also installed in front of the amplifier gain controls to eliminate the risk of accidental adjustment of the gain controls.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 Big Sky Acoustics Ltd was instructed by Niall McCann of Keystone Law Limited, acting on behalf of Premium Pubs 1 Limited, to carry out an assessment of potential noise impact from licensable activities at an established public house known as Victoria Stakes located at 1 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TH.

8.2 This assessment makes reference to the Licensing Act 2003, Haringey's Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-26, the new National Licensing Policy Framework, the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, the Noise Act 1996, the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, as well as relevant industry guidance and best practice.

8.3 All noise from activity inside the building is contained by the building envelope. The music system is basic but controls are effective at limiting the maximum operating level in each one of four zones.

8.4 Plant noise is at a low level. Any suggestion that kitchen extract plant cycles on and off during the night it misguided as it requires manual control to operate.

8.5 I have proposed that a Noise Management Policy is formalised for the premises.

8.6 Given the location of this long-established pub, and the ongoing development of the business to be more food-led and positioned at the quality end of the market, it is my professional opinion that the operation Victoria Stakes by Premium Pubs 1 Limited does not introduce higher noise levels than the previous operation of the premises under different ownership, and any activity in the rear courtyard can be controlled with appropriate management procedures so that the prevention of public nuisance licensing objective is always upheld.

Richard Vivian BEng(Hons) MIET MIOA MIOL
Principal Acoustic Consultant, Big Sky Acoustics Ltd

Appendix A - Terminology

Sound Pressure Level and the decibel (dB)
A sound wave is a small fluctuation of atmospheric pressure. The human ear responds to these variations in pressure, producing the sensation of hearing. The ear can detect a very wide range of pressure variations. To cope with this wide range of pressure variations, a logarithmic scale is used to convert the values into manageable numbers. Although it might seem unusual to use a logarithmic scale to measure a physical phenomenon, it has been found that human hearing also responds to sound in an approximately logarithmic fashion. The dB (decibel) is the logarithmic unit used to describe sound (or noise) levels. The usual range of sound pressure levels is from 0 dB (threshold of hearing) to 140 dB (threshold of pain).

Frequency and Hertz (Hz)
As well as the loudness of a sound, the frequency content of a sound is also very important. Frequency is a measure of the rate of fluctuation of a sound wave. The unit used is cycles per second, or hertz (Hz). Sometimes large frequency values are written as kilohertz (kHz), where 1 kHz = 1000 Hz. Young people with normal hearing can hear frequencies in the range of 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz. However, the upper frequency limit gradually reduces as a person gets older.

A-weighting
The ear does not respond equally to sound at all frequencies. It is less sensitive to sound at low and very high frequencies, compared with the frequencies in between. Therefore, when measuring a sound made up of different frequencies, it is often useful to 'weight' each frequency appropriately, so that the measurement correlates better with what a person would hear. This is usually achieved by using an electronic filter called the 'A' weighting, which is built into sound level meters. Noise levels measured using the 'A' weighting are denoted dBA. A change of 3dBA is the minimum perceptible under normal conditions, and a change of 10dBA corresponds roughly to doubling or halving the loudness of sound.

C-weighting
The C-weighting curve has a broader spectrum than the A-weighting curve and includes low frequencies (bass) and so it can be a more useful indicator of changes to bass levels in amplified music systems.

Noise Indices
When a noise level is constant and does not fluctuate over time, it can be described adequately by measuring the dB level. However, when the noise level varies with time, the measured dB level will vary as well. In this case, it is therefore not possible to represent the noise level with a simple dB value. To describe noise where the level is continuously varying, several other indices are used. The indices used in this report are described below.

L_{eq} The equivalent continuous sound pressure level which is normally used to measure intermittent noise. It is defined as the equivalent steady noise level that would contain the same acoustic energy as the varying noise. Because the averaging process used is logarithmic the L_{eq} is dominated by the higher noise levels measured.

L_{Aeq} The A-weighted equivalent continuous sound pressure level. This is increasingly being used as the preferred parameter for all forms of environmental noise.

L_{Ceq} The C-weighted equivalent continuous sound pressure level includes low frequencies and is used for the assessment of amplified music systems.

L_{Amax} is the maximum A-weighted sound pressure level during the monitoring period. If fast-weighted it is averaged over 125 ms, and if slow-weighted it is averaged over 1 second. Fast-weighted measurements are therefore higher for typical time-varying sources than slow-weighted measurements.

L_{A90} is the A-weighted sound pressure level exceeded for 90% of the time-period. The L_{A90} is used as a measure of background noise.

Example noise levels:

Source/Activity	Indicative noise level dBA
Threshold of pain	140
Police siren at 1m	130
Chainsaw at 1m	110
Live music	96-108
Symphony orchestra, 3m	102
Nightclub	94-104
Lawnmower	90
Heavy traffic	82
Vacuum cleaner	75
Ordinary conversation	60
Car at 40 mph at 100m	55
Rural ambient	35
Quiet bedroom	30
Watch ticking	20

Appendix B - Site location

Appendix C - Instrumentation

All measurements were carried out using a Cirrus type CR:171B integrating-averaging sound level meter with real-time 1:1 & 1:3 Octave band filters and audio recording conforming to the following standards: IEC 61672-1:2002 Class 1, IEC 60651:2001 Type 1 I, IEC 60804:2000 Type 1, IEC 61252:1993 Personal Sound Exposure Meters, ANSI S1.4-1983 (R2006), ANSI S1.43-1997 (R2007), ANSI S1.25:1991. 1:1 & 1:3 Octave Band Filters to IEC 61260 & ANSI S1.11-2004.

Description	
Cirrus sound level meter	type CR:171B
Cirrus pre-polarized free-field microphone	type MK:224
Cirrus microphone pre-amplifier	type MV:200E
Cirrus class 1 acoustic calibrator	type CR:515

Noise measurements were made in continuous samples of 1-second intervals. Measurements included the L_{Aeq}, L_{A90} and L_{Amax} indices. Simultaneous octave and third octave frequency spectra were also obtained during the survey. Measurements were taken at 1.5 m above grade level. Measurement duration was typically 1-minute per sample although where the L_{Aeq} had stabilised over a shorter period these measurements were also used. Throughout the course of the survey an outdoor microphone wind-shield was used. For the purposes of this assessment all measurements were paused or restarted for emergency service sirens, aircraft passes, premises occupant movements/talking, and any significant nearfield noise incident.

The calibration of the measuring equipment was checked prior to and following the tests and no signal variation occurred. Calibration of equipment is traceable to national standards.

Appendix D - Meteorology

	Temperature	**Wind speed**	**Precipitation**
At start	9°C	0-4ms^{-1}	Light rain
During assessment	9°C	0-2ms^{-1}	Light rain
At finish	8°C	2ms^{-1}	none
Additional comments: *there was light rain at the start of the site visit.*			

Appendix E – Event contract noise clauses

5. Entertainment & Noise

All entertainment must be approved by management in advance.

Live music is not permitted in the yard.

Music in the yard must end by 22:45 and remain under 65 dB.

Music in the dining room must end by 23:30 and remain under 75 dB.

No fireworks, sparklers, or Chinese lanterns are permitted.