Re: Acoustic Verification – Plant Hill Road, Blackley

Planning Consents: *137912/FO/2023* and *144465/JO/2025*

Dear Sue,

We write in relation to the above planning consents and, specifically, the discharge of the acoustic-related planning conditions for the Plant Hill Road development.

As you are aware, the post-completion noise testing has now been undertaken. Unfortunately, the verification survey confirms that the internal noise levels achieved do not meet the levels set out in the **Environmental Noise Assessment** originally submitted with the planning application (IDOM Report Ref: ENA-22522a-23-34, January 2023). The completed testing by **Miller Goodall** demonstrates some exceedances, particularly at the road-facing elevations.

Following submission of the application, IDOM ceased providing noise-related services. In progressing the scheme, we installed the glazing and ventilation strategy exactly as recommended in their report—namely, **standard double glazing and acoustic trickle vents**—and subsequently commissioned Miller Goodall to carry out the required compliance testing.

Their report concludes that *"the derivation of the required sound reduction is an underestimate of the actually required mitigation"*, and that meaningful recommendations for compliance would require a **full reassessment** of the scheme.

Ventilation Options Investigated

In an attempt to remedy the exceedances without fundamental redesign, we explored upgrading the acoustic trickle vents. However, based on data from Simon Acoustic (below), the alternative options available do not provide a materially improved attenuation:

- **Standard Trickle Vents:** 31 dB open / 39 dB closed
- **FV Trickle Vents (installed):** 32 dB open / 40 dB closed
- **EMM Trickle Vents:** 33 dB open / 39 dB closed

The marginal gains achievable are insufficient to address the exceedances identified by Miller Goodall.

Project Impact and Practical Constraints

This situation presents a significant challenge:

- The dwellings cannot be handed over until the condition is resolved.
- The necessary acoustic performance required is now uncertain.
- The scheme was tendered strictly to the specification set out in the original IDOM assessment, with **no budget allowance** for enhanced building fabric or advanced ventilation systems.
- The development forms part of **Project 500**, providing new affordable housing across Manchester; viability has been tightly managed from the outset.

There is a genuine concern that pursuing further reductions—particularly if required to address nighttime LAFmax exceedances—could push the scheme into territory that would have rendered it unviable at planning stage.

Planning Condition Requirements and Next Steps

The planning condition requires submission of the findings *as they are*, together with any recommendations to achieve compliance. Given the circumstances—and the disconnect between the installed measures (based on the approved assessment) and the now-identified exceedances—we believe it is appropriate and necessary to seek the Council's professional input on a **pragmatic and proportionate solution**.

We are therefore requesting guidance from the Planning Service on:

1. **Whether, in this specific context, an alternative compliance route may be acceptable** where mitigation beyond the originally approved specification would jeopardise project viability.
2. **What form of additional evidence or justification** the Council would require to support a revised approach to discharging the condition.
3. **Whether a reassessment by Miller Goodall** (as suggested) should be commissioned prior to further dialogue, or whether a more collaborative approach would be preferable given the underlying viability constraints.

Conclusion

We trust that the enclosed documentation clearly explains the technical position and the limitations of further mitigation at this stage. We are committed to working proactively with the Council to agree a reasonable and deliverable way forward that recognises the

affordable-housing nature of the scheme and the reliance placed on the originally approved Environmental Noise Assessment.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further at your earliest convenience as we are commited to the relationship with both Project500 and Manchester City Council.

Yours sincerely,
Jenni Pocsai
Assistant Project Manager
Irwell Valley Homes
[redacted]