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VA4834 SEACOURT TENNIS CLUB, HAYLING ISLAND

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Response to Review

Following our report (4834.230817.NIA) assessing the likely impact of the proposed new padel courts on surrounding dwellings, a review has been undertaken by Impact Acoustics on behalf of a concerned neighbour. A stand-alone assessment report was also produced.

Unfortunately, Impact Acoustics was not aware of a subsequent report (4834.231204.NIA) issued in December 2024, in which the height of the proposed acoustic screens was increased from 2m to 2.5m, and the width of the screen extended to the east to provide additional protection to the southern neighbours.

The background sound levels measured by Impact Acoustics were within 2dB of the original measurements and no concerns have been raised regarding the methodology.

The primary objection raised by Impact Acoustics was that the noise levels in gardens would exceed the Sports England recommended limit of 50dB and façade levels would be higher than the existing ambient sound levels. However, the measurements of the ambient noise levels were not taken at the first-floor level, so care should be taken when making a direct comparison.

The review by Impact Acoustics considered the 2m high fence originally proposed in the Venta report. Following comments from Havant Council, the proposed fence height has been increased to 2.5m. This is predicted to result in the following sound levels, which closely align with Impact Acoustics' predictions for a 2m high screen (using less onerous data):

Receptors		Predicted LAeq
Dwellings to the South	First Floor	52 dB
	Ground Floor	48 dB
	Garden	50 dB
Dwellings to the North	First Floor	47 dB
	Ground Floor	45 dB
	Garden	50dB

Table 1 – Predicted Sound Levels from Padel Courts (2.5m high fence).

This demonstrates that the Sports England requirements are met in all locations with the exception of the first floor level at the dwelling to the south, where the exceedance is 2dB above the Sports England Criteria. Impact Acoustics also argues that the sound level is greater than the existing ambient sound levels, but these measurements were not taken at the first-floor level, so care should be taken when making a direct comparison.

As discussed in the report, the use of the padel courts only during the daytime suggests that the ground floor and garden areas are most relevant.

It should also be noted that the assessment has considered two courts in constant use (no breaks between rallies, for change of games, etc.), and so provides a robust scenario. Actual usage intensity is likely to be lower, resulting in lower sound levels.

The primary disagreement between the two reports is that Impact Acoustic argues that the sound of padel is significantly different to tennis to constitute a change in the acoustic character of the area. Venta has acknowledged that there is a difference in sound, which would be discernible. However, it must also be acknowledged that racquet sports are already played in the area, and the impact must be lower than an equivalent scheme being introduced to a site with no such history.

It is with consideration of the above context (considering first-floor windows during the daytime in an area with pre-existing racquet sports) that the initial assessment of a moderate impact can be downgraded.

Notwithstanding the above, Seacourt Tennis Club have voiced willingness to increase the height of the acoustic screen on the south side of the courts to 3m if required as an act of good will. Impact Acoustics has confirmed that they would consider this to meet all the acoustic requirements. This would be in addition to the proposed noise management plan, which should also include signage reminding players of their proximity to residential dwellings, as suggested by Impact Acoustics.

Implementing the proposed mitigation measures, including acoustic screens and a noise management plan, is expected to manage sound levels well and meet recommended limits for most areas. Considering the existing daytime use patterns and presence of racquet sports the overall impact of the proposals are expected to be low.

Yours sincerely
on behalf of Venta Acoustics

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