



Russell House Major Works (project T168b)

Question and Answer Sheet

The questions in this document were raised by leaseholders who attended the one-to-one leaseholders meeting held at Churchill Gardens Community Hall on Tuesday 20th and Thursday 22nd of June 2023.

Summary of the Russell House major works:

Russell House was originally part of the major works programme, T168 Churchill Gardens Estate Phase 6 in 2017. However, following the outcome of United Living's detailed window surveys it was recommended that window replacement works should be added to the works at Russell House. Furthermore, the residents at Russell House requested the scheme be put as a stand-alone project. WCC decided that Russell House should be completed as a standalone project due to the size of the project. The proposed works will be completed under T168b which includes roof works, window replacement works, external repairs, internal/ external decoration works, installation of lightning protection system and dry riser mains.

For more information on Russell House T168b project, please visit the major works webpage:

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/russell-house-major-works-project-t168b/details>

Why are you doing these works?

These works are required to maintain the internal and external fabric of the building. It will ensure your homes are in a good state of repair, safe and free of building and services related defects. Also, to the works, Health and Safety relating to electrical services and emergency lighting are also required to improve the safety of residents in the event of an emergency.

What was the initial proposed scope of works and cost in 2022?

Window replacement, Roof replacement, Communal Walkway works, Balcony works, Drainage works, External repairs, External Decorations, Communal Decorations, Electrical works, Bin/Pram Shed works, Fire Safety works and Ventilation works (tenants only).

Estimated project cost: £3,067,084

For more information, please visit the major works website.

What additional works have been added to the scope?

We had a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) carried out by an external consultant to Russell House and they recommended the following is required.

- 1 Upgrade all doors to both staircase with FD30's, (Fire Escape Route).
- 2 Upgrade all FED doors to the dead-end balconies with FD30's, (1st – 3rd Floors).
- 3 Upgrade the windows along the dead-end balconies to Fire Rated Glass (1st – 3rd Floors).
- 4 Construct compartment leading to both staircase fire escape route (1st – 3rd Floors).
- 5 Upgrade Emergency lighting to LED, a provisional sum £100k has been allowed, this may be reduced if it is as simple of replacing the lighting fittings.
- 6 Review / upgrade external lighting on the grounds.



- 7 Additional costs were added for the renewal of the FED, this is because the doors are integrated with the windows in a lot of the cases and these need to be replaced as in item door and frame combined.
- 8 Similarly, the doors to the private balcony, will be upgraded to double glazing units in line with the windows.
- 9 Brick cleaning

What is the proposed cost for the project considering the recent additional works?

The estimated cost of the project is now £4,550,137.

When is the project due to start on-site?

2024 and completing in 2025.

Why is the cost immensely high compared to the 2022 figure of £ 3,067,084?

Due to the unpredictable market interest rates, material and labour cost has increased. The FRA has also instructed to include the additional works listed above. We also projected some anticipated cost up to when the project will start on site, which will be 2024 / 2025, and have applied a 30% uplift on the costs.

You said the latest total project cost is £4,550,137. Is this the final cost?

This is an estimated budget, the contractor will provide the actual cost to carry out the works, which will be scrutinised by Westminster City Council (WCC).

Who will scrutinise the contractor?

Senior and qualified staff from the Commissioning Team at Stage 3 when the project progresses.

At what stage are we currently in with the T168b project?

We are currently in the initial planning stage of the project. For more detail on the stages, please see the [Key Stages](#) information below. You can also see the live progress of the project on our major works website.

Reason for windows being replaced?

According to the condition surveys, all the windows will be replaced due to the window frames having been severely deteriorated and extremely weak.

Can the residents choose the type of windows they want?

Residents will be given a choice of UPVC, Timber or Powder Coated Aluminium during the design stage.

Will the windows be double glazed?

Yes.

Will my property's front door be replaced, and if so, why?

Typically, front door replacements are the responsibility of the leaseholders. However, due to the requirement for all properties to have an FD30 door installed in accordance with the Fire Safety Act, this responsibility now also applies to leaseholders to ensure compliance.



Why do we need upgraded lighting and emergency lighting?

The council has a duty to ensure residents' safety and facilitate safe movement in and out of the block with improved LED lighting. Emergency lighting will be installed to provide illumination in the event of a complete blackout, ensuring visibility in critical situations.

Why is the cost of upgrading emergency lighting to LED so high (£100k)?

The potential reason for the high cost is that, after the electrical surveyor inspection, it is possible that the entire block may require rewiring. In such a scenario, a budget of £100k was estimated to cover the necessary electrical work.

Will scaffolding be included in the project?

Yes.

Will the scaffold be equipped with alarms?

Yes.

How long will the scaffold remain in place once installed?

The completion of works on the entire block will occur in phases. Therefore, when the contractor begins their work, the scaffold will be installed section by section rather than covering the entire block. We currently do not have an estimate for how long the scaffolding will be in place for each section. However, we will have a clearer answer once the project progresses to the Service Provider Proposal stage.

Is the council offering a contract out to tenders to make a formal bid for this project?

This has already conducted, and at the start of 2018 we entered a ten-year partnering contract with two major works contractors to deliver major work: one in the north and west (Axis Europe) and one in the south and central (United Living) of Westminster. The benefit of doing this include:

- Reducing costs associated with the procurement of major works
- Helping to reduce internal project management fees to less than 12% per project
- Allowing us to give more reliable dates when works are due to start
- Enabling us to manage contractors more effectively

United Living will be the contractor for this project.

Would that mean United Living could inflate the price since you have a contract with them?

Westminster City Council has conducted thorough due diligence to understand the costs associated with raw materials, labour charges, and an estimated total for the works at Russell House. During stage 2, specifically the Project Execution Plan (PEP) stage, United Living will evaluate the project and provide a PEP outlining their projected costs for completing the works. The Council will review the PEP and determine if the proposed costs are reasonable. If the Council finds the costs unjustified, the project plan will be reassessed, and United Living will be asked to re-evaluate and resubmit the PEP. However, if project costs increase due to inflation, we will consider this to be a justified adjustment.



What projects has United Living carried out for WCC?

- Z251 Glastonbury House
- Z117 Anson House Roof
- Y142 (s) fire door replacement phase 1
- Y112 (N&S) K&B's
- X107 Vale Royal (on site, due to complete Dec 2024)
- V120 Lisson Green
- S159 Millbank
- AC111 Sullivan House Roof
- AC103 Wharncliffe Gardens (on site, due to complete Jan 2025)
- AB121 Turner House Roof
- AA902 Grosvenor Community Hall
- W103 Avenue Gardens (on site, due to complete Jan 2024)

You share the programme of works?

Will be available in Autumn 2024.

When did the last major works take place at Russell House?

Completed in November 2006 and consisted of roof works and external decorations.

Russell House was part of the Churchill Estate Major Works project (T168). What was the cost for the project at the time?

**Major works Project T168: Churchill Gardens Estate and Russell House
Summary Scope Of Scope of Works**

| | Scaffolding | External decs | Internal decs | Window repairs | Structural/concrete/brickwork repairs | Asphalt repair or renewal | Communal window repairs | Roof works | Timber repairs | Metalwork repairs | Tidy cables on exterior | Electrical works | Fire stopping works (FRA) if required | New kitchen & bathroom fans, Estate & drainage works | Roof access & security works | Water tanks & associated works | Balcony works |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Chaucer | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| De Quincey | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Erskine | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Gifford | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Langdale | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Selden | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 7 Telford Terrace | * | * | | * | * | | | | | | | | | * | * | | |
| Russell | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Shelley | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * |
| Keats | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * |
| Coleridge | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | |

The original client brief budget for T168, which included 7 Churchill Garden blocks and Russell House was £2,632,783.



Why did the Major Works not take place in 2017?

Following the outcome of United Living's detailed window surveys it was recommended that window replacement works should be added to the works at Russell House. Furthermore, the residents at Russell House requested the scheme be put as a stand-alone project. WCC decided that Russell House should be completed as a standalone project due to the size of the project.

Why did the council not inform the residents that Russell House will be removed from the T168 Churchill Major Works project?

We wrote to resident in March 2022 explaining that Russell House would now be a standalone project under project code t168b. See the major works website (Ref: 11 03 2022 Russell House major works - project update letter)

Leaseholders were not informed that if Russell House were to become a standalone project, it would necessitate starting the project from scratch, leading to a delay in its commencement date. This delay, coupled with the yearly rise in inflation, would also impact the overall cost. Why was this crucial information not effectively communicated to us?

Included in the letter referred to above we did say that Asset Strategy team would review the original plans and a meeting would be arranged to reintroduce the project. This meeting was held on 24 August in Churchill Gardens Community Hall.

See the major works website (Ref: 11 03 2022 Russell House major works - project update letter, 25 07 2022 Russell House major works - invite to residents meeting and 01 09 2022 Russell House major works T168b - Q&A)

The decision to commence the project in 2024, rather than 2017, has had a significant impact on the proposed project cost. Inflation and the cost of raw materials have notably increased since 2017. Is the council willing to take responsibility for this delay and cover the additional costs incurred due to inflation?

TBC

Will you install extractor fans to my property?

Only tenants' properties.

Who conducted the survey, and could you please provide the survey report?

There were four separate consultants reports for Russell House to identify, the condition of the building, mechanical and electrical system, NPV on the windows and a Fire Risk Assessment. These reports could be circulated, but would need to be redacted to conform with data protection laws.

Who prepared the Fire Safety Report, and could you please provide the report? Who is the consultant for this project?

Gunfire - Passive Fire Protection Contractors

Who is the consultant for this project?

Playle & Partners.



In 2006, external decorations were carried out on the block. Why are you planning to redecorate?

WCC has an obligation to keep the properties in a good state of repair, major works is generally carried out every 12 years to help achieve this.

In 2006, the decorations were done, but the paintwork was of poor quality and did not last even a year. Will you reduce the bill to compensate us in the T168b project?

We cannot speak to the quality of work undertaken in 2006. After works are completed, there is a defects period within which issues can be rectified, beyond this measure we cannot offer any redress. The redecoration cycle is generally every 12 years, the decorations would have been carried out in 2017 but this was delayed for varying reasons and have lasted, however they now require attention.

Would the Sinking Fund be utilised to cover some of the costs and ease the financial burden on the leaseholders?

As far as we are aware there is no sinking fund.

Will we see pictures of the design of the windows?

Yes, at stage 4 of the project.

How long will it take to complete the on-site work?

1 year.

I am a leaseholder, why are you replacing my entrance door?

Usually, leaseholders replace the doors. However, we will need to match the FD30 doors for all properties in the block to meet the health and safety standards.

We will need a Steering Group so residents of Russell House come together and make decisions together. Is this something you can arrange?

Lindsay Jenkins, who is your Resident Advocate, will contact you to organise a working group.

The toilet windows do not open. Can you replace the toilet windows with a window that can be opened?

Yes, upon majority residents' request. We will organise a Project Execution Plan and Service Provider Proposal meetings were residents, as a collective, request this. You can also raise this request in your Steering Group meeting with your Resident Advocate, Lindsay Jenkins.

How many leaseholders in the block?

47.

What is the tenants' contribution to the costs?

Tenanted properties percentage is funded by Westminster City Council's Housing Revenue Account (rental income).



What are the main costs of the project?

Various costs, but main costs will be scaffolding, FD doors, windows and emergency lighting.

What kind of windows will you be replacing?

You can request for a Timber, UPVC or Powder Coated Aluminium. Timber windows will require repairs every 7 years, where as powder coated aluminium does not require repairs every 7 years but more expensive to install than Timber framed windows.

What is the estimated cost on the scaffold?

The estimated cost for scaffolding is approximately £300K.

Can the scope of works completed in phases instead of all to be done in the same year?

We could look into this; however, we advise the proposed scope of works to be completed in one go as raw materials and labour charges increases every year.

Can the scaffold cost be reduced, so not all the blocks are using the scaffold in one go and it is used block by block?

How do you plan to repair the external bricks?

We have not finalised, but we may apply acid washing, pressure washer or steaming washer.

What is the management cost for the major works?

We are still in the initial stage, and the costs have not been finalised yet. This information will be known to us after the PEP stage. The management cost will also be included in the Section 20 notice of estimate.

Will the window frame be changed?

All windows will be replaced and will have a new frame.

Is Russell House a listed building?

Russell House is not a listed building.

Would the major works affect the design and the structure of the building?

The structure and the core building design of the building will not change. The changes will only be made on the windows and the design of the windows. We will also install a new bauer roofing system.

What will be the cost for leaseholders?

The Leasehold Operations Team will calculate the cost, and this will be provided in your Section 20 Notice of Estimate.

When will we receive the Section 20 notice?

During stage 5 Leaseholders' consultation and once the Service Provider Proposal is finalised, we will issue leaseholders with a Section 20 Notice of Estimate. The notice will outline the description and justification for each aspect of the works, provide details of project costs, block costs, and estimated individual leaseholder liabilities. Leaseholders will have 37 days to submit written observations.



How do we make payment?

After receiving your Section 20 notice, you will receive an estimated invoice where we present you with various payment options. You then return your payment option form and direct debit mandate to us.

What are the payment options?

| Invoice | Term | Payment options available |
|---|------------|---|
| Up to £2,000 | 12 months | If your invoice is under £2,000 you can spread your payments over 12 equal monthly payments. No interest is charged. |
| £2,000 and above | 24 months | If you receive an invoice for more than £2,000 you can spread payments over 24 equal monthly payments. You must complete an extended payment instalment form. No interest is charged. |
| £2,000 and above (Resident Leaseholders only) | 60 months | If you receive an invoice for more than £2,000 you can spread payments over five years in 60 equal monthly payments. This option will not be made available where the property is sublet, owned by a company, or owned by a housing association. You must complete an extended payment instalment form. No interest is charged. |
| £20,000 and above (Resident Leaseholders only) | 120 months | If you receive a bill for more than £20,000 you can spread payments over ten years in 120 equal monthly payments. No interest is charged for months 1-60. Interest is charged on the balance remaining at month 60 at 1.5% above the Bank of England Base rate for months 61-120. This option will not be made available where the property is sublet, owned by a company, or owned by a housing association. You must complete an extended payment instalment form. |
| £20,000 and above | 300 months | If you receive a bill for more than £20,000, Westminster City Council is now offering a Discretionary Service Charge loan, available to all leaseholders who are unable to secure borrowing from their mortgage company or a personal loan. The service charge loan will be secured by a way of a legal charge on the property for a maximum of 25 years. Interest will be charged at a variable rate of 1.5% above the Bank of England base rate and will be reviewed annually. You will also need to pay the administration costs involved. Westminster City Council is only a lender of the last resort. |

What if I am unable to make the payment?

In such cases, a Discretionary Loan can be obtained, which will be secured by a legal charge on the property for a maximum period of 25 years. The loan will accrue interest at a variable rate of 1.5% above the Bank of England base rate and will be reviewed annually. Please note that there will also be administration costs associated with the loan.

Key stages and communications related queries



What are the key stages under the major works project?

There are a number of key stages that take place to develop and deliver each major works project. We will update residents at each stage, hold residents' meetings and publish the relevant documents on our website for your information and comment.

Stage one Client brief: We have carried out initial inspections and surveys to confirm the expected scope of works required. We have also prepared the budget for the work based on experience of costs from similar projects. The first introductory meeting with residents was carried out to discuss this.

Following the resident's introduction meeting, we will carry out a final review of the planned works. The client brief will be submitted for final approval. The final client brief will be issued to United Living and a copy will be published on our website.

Stage 2 Project Execution Plan (PEP): United Living will write a detailed plan of how they will deliver the works based on the client brief and this is called the Project Execution Plan. United Living will provide their cost estimates at this stage. We will invite you to another residents' meeting before we approve and sign off the PEP.

Stage 3 Pre-commencement order: once the PEP has been approved and signed off, we will issue a pre-commencement order to the contractor. This gives the contractor permission to move forward with the final design details of the project and this is called the Service Provider Proposal.

Stage 4 Service Provider Proposal (SPP): We will invite residents to the third residents' meeting to review the Service Providers Proposals document prior to final instruction.

Stage 5 Leaseholders' consultation: Subject to final revision of the SPP, we will send leaseholders a **Section 20 Notice of Estimate**. The notice will set out the description and reason for each aspect of the works. It will detail the project costs, set out block costs and estimated individual leaseholder liabilities. Leaseholders have 37 days to make written observations.

Once the statutory notice period expires and all observations responded to, the contractor will receive a **commencement order** which allows them to start.

Stage 6: Before works start on-site, the contractor will write to you to introduce their onsite team, their contact details, and invite you to a '**meet the contractor**' event. The purpose of the session is to provide you with information on what work is involved, how it may affect you and the approximate timescales. We will also provide you with a clearer indication of a start on site date. We expect the project will take one year to complete all the 9 blocks.

Stage 7: As the work nears completion, we will arrange a site walkabout. This is an opportunity for you to inspect the work with the contractor's and council's project teams. This will allow us to pick up on any concerns that you may have about the works and to get them rectified before the contractor leaves the site.

Stage 8: Completion and defects period: Once the works are complete and approved by Westminster City Council, we will write to confirm the project is moving into the 12-month defects period. The defects period means that any issues that occur with the works during the next 12 months can be referred to the contractor to address at no additional cost.



Stage 9: End of defects sign off: we will write and tell you of this and advise how you can report any issues outside of the defects period. Also, an aftercare booklet and instruction manuals for new equipment and safety certification (where applicable) will be given to you.

Where can I get more information?

If you have any questions about the planned works, we will be happy to help. Please contact us by:

- Calling our Customer Services Team on 0800 358 3783 - ask to speak to Lindsay Jenkins in the Resident Advocate Team
- Emailing residentadvocates@westminster.gov.uk and include T168b on the subject line.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shah Alam'.

Shah Alam
Resident Advocate