

Minutes of the Asset Management Working Party

Monday, 4 April 2022: 5:30 - 6:15 pm by Zoom.

Officers:

Mike Saunders
Jason Hayes

Residents

Christopher Makin (Chair)
Tim Cox (took the minutes)
Henry Irwig
Tam Pollard
Randall Anderson
Matthew Dendy
Margarita Chiclana

Apologies:

Fiona Lean
Ted Reilly

1. Minutes / Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of 21 February 2022 were approved, with no corrections or additional items being raised.

2. Underfloor Heating Working Party

It was agreed at the previous meeting that the AMWP and the Underfloor Heating Working Party (UHWP) should work closely together on matters of common interest. The Chair reported that he and Ted Reilly had now joined the UHWP to ensure alignment.

Mary Durcan has resigned as Chair of the UHWP because of other commitments.

3. Savills Stock Condition Survey

It was reported at the last meeting that officers are creating components to load into the City's asset management system, Keystone, based on the Savills survey. This is a manual process because of the number of different kinds of component that could be recorded in a building.

Jason Hayes reported that this process is on target for completion by the end of May.

4. Window survey

Mike Saunders is awaiting a quote from a surveyor to assess the condition of top-floor windows around the estate.

Henry Irwig reported that, on a recent walk around the estate, he was struck by the different exposures of different facades to the weather. He suggested widening the scope of the survey, as discussed in December, to include sampling of windows in other exposed areas (e.g. at the back of Ben Jonson, where lower level windows are not protected by overhanging balconies).

The survey would also address: (i) The location of currently problematic or suspect elements; (ii) A description and classification of the various types of deterioration found; (iii) An analysis of the various root causes of each type of deterioration; (iv) An evaluation of alternative methods for repair and/or replacement; (v) An indication of the potential costs and benefits involved.

ACTION: Mike Saunders to add sampling of other windows to the survey.

5. Garchey

Ahead of the meeting, Mike Saunders had provided a report from a contractor, which formed the basis for discussion. The report concerned communications with Thames Water (TW).

The Garchey is a combined grey (kitchen waste) water and surface (rain) water system. Building Regulations Approved Document Part H5 requires any system for discharging rainwater to a sewer to be separate from the conveyance of foul water (which includes grey water). See: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442889/BR_PDF_AD_H_2015.pdf. TW think any Garchey replacement would need to comply.

The balcony drainage connects to the Garchey stack at each level from roof downwards, so separating rainwater and grey water could potentially require redirecting these connections to a separate down service. The installation of separate drops is potentially very problematic in terms of feasibility, cost and disruption and this will need further consideration.

TW have also stated that they would consent to a surface-water connection to a public sewer only when it has been proven that a hierarchy of disposal methods (set out in the report) has been examined and proven to be impracticable. There should also be a preference for green over grey features, in line with a drainage hierarchy”.

The report concluded by recommending that City of London engage a firm of Public Health Consulting Engineers to provide the expert advice required to move this forward to a conclusion.

Tim Cox and Randall Anderson queried TW’s views. Mike Saunders confirmed that, under the existing arrangements, solid waste from the Garchey ends up in a tanker, but all the water passes straight through to the public sewer. The Garchey should no longer be used for much solid waste given the recycling arrangements for residents, and the amount of grey water should reduce if the Garchey is removed because there would no longer be a need to flush the bowls. Since rainwater already flows to the sewer via the Garchey, it is difficult to see why there should now be an examination of other disposal methods (most of which seem clearly impracticable).

In response to a question about interim cost savings, Mike said there were only 3 members of the Garchey staff, which was the minimum required (allowing for holidays, sickness, etc).

[TC Note: On a brief look, Building Regulations Approved Document Part H5 looks as if it “applies only to a system provided in connection with the direction of extension of the building”.]

ACTION: Mike Saunders to revert to TW with our challenges.

6. Fire Signage

Jason Hayes confirmed that the application for listed building consent had been submitted.

In response to a question about the need for signs, Jason confirmed that signs were needed only if there was a risk of confusion about the exit route to take if there is a fire (including whether to go down or up). This meant that some blocks would need signs but possibly not all.

ACTION: Jason Hayes to confirm which blocks will require signs.

7. Fire Door Replacement Programme

Jason Hayes reported that the audit of doors was complete and there were more different types of door than first thought. Work was now starting on a brief for the design team and on identifying whether any types of door should be prioritised for risk reasons. Once designed, each type of door would need to be tested for fire resistance. There may be some scope for conforming doors to reduce the number of different types, but this is likely to be limited for listed building reasons.

ACTION: Jason to confirm number of different door sets, and potential number to be tested.

8. Redecorations

Jason Hayes reported that work is progressing around the estate (and Henry Irwig said that the work in Bryer seemed to be “good and thorough”).

Following the meeting, Jason provided the following report on the cost implications of the delay in starting work and exclusion of the door sets from the programme:

The tender for the Barbican Estate Redecoration Programme 2020-25 closed at the end of October 2019. Post tender negotiations with the successful bidder (K&M McLoughlin) were opened shortly after with a 2% reduction in price secured as a Best & Final Offer in February 2020. Due to the unprecedented circumstances brought about by the global Covid-19 pandemic which took hold in March 2020, execution of the contract was suspended in order to minimise the risk of exposure to residents.

During this period of suspension, the proposed redecoration of residential front doors was omitted from the contract sum as these were scheduled for short term replacement. This saw a reduction in the region of £60k to the contract sum. It is accepted that this reduction would not cover the full balance of the omittance of the front doors, however, during the extended period in which the contract was on hold the construction industry was experiencing cost inflation in advance of 5%. The redecorations contractor would have been well within its rights to request an uplift in line with the cost increases they were facing (as did many of the other contractors the City has been working with during this time).

As a gesture of good will, K&M did not apply a general uplift but will have recovered a small portion of the cost increases against the reductions applied to the front door omittance. A 5% uplift on a £3,500,000 contract would equate to an additional £175k. Officers, in a Progress Report (June 2021), argued that the result negotiated was a good outcome for residents and recommended proceeding with the contract; this view was supported by the RCC and BRC. Contracts were formally exchanged with the contractor in November 2021.

9. Lifts

Jason Hayes reported that Gateways 1 to 4 had been written and would be presented to the next RCC meeting. These Gateways cover the steps from obtaining approval to start the project up to obtaining permission to proceed to tender the work.

Jason was asked about whether other lifts were likely to require work in the near future so that the tender could include them and benefit from economies of scale. This would be covered in the stock condition survey.

10. Roof Working Party

As recorded in previous minutes - *The outcome of the Savills survey would determine the need for, and constitution of this WP.*

11. Dates of Future Meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for 5:30 on Monday, 13 June with Ted to take the minutes.

Meeting (and minute takers) are also scheduled for:

1. 26 September, Fiona
2. 5 December, Henry