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Dear Neill

RE: STACK Manchester – Acoustics

This letter has been prepared to accompany the noise impact assessment report, and planning application to be submitted to Manchester City Council for the operation of STACK Manchester, Oxford Road Manchester. This letter has been prepared further to the following.

- The temporary planning approval from Manchester City Council for the operation of Hatch, Oxford Road, Manchester (Ref: 124502/FO/2019) which was accompanied by a noise impact assessment prepared by Fischer Acoustics (FA) dated June 2019.
- The operation of the site by Hatch.
- The acquisition of the site by STACK, with proposals to operate the site in a similar way to the former Hatch.
- The variation of the premises licence (Ref: 200769) on the 2nd November 2023 (Variation Ref: 294137).
- The noise impact assessment prepared by Wardell Armstrong LLP (WA) dated April 2024.
- Revised considerations of the operation of STACK facilities.

Acoustics Works Undertaken to Date

The report prepared by WA assessed the potential impact of music and patron noise, and noise from any fixed plant and equipment from the music & entertainment premises at 103 Oxford Road, Manchester, on noise sensitive receptors. The report identified that the proposed music venue would not cause an unacceptable noise impact at the surrounding noise sensitive receptors, which comprised residential receptors and office spaces.

The WA report included an assessment which considered the effect of any music noise from the venue in terms of Noise Rating Curves. This is considered to be a more repeatable assessment method, than that utilised by FA for the original planning application. This approach considers the internal sound level in receptors against known ‘good’ sound levels within living rooms and bedrooms and it is considered to be more repeatable.

The use of NR curves in the assessment is our preferred option for the assessment of entertainment noise in noise sensitive rooms (e.g. living rooms, bedrooms, offices etc).

Proposed Changes to the Venue

The development at 103 Oxford Road comprises a flexible commercial use (Use Classes A1 (shop), A3 (restaurant/cafe), A4 (drinking establishment), A5 (hot food takeaway) or B1 (office)). Originally this premises was operated by Hatch. However, more recently, the site has been acquired by STACK.

STACK seeks to operate the premises in a similar way to that set-out in the April 2024 WA noise assessment report. However, some operational changes are proposed to that considered in the WA, these include;

- Change in the applicant from the Danieli Group to STACK (Manchester) Limited.
- Change to the proposed operating hours, the proposed operating hours comprise the following.
    - Monday to Sunday – 0700-0200hrs (with 30mins to allow for patrons to leave the premises)
- A state-of-the-art loudspeaker system will be installed using Martin Audio equipment. The loudspeakers which will be installed are highly directional. This allows the sound to be directed where it is required. The off-axis sound is greatly reduced when compared with conventional speaker systems. This approach is used across the main speakers which are distributed around the venue, and the low frequency sub-woofer system. Furthermore, the sophisticated speaker system is installed and calibrated to limit the noise emissions received at the nearby receptors.
- A dedicated noise management plan will be prepared by STACK and adhered to. A similar noise management plan is used across the various STACK venues.
- Kroud Karaoke events will be held once per month and between 1900hrs and 2100hrs. These events encourage patrons to sing along to the music and can produce higher sound levels than the normal operation of the venue. These Kroud Karaoke events occur during the less sensitive daytime period between 1900 and 2100hrs.

Summary of the Changes

The proposed operating hours of STACK Manchester are the same as those which are set-out in the licence which has been granted for the venue. Further, the WA noise assessment report considered the potential effect of music noise from the venue during the daytime and night-time. The WA assessment found that the venue could operate during the night-time without causing a significant adverse effect at nearby noise sensitive receptors. Therefore, the slight extension to the operational hours (from 0100hrs to 0200hrs) is not considered to comprise a material change to the assessment, with no changes to the potential noise impact.

The venue will utilise directional loudspeakers, which are installed on a number of STACK venues, and other similar premises. These speakers reduce sound break-out to surrounding premises and receptors, ensuring that more of the sound stays within the venue itself. This speaker system was not considered in the previous WA acoustic assessment report. The installation of the speakers is likely to reduce noise break-out, subsequently reducing music sound at the receptors. This is a positive change to the operations of the venue.

The proposed STACK venue is like other venues which are operated by STACK across the country. The noise emissions from these venues are closely controlled on site and using a noise management plan. This noise management plan includes restrictions to the operating hours, deliveries, and music sound levels. They also include a procedure to test and check the noise emissions as well as one used for complaints. A similar plan will be implemented for STACK Manchester.

The STACK Venue will include a Kroud Karaoke event once per month and for 2hrs (1900-2100hrs). The limited nature and duration of these events acts as sufficient mitigation to control the noise impact at surrounding noise sensitive receptors.

Conclusions

A previous noise impact assessment has been prepared by Wardell Armstrong LLP. The report identifies that, with appropriate controls, noise from the operation of the music and entertainment venue at 103 Oxford Rd, Manchester does not cause a significant adverse effect on surrounding noise sensitive receptors.

Some changes to the venue operations to what was assessed in the WA are proposed, including a slight extension to the operational hours and infrequent Kroud Karaoke events. These changes are not considered likely to cause a worsening to the effect on surrounding noise sensitive receptors.

Furthermore, improvements will be made, when compared with that used in the above assessment. These improvements will include the replacement of the loudspeaker system to one which is more directional, and the implementation of a noise management plan. These improvements will look to reduce the potential noise impact of the development on surrounding noise sensitive receptors.

Therefore, in summary, the assessment prepared by WA dated April 2024 constitutes a worst case-scenario assessment of the potential noise impact of the development on surrounding noise sensitive receptors.

We trust that the information contained in this letter proposal is clear, however, please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any clarifications.

Yours sincerely,
for RPS Consulting Services Ltd



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