

Emanuel House Major Works Meeting and questions from the meeting

24 November 2022

18:00 – 19:30

City Hall, Victoria Street

Attendees

- Holly Igglesden (WCC), Phil Owen (WCC), Kevin Dey (WCC), Lindsey Brown (Blenheims)
- 15 in person leaseholders
- 4 on zoom

Questions

1. When will you be able to provide a definitive list of the scope of the work required under the section 20?

- Surveyor to be instructed to undertake detailed specification this year (2022)
- Specification drafted Spring 2023
- Contract to be signed Autumn 2023
- Potential works to start Spring 2024

During each of these stages WCC will be updating leaseholders and offering them an opportunity to meet to discuss the progress of the project.

2. Where has the initiative come from for these major works?

Following residents' complaints regarding faulty windows a survey (by Earl Kendrick) was carried out in August 2021 of the windows only. This survey recommended that all the windows were replaced to ensure they were compliant and in line with current building regulations. Earl Kendrick (EK) advised that as a scaffold is required for the window replacement in order to be cost effective a full survey should be undertaken. This survey took place in March 2022 which highlighted a number of urgent items which can be found in the reports.

3. Given the Freehold Purchase timeline, why is there the urgency to proceed with these major works at this time?

The Freehold Purchase should be considered separately from the obligations that the council have to keep the building safe and well maintained, Westminster council have a duty to rectify urgent repair issues in a timely manner.

4. What discussions have taken place within WCC as to the potential impact of the proposed major works on the purchase of the freehold by leaseholders?

There will be no impact on the purchase of the freehold. The freehold, if purchased by the leaseholders needs to be completed by July 2023. This would then happen before any contract for works is signed leaving the decision regarding the future of any works with the new freeholder.

5. What input does WCC envisage leaseholders will have in preparing the scope and specification of the works?

All leaseholders will be consulted during and updated throughout the process.

6. What is the earliest date that WCC would expect the works to begin?

It is anticipated that the works will commence in Spring 2024.

7. Why do we need to replace all windows, even if they are working?

Some of the windows are not compliant and cannot be repaired. Whilst some windows may be in acceptable condition (but not compliant), if they do fail this would mean having to restart the process and obtaining quotations for another scaffold to be erected. It is more efficient to carry out the replacement of all windows at the same time. If windows have been replaced recently and are compliant these may not need replacing.

8. How much will these works cost and what do we do if we cannot afford the cost?

We have received budget costs which include scaffolding, however once a surveyor is appointed and a specification is drafted this will be sent out to tender for actual costs.

The Council is in the position to be able to fund these works and work with residents to pay back the cost over a period of time if they cannot afford the cost out right. The council uses the same process for those in social housing and supports a loan arrangement with zero interest for the first 2 years . Going forward, it is suggested that a sinking fund could be set up to cover costs such as these in the future.

9. If residents own the freehold are we obliged to carry out the works?

It is recommended but as freeholders it will be your decision and responsibility to manage the maintenance, safety and compliance of the building.

10. Section 20 requirements have not been achieved.

We have served the notices in accordance with Section 20 of The Landlord and Tenant act 1985. As per the guidelines for the Section 20 notices, the managing agent has described the proposed works and reasoning's for these works in general terms.

11. Can we have a leaseholders meeting in City Hall without WCC present?

Meetings without WCC officers are not permitted – there is a cost to having additional security and reception staff as the building is shared with the Parliamentary Estate. WCC would however be willing to pay for a space at one of the [WCC community halls](#).

12. For the last major works WCC liaised directly with leaseholders. Why is there a need for Blenheims to fulfil that role this time? What experience and skills do they have to do so? What is the anticipated cost of their involvement?

Blenheims will be administering the Section 20 Notices in their capacity as managing agents of Emanuel House, the project will be managed by the surveyor and/or a project manager.

13. Earl Kendrick recommended that their Condition Report - on which the justification for the Section 20 Notice was based - be read in full in conjunction with the "accompanying Planned Maintenance Programme" (page 7). Will WCC make this Planned Maintenance Programme available to leaseholders?

This will be available on the website as part of the March 2022 report.

14. How can we contact you?

Emailing the dedicated email account emanuelhouseproject@Westminster.gov.uk

Phoning 07739317727

Emailing the managing agent Lindsey Brown at lbrown@blenheims.co.uk

Visiting the dedicated webpage that will be available for you to see updates during the process. The site will be live in the new year and the website shared with all leaseholders.

15. If VAT is payable by leaseholders on these major works, can WCC confirm that if it is able to reclaim any VAT back, this reclaim will be refunded to leaseholders in full?

We are consulting with our VAT advisors and will revert in full in due course.

16. What else needs to be done to make the building compliant and energy efficient?

This question will be proposed to the surveying team to consider during production of the detailed specification.