

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Working Group Briefing Note

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Summary

A working group was formed that brought together key departmental leads, with the purpose of understanding any potential risk in relation to RAAC in any City of London owned property (c.1200 assets in total).

A systematic approach to filtering and consequently inspection, was rolled out to all properties. This exercise is now fully complete, with 3 properties being confirmed as containing RAAC. All properties containing RAAC are medium to low risk and its presence should not affect operations or residual values of those properties in the future.

The filtering process was developed and aligned with industry guidance. Whilst the group cannot categorically confirm that RAAC isn't present in all areas of the portfolio, it can confirm that it is unlikely to be present in the rest of the portfolio. In addition, a process has been put in place that will enable individuals to highlight any areas of concern and information developed as part of the working groups exercise will be centrally held, much in the same way as registering asbestos.

Approach taken by working group:

1. No specific central asset data on RAAC was held, as it had previously never been a requirement of organisations to do so. All relevant departments have now undertaken full review of all properties and relevant structures to be able to satisfy this requirement. The Corporation had **over 1,200 properties** which needed to be assessed.
2. Departments with direct responsibility for the building and/or day-to-day estate management for each asset were tasked to undertake an initial review of their portfolio, using central guidance (tailored for the CoL as a best practice way of filtering). This was used to filter out properties unlikely to contain RAAC and enable prioritisation of remaining properties. Priority is based on the impact if RAAC were found rather than the likelihood of it being present.
3. Those properties identified as potentially containing RAAC, were then visually inspected following Dept for Education guidance. When RAAC was suspected or access prevented a suitable visual survey, a more detailed inspection was undertaken by a surveyor following The Institute of Structural Engineers guidance and where needed, intrusive work to establish the condition of any RAAC identified.

This task is now complete, the outcome is:

- Out of 1227 properties, 334 were identified through the filtering process as potentially containing RAAC.
- Visual inspection of the 334 properties, identified 48 which recommended an inspection survey.
- Inspection surveys of the 48 properties, identified 3 properties containing RAAC;

Property	Where found	Inspection undertaken	Next steps	Cost of works to date
City of London School (Boys)	Main Hall roof	Intrusive inspection undertaken by external consultants. These confirm the area can remain in use.	Additional inspections to internal roof void (restricted access) to ensure record drawings are correct, due to complete in Feb/March 24.	External surveys – c.£15k Further surveys – c.£10k
City of London Girls School	Several internal intermediate floor areas (4 in total)	Detailed visual inspection & intrusive survey by external consultants <u>Remediation works completed in December 2023.</u>	Minor repair works required to one small area, planned over half-term period. 3 yearly inspection required to monitor going-forwards	Surveys c.£30k Completed works c.£70k
Units 1-5 Europa Trade Park, Canning Town (Investment Property)	External wall areas to warehouse units	Inspection by technical officer	Intrusive inspection by external consultant, no immediate remediation works have been required.	Proposed surveys c.£10k
Total				c.£135k

Noted in relation to identified RAAC

1. The Corporation undertook initial surveys of the City of London School for Girls in 2022 and RAAC was only identified in limited areas. Structural Engineers undertook further investigations, in late 2022/early 2023 that confirmed the RAAC to be in good condition.
2. Following updated guidance from the Institution of Structural Engineers (ISE), a detailed and intrusive inspection was undertaken in early October. This confirmed there were some minor issues that only require addressing once convenient, and a 3-yearly inspection cycle is sufficient to mitigate any risks for some time to come.
3. Just one area noted above required more rapid intervention to the City of London School for Girls. This is due to the original construction method of some floor planks in the New Hall that don't align with the new ISE guidance. Permanent remediation works were completed during the Christmas break (December 2023).
4. All properties remain in use. It is anticipated that there will be no impact on the residual value of any of these properties.

Conclusion

It must be noted that whilst all reasonably practical steps have been taken to identify RAAC, this cannot guarantee RAAC isn't present within inaccessible areas of a property. Going forward, including inspection for RAAC during major work projects will be implemented to manage any residual risk from unknown RAAC.

Appendix A – Background information

Background to RAAC

1. Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) is a lightweight, form of concrete commonly used in construction between the 1950s and mid-1990s. It is usually found as precast panels in roofs (commonly flat roofs) and in floor, cladding and wall construction.
2. In the 1980's many failures of RAAC roof planks installed in the 1960's was reported and many such installations were demolished. The review undertaken by the Standing Committee on Structural Safety (SCOSS) in 2019 noted that RAAC was used for walls, and it was possible that there were RAAC floor planks, but no failures of these had been identified in their review.
3. Failure of RAAC was associated with poor design, installation and most significantly - maintenance, especially in roof planks where exposure to moisture could have an adverse effect on the material.
4. In March and October 2022, the Department of Education emailed all schools, asking them to complete an online survey on the presence of RAAC in their properties.
5. Subsequently in September 2023, following the collapse of RAAC within two properties, previously assessed as being satisfactory under existing guidance, schools were advised to mitigate any area where RAAC had been identified.
6. Government have now advised that all properties should be checked for the presence of RAAC, and risk controls implemented where it is identified.