

Emanuel House Major Works Meeting and questions from the meeting

9th May 2023

18:00 – 19:30

City Hall, Victoria Street

Webpage: [Emanuel House Proposed Major Works \(cwg13297\) | Westminster City Council](#)

Attendees

- Chris Barnard (Faithful & Gould), Phil Owen (WCC), Kevin Dey (WCC), Malcolm McMichael (Project Manager), Holly Igglesden (WCC),
- 9 in person leaseholders
- 3 on TEAMS

Questions

1. Faithful and Gould (F&G) carried out a survey to ascertain condition of windows. How did F&G survey the windows?

F&G carried out an initial survey of the windows in communal areas and surveying the other windows from ground level up. They were able to see that all the windows were installed at the same time and are now long past their economic life (according to the BRE research results), mastic is failing and the mosaic tiles surrounding the windows are falling away from the cladding behind, making it unsafe.

2. Why are the windows being replaced now?

- The window components are failing, and some windows are inoperable as they are significantly beyond their normal life expectancy.
- The poor thermal insulation has an impact on Environmental issues.
- The high-profile conservation area requires profiles to be consistent and the Planning officer is unlikely to want windows done ad hoc
- Scaffolding is expensive so it is more economical for all the windows to be replaced at once.

3. Why is scaffolding required and why can't the windows be replaced from inside the flats?

Health and Safety regulations require safe working. Scaffolding is much safer for the contractors doing the works and it is safer for the public. The repair of window reveals can only be done from the outside.

4. What other work may be needed to make the building safe and improve thermal efficiency?

The external fabric of the building may require attention. These options will be considered by an architect in a detailed report that will be shared with residents but may include:

- Recladding
- Over cladding
- Refixing cladding

5. What evidence is there that justifies the windows needing to be replaced?

A Chartered Building Surveyor has been appointed to carry out surveys of the windows and they will go into each flat, subject to access being provided, to ensure a full survey is carried out.

6. Will it be just the flat windows or the lightwell windows as well and how would scaffolding get erected for the lightwell windows?

Scaffolding can be erected over the top of the building, but a contractor will be required to submit a scaffolding design which will need to comply with H&S requirements.

7. There is an issue with ducks and pigeons making a noise and droppings, how will this be managed?

WCC will approach the managing agents to identify what solutions are available.

8. When will F&G be doing the window surveys?

Subject to access, the surveys will take place over the course of the next 3-4 weeks.

9. What else have F&G been asked to look at in the building?

F&G have also been asked to look at the underfloor heating system, internal floor plans for the flats, external cladding and the roof.

10. How are residents expected to pay for the works?

The major works service charge booklet from the website page identifies how the Council can support repayments. The Council can talk to individuals and agree repayments based on residents own personal financial situations.

11. Should the Council have done the works in 2010 according to the Scofield Lothian report and will some of the window costs be covered by the council if found to be the case?

Now that the Scofield Lothian report has been shared a legal view on this issue will be obtained. The council has a legal duty to collect money that is due.

12. What are the next steps

- Inspection for further justification of the works as outlined above
- Appoint an architect to review remedial cladding work options within next 8-10 weeks
- More detailed inspection and specification document with consideration given to other window frame option.
- A procurement process will be carried out in line with Westminster's procurement guidelines to get the best contractor for the role based on cost and quality. The process will be shared with residents.
- Quality inspections will be undertaken throughout the contract.

13. Has the Council asked a developer if they are interested in the site?

No.

14. Major works and Insurance: If insurance is split between the council and leaseholder flats how is this calculated.

In the case of a major event i.e. fire which affects the whole block, the leasehold insurance covers the leaseholder for a proportion of the communal areas as per the lease agreement. Each leaseholder is responsible for a proportion of communal areas and a contribution will be made in the event of a major claim.

15. There was a note on a council website that the existing insurer is withdrawing from the market and that there was only 1 insurer that was in this market now. The result was that people would see an increase for insurance on their service charges. Is this right? If so - does this mean that only this insurer is prepared to insure buildings like Emanuel house?

The note on the Council Website is correct. Avid parted ways with their insurer capacity so they were unable to offer terms for 23/24. The Local authority residential leasehold insurance market has proved very challenging. Unfortunately, Ocaso and Zurich had also recently exited the Residential Leasehold Buildings Insurance market leaving Protector Insurance as the only insurer providing a quotation.

16. Can there be an extension to the purchase of the freehold until after the works are completed?

The council has maintained that the major works and the purchase of the building are two separate issues. However, an appeal against this and a request for a meeting will be submitted to the cabinet member to consider, following receipt of a request from the Residents Freehold Purchase Committee.