

Mr Zahid Khan
Premises Licence Holder
After Dark
Via email

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Your contact is: **Rebecca Moon - Environmental Protection & Nuisance**

Dear Mr Khan

Re Acoustic report, After Dark Nite Club, 112 London Street, Reading, RG1 4SJ

Thank you for providing me with a copy of your acoustic report on 11th June 2019 (Completely Sound, After Dark Club Reading Acoustic Report, ref 03-03.ADR.0519).

I note that this was provided later than the 10 working days prior to the review hearing due to take place on 18th June, that was requested by the licensing committee at the previous adjourned hearing, and only after I requested it from you by letter on the 6th June.

However, I have had a chance to review the document and would like to submit the following comments and questions regarding the report:

- A sound insulation test has been carried out to determine how much sound is attenuated between the After Dark and the interior of the resident's property. 34 dBA has been proposed as an acceptable noise level within the resident's property and a limit of 90 dBA has been proposed for inside the After Dark. A number of recommendations have been made regarding improvements in sound insulation and in the type of noise meter being used to determine the volume of the music.

There are a number of matters which are not clear or are missing from the report and I therefore have limited confidence in the conclusions. I have outlined my concerns below:

- A number of recommendations for noise insulation have been proposed on page 12 e.g. sealing of vents and windows, isolating sub woofers from the floor. Is the 90 dBA limit reliant on these having been carried out or is it based on the current building structure?

- Whilst the sound insulation test was of some interest, what should be carried is a real world test - to play music within the club and operate the MC microphone in a manner that is typical of when the club is operating, and then measure the noise break out, both objectively and subjectively to determine a noise limit, otherwise we do not know how representative the assessment is. It would be best to actually carry out measurements during a typical club night event.
- Is there any raw data from the assessment to show the noise level that was played inside the club and the level that was measured inside the resident's property?
- During the noise tests that were carried out, the resident reported that music was played, but that the level of noise experienced within her flat were not typical of the nights when she experiences noise disturbance.
- There is mention of the background traffic noise affecting the measurements, and the background noise level would be different at around midnight when the club is operating.
- The frequency content of the music has not been taken into account the assessment.
- It is not clear which of the noise limits is being proposed. On page 11, in table 7.1 the limit of 90 dBA inside the club is based on the resident having their window closed. In table 7.2 the breakout noise limit of 49 dBA to be measured outside the property is based on the windows being open. How does this relate to the proposed 90 dBA within After Dark? If music is played at 90 dBA inside, is this limit met? Was this tested? How does this relate to sound levels at second floor where the receptor is? Page 12 notes that sound levels were subjectively higher at 2nd floor level.
- The club has previously stated that there is a noise limiter being used (e.g. page 51 of committee report). The report confirms that there is not. Instead it is a noise meter being checked to see what the current level is and volume is turned down if it looks too high. The report states that this noise limiting system could be effective if a different meter is used which provides an average level, however, only if it is solely a resident DJ, which is not the case in reality as the club holds events run by promoters and also has live music events. (see page 13) There is evidence that shows that sometimes the club operates and does not cause a nuisance, and sometimes it operates and does cause a nuisance. Ultimately this must be because the music being played is not of consistent volume, suggesting that the limiting system in place at the moment is not effective - would the use of a better noise meter be enough to resolve this or should a proper noise limiter be installed?
- No mention is made of the different types of events that the club holds and how this affects the assessment conclusions - the assessment should take into account live music, internally-run club nights and events run by promoters.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Moon
Senior Environmental Health Officer