



Wharncliffe Gardens Major Works Questions and Answers September 2021

The questions in this guide were raised at the online session held on 1 September 2021.

➤ The Project: Blocks, Scope of Works, Contractor and Timetable

Q: Which blocks are included in the project?

A: As part of the project, we will be carrying out works to the following blocks:

- Ashby Court
- Castleford Court
- Helsby Court
- Rothley Court
- Birch Vale Court
- Cheadle Court
- Hucknall Court
- Winchelsea House
- Brackely Court
- Elmton Court
- Pennyford Court

Q: What works are included in the project?

A: The scope of works for the project is summarised below:

- Roofing repairs.
- Brickwork repairs.
- Redecoration to all internal communal areas and previously painted surfaces.
- Replacement of windows with double glazing (excluding Winchelsea House and Pinner Court).
- Replacement of flooring to all communal areas.
- Replacement of communal front entrance doors.
- External estate-wide repairs.
- Upgrading of lateral mains.
- Upgrading of estate communal lighting.

Q: Why are you doing the works?

A: The works are required to keep the buildings in good order and to maintain the internal and external parts of the buildings and estate.

Q: Who will be doing the works under the project?

A: **United Living** will be delivering the project. They are our Long Term Partnering Contractor appointed to carry out major works in the central area of the borough.

Q: When is the project expected to start?

A: Pending Section 20 Notice of Estimate consultation with leaseholders, the project is expected to start onsite in January 2021.

Q: How long are the works expected to take?

A: The project is planned for 88 weeks, with an estimated completion of September 2023.

Q: What has caused the delay to the project starting?

A: The project was originally tendered as a single contract via a two stage European procurement process. However, due to the long term viability of the nominated contractor to deliver and complete the project we cancelled the procurement process and made the decision to use our

Term Partnering Contractor to deliver the project. The change in procurement approach resulted in the delay to the works. During 2020, there was also a delay to the project due to COVID-19 as our Term Partnering Contractor furloughed staff. We are now progressing with the project and do not expect any reoccurrences of this type of delay.

Q: What stage is the project at and what are the next steps?

A: The project is in the final planning and approvals stage. United Living has drafted a Service Providers Proposal (SPP), which we have approved. The SPP is the detailed plan of how the work will be done including the method of work, the costs, and the timetable for completing the work. You can view the Service Providers Proposal (SPP) using the following link:-

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/wharncliffe-gardens-repairs-and-decorations-project-aa102>

The next stage is leaseholder consultation, via a Section 20 Notice of Estimate. Once this has concluded we will give United Living the approval to prepare for the start of the project onsite.

Q:When will works be done to my property?

A: Until the start date is confirmed we cannot say when works will start at your block / property. However, United Living plans to work in the following order: Elmton Court, Hucknall Court, Helsby Court, Birch Vale Court, Rothley Court, Pennyford Court, Brackley Court, Cheadle Court, Castleford Court, Ashby Court, Winchilsea House. Before works starts onsite United Living will write to you to confirm the programme timetable and timescales.

➤ **Window Questions**

Q:Where can we see the proposed windows and how they work?

A:The different windows have been fitted at the Residents' Hall. We will be organising two resident drop-ins' sessions in the autumn, where you will be able to see the windows and how they work. We have included with this Q and A drawings of all window types for your information.

Q: How long will it take to fit the windows in each property?

A: United Living plan to replace all the windows to a property in a day. They will discuss your circumstances with you and confirm the expected timescale before starting in your property.

Q: Will any damage caused to my decorations around the windows be made good?

A: United Living will make good any damage caused. However, due to the fitting architrave around the window there should be no visible damage to any decorations.

Q: Will the window in the communal hallways be double glazed?

A: Yes, the windows in the communal areas will also be double glazed.

Q:How long are the guarantees for the windows and window fittings?

A: All works will be covered by the 12 month defects period as well as a 10-year guarantee on the windows and 12 months guarantee on the window fittings (handles, hinges and restrictors).

Q: If a window fails in the guarantee period, who covers the scaffold cost if required?

A: United Living would cover the cost of the scaffold if needed to repair a failed window.

Q:What should I do if my current windows need urgent attention?

A: If you have concerns about the safety of your windows please contact customer services on 0800 358 3783 to book fan inspection of the windows to ensure that they can be made safe.

Q: Will you be changing all fans in the kitchen and bathrooms?

A: We will be changing the fans in all tenanted flats. However, leaseholders will be given the option to opt-in to the ventilation works at additional cost, we will write to you separately with details of this.

Q: Will leaseholders be given a choice of windows?

A: No, the window designs have been approved by us and the Planning Team.

Q: I am a leaseholder, what happens if I have replaced my own windows?

A: Where windows have already been replaced to leasehold properties we will require documents to confirm that you have received both planning permission and freeholder's permission to replace these windows. Replacement windows to leasehold and tenanted properties will be subject to onsite surveys and replaced as required. Please note that where leaseholders have replaced their own windows with or without the required permissions they remain liable for their cost contribution to all other windows replaced to the block as is defined in their lease.

➤ **Other Queries: Quality, Flat Entrance Doors, Security**

Q: How many coats of paint will the walls receive?

A: The paint used in the communal areas is a special fire-retardant paint and 2 coats will be applied using the manufacturers required specifications.

Q: Are the textured walls in the communal areas be smoothed?

A: There is no allowance in the original scope of works for the smoothing of the communal area walls. We have looked into the additional cost of this and once we have allowed for the cost of the works plus the additional time to the programme which would add further preliminary costs, we do not feel that the extra cost to each leaseholder could be justified by these works. We note the comments regarding the "sharp points" to the textured walls and will discuss with United Living a suitable preparation method which might help to minimise this.

Who will be checking the quality and standard of the works?

A: United Living have their own Quality Management standards in place which are detailed in their Quality Management Plan, a copy of which is included as part of their SPP. Over and above this the Westminster Quality Manager will inspect the completed works to ensure they meet the standards set out by the council.

Q: Do tenants have to have their front entrance doors replaced?

A: Yes, tenants are required to have their front entrance doors replaced as this is to ensure the building is compliant with current building regulations.

Q: I am a leaseholder; will my flat front door be changed?

A: As leaseholders own their flat front door they will not be automatically changed as part of the project. However, we are encouraging leaseholders to opt-in to the door replacement at cost price. We will discuss this with you, including prices, when the project starts onsite.

Q: If I opt-in to have a new front entrance door, will I get a choice of colours?

A: Leaseholders who opt-in to have their door replaced will have the option to choose the door colour from a choice of 4.

Q: Will leaseholders have to pay for the tenants' doors?

A: Any tenant only specific work, such as the replacement of tenant front entrance doors, is not rechargeable to leaseholders.

Q. What action are WCC taking to substandard leaseholder front doors that are not being replaced and may compromise fire safety to the block?

A: WCC have appointed a QC and are awaiting their formal legal advice in respect of this question. We will provide an update to residents once we have reviewed this advice and developed an agreed strategy based on this.

Q: Some Residents have issue with overheating how will that be addressed?

A: If you are experiencing problems with your heating, please contact Housing Enquiries via telephone customer services on 0800 358 3783 or email them at housing.enquiries@westminster.gov.uk.

Q: Will the scaffold have security?

A: United Living will install an alarm to all scaffolds and place fencing around the bottom of the scaffold. They ensure all ladders are removed and secured, at the end of each working day.

Q: Have you considered fitting CCTV in the blocks?

A: CCTV is not included in this project. There is a procedure in place for the fitting of CCTV which is evidence based. Residents should contact customer services at housing.enquiries@westminster.gov.uk to report incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB). This will allow the ASB team to collate evidence to justify the fitting of CCTV.

➤ **Leaseholder Consultation and Costs**

Q: I am a leaseholder, how much will the works cost me?

A: At this time we are unable to provide an estimate of individual costs as these will depend on each leaseholders' lease terms and proportion due under their lease. If you are a leaseholder, we will send you a Section 20 Notice of Estimate which will detail your estimated liability for the project.

Q: When will the Section 20 Notice of Estimates be served?

At this stage we plan to send the Section 20 Notice of Estimates in October 2021. The notice will set out the description and reasons for each aspect of the work. It will detail the project costs and your estimated individual liability. You will then have 37 days to make observations.

Q: How can Westminster justify the rise in costs?

A: The rise in costs have been caused by three principle factors, the first being there have been three cost-significant items added to the scope of works, the replacement of the lateral mains supply to all properties, the installation of upgraded estate wide communal lighting and the need for extensive below ground drainage cleaning and repairs all with an impact on project duration and Preliminaries costs. The second factor is the shortage of materials and labour leading to rising costs. The third has been the inevitable (if small) rise in price indices since the last project costing was undertaken.

Q: The pandemic has caused some financial hardship; how can I get help with the costs?

A: Any leaseholder experiencing financial difficulties should contact us on 0800 358 3783 or housing.enquiries@westminster.gov.uk. The team will be able to talk through individual circumstances and discuss what payment options may be available.

➤ **Project Information**

Q: Where can I get more information on the project?

A: There is a dedicated project website, which includes the project documentation, copies of letters and the latest news. You can view the website at:

www.westminster.gov.uk/wharncliffe-gardens-repairs-and-decorations-project-aa102