

## Wimbledon Hall – Stage 1: Observations and responses

### **1. Given the 'extensive' nature of the proposed work at Wimbledon Hall and the 'significant financial implications' for leaseholders why didn't you inform them of your plans before April 2017?**

We constantly monitor the condition of our buildings. We carry out regular site inspections and hold key information on stock condition and expected lifespan of building components.

Following recent inspections there are elements of Wimbledon Hall that are showing signs of aging. This coupled with our response maintenance history over the past year and repair requests has highlighted the need to undertake further investigations.

We began looking at the scope of work required in early 2017. The initial tender investigation process lasted for three months and involved looking at the following elements:

- Present stock condition
- Site surveys and measurement
- Site impact for leaseholders and residents
- Contractors with the competency to undertake the project
- Possible refurbishment materials and costs
- Site meetings with suppliers and manufacturers
- Means of project delivery
- Correspondence with building control

The data collected from the feasibility study formed the information provided to residents on the scope of work required.

### **2. Why didn't you follow best practice and use a reserve fund to help leaseholders?**

Leaseholders are required to pay into a sinking fund to cover the cost of cyclical maintenance. The amount contributed by leaseholders varies, so some leaseholders may have contributed a larger amount than others depending on how long they have a leasehold interest at Wimbledon Hall. Further information about the balance of the sinking fund will be provided in Stage 2 of the Section 20 consultation when we supply Notice of Estimates.

### **3. You are required by law to consider the financial impact on tenants when considering the reasonableness of works. Do you agree it's unreasonable to incur these costs immediately when they could be phased over a longer period of time?**

We need to undertake a series of major works in order to maintain Wimbledon Hall for the future. If the works are not undertaken some structural and weather protecting elements will continue to deteriorate and will eventually cost more to repair..

We anticipate leaseholders will be invoiced in the summer of 2018 following service charge reconciliations. We may be able to offer discretionary payment plans to leaseholders and anyone requiring further information about the options available should contact the home ownership team for help and advice.

**4. Should this consultation not be delayed to provide more cost information to customers?**

The next stage of the consultation will relate to the costs for works. Stage 1 of the Section 20 consultation has now been completed and we will shortly be in a position to tender for a preferred supplier(s). We will write to you to let you know the estimates we have received and at this stage you are also able to send us any further observations in relation to the costs of the planned works.

**5. During the last 35 years there have been four changes in management companies. They have let the development deteriorate. Aster appear to be redressing the situation but by not phasing work over a period of time they have given no consideration to customers.**

We are sorry that you have felt let down in the past by the service you have received. By carrying out the works required at the same time as replacing elements which have reached the end of their life expectancy and require scaffolding we are able to keep the costs down in the long term. We are always looking to improve our service and moving forward we are developing 30 year plans so that you can see when works are likely to be due and budget appropriately.

**6. Car parking issues because of the use of scaffolding in the car park which has left 15 spaces not able to be used.**

There are 30 car parking spaces located within the grounds with a further 29 spaces per block in the communal basement car parks. Approximately 13 of these per block will be affected, so a total of 26 car parking spaces will be unavailable during the course of this project. There are therefore 62 car parking spaces available for use whilst the works are being carried out. Unfortunately until the project has been awarded to the successful contractor we won't know for sure on timescales but are estimating a four month period.

We have approached Bournemouth Council to discuss whether there are any options available for on the road parking and we will let you know once we've heard back.

We do know that Derby Road has unrestricted parking and Knyveton Road has restricted parking. Both roads offer some flexibility for any parking issues at Wimbleton Hall, if any should occur.

The contractors will inevitably need some parking for their vehicles during the works however this will be discussed once a contractor is appointed and will be kept to a minimum. These vehicles will only be parked during working hours (core hours are 8.00 am – 5.30 pm).

## **7. Queries regarding works to TV system:**

### **How long will customers be without service?**

The proposal to replace the existing cable /SkyTV system has been looked at by one of our local suppliers. They have assessed the work and will supply and fit the majority of the new cabling and conduit at a height of approximately 2.400m so that any future maintenance or upgrade work can be carried out using a ladder. The new cabling will be fixed to the buildings prior to the existing system being disconnected, and as a temporary measure the old feeds will be diverted onto the new system to keep the downtime to a matter of hours. Engineers will need to go into each individual flat and connect each property.

Whilst the work is being carried out the connection may be disabled for a morning or an afternoon, but it will be kept to a minimum.

### **Will there be any warning?**

All residents will be advised that the TV/Sky signal will be temporarily disabled; this may be done via a letter in advance and on some occasions it may be via the contractor knocking on the door and advising that there will be some downtime whilst they work on their property.

### **What happens to Sky dishes currently in place and how will they be serviced?**

We will need to check whether permissions have been granted for existing satellite dishes. If permission is in place then these dishes will be fixed to the plant room as per the current arrangement. Access to the roof will be permitted but would need to be requested for each visit in order for the health and safety requirements to be satisfied.

### **Will the upgrade to the TV system retain a coaxial feed to each flat so that Freeview can continue to be received?**

The new system will provide digital (Freeview) TV / DAB radio / Satellite 1 & Satellite 2 connectivity via a unit plate as shown below, the cables needed are the same as the ones you normally use to connect to your TV, Freeview box, Sky box and other devices.



**Will the new cabling (and any containment) be run over the exterior of the building as has been the case with the conduit feeding the CCTV cameras?**

The new cabling will need to be run inside of trunking. Care and consideration will be taken when fixing this to the external elevations. The contractor will try to keep the trunking as discrete as possible, in principle, it will be one band of trunking all around each of the buildings and then for the cable runs to spur off to feed each individual flat.

**8. Will installation of the new infill panels affect the internal decor behind the panels?**

The new infill or façade panels should not affect the internal finishes to any flats. The internal wall is constructed from block-work, and will not be disturbed when the existing Superlux facade panels, insulation and timber framework are removed and replaced with an improved construction build-up.

**9. If the aluminium windows are not being replaced (and presumably neither is the 'silver' door furniture on the communal doors) why was 'gold' door furniture chosen when the flat doors were replaced?**

Unfortunately we cannot comment on why gold furniture was selected rather than silver. The current maintenance team were not involved in decisions made during the time of installation.

**10. No mention is made of the damaged handrails beside our pathways.**

Once the contractor has been appointed we will undertake a joint survey on site and will pick up on any areas that may need additional repairs.. We are aware that some areas will need additional remedial works.

**11. What work is proposed with regard to the cavity insulation?**

The current cavity wall insulation has aged and is known to have degraded. A thermal imaging survey was undertaken earlier this year which identified cold spots where there are void spaces in the cavity wall insulation. In some

areas it has started to sag and drop, this can then be a contributor to condensation inside of the building. There may also be moisture retention in the cavity due to the failed pointing at high level which can mean rain is able to get in and compromise the mortar joints. The external works due to take place will address these issues.

The proposed new cavity wall insulation will be installed using a PVA glue to bind it together, and once installed it will offer much improved thermal efficiency within the blocks.

**12. Will the voids left by removal of the redundant gas flues be in-filled with matching brickwork or covered with a panel that is aesthetically sympathetic to the brickwork?**

Any gas flues that need to be removed will have the immediate area of previously cored through brickwork opened up in preparation for new brickwork to be reinstated. This will be done in a stretcher bond fashion using matching coloured bricks and mortar.

**13. Can you confirm repointing work will take place?**

We plan to extract the current cavity wall insulation and undertake any necessary re-pointing works. We will then refill the cavity with new insulation. Should we discover any further defects with the fabric of the building, this will get assessed and where possible will be added to the current programme of works.

**14. Queries relating to the use of scaffolding:**

**Would you tell me, please, which part of Health and Safety Regulations led Aster to decide that scaffolding would be necessary for the forthcoming major works at Wimbledon Hall as opposed to the use of cradles?**

We need to adhere to the Work at Height Regulations 2005 when planning of a project of this nature.

**We were informed that due to Health and Safety we must use scaffold which is the most expensive option. This is untrue and both cradles and mast climbers use method statements and risk assessments.**

We have sought independent advice and the consensus is that in order to deliver this project in a cost effective and timely way scaffolding should be used.

By using scaffolding will be able to apply the correct level of planning in accordance with the Construction, Design and Management (CDM 2015) regulations and adhere to s health and safety regulations, specifically the working at height regulation 2005.

# ASTER

GROUP

In relation to the cradle systems, this type of system is often used for specific work areas. It will have an impact on cost and would mean that the timescales/duration of the works when considering the individual phases associated with this project would be much longer.

For example, different contractors would need to use it at different times so all work types to one elevation would need to be completed at the same time before dismantling and then erecting to a different elevation. Should there be the need to return to an area, the cradle would need to be repositioned and set up again, and this may prove ineffective time management.

The mast climbing platform systems have been designed to be mounted on a flat surface without obstacles. Wimbledon Hall has ground level changes, the building has projections and recesses to work around and it would be difficult to get this system around the back of the blocks and onto the car park flat roofs, and support would still be required.

We would also need to comply with the lifting operations and lifting Equipment Regulation 1998 (LOLER) when using a hoist type system. This would require checking and professional inspection regularly. Additional costs would be required to cover this.

It is essential to have the main roof perimeter at parapet level protected. This can only be achieved using scaffolding with guardrail to ensure the safety of the contractors. The team will be required to work on the very edge of the roof and will be leaning over to complete tasks such as dressing down the new felt system. The scaffolding will ensure that in the event of an accident that any site operatives or stray materials will not fall from a height of nearly 15 metres.

Cradle systems are also restricted from being used during times of adverse weather and when the wind reaches speeds of 25 mph and above, so would no doubt encounter periods of down time.

This project will have multiple contractors delivering the range of works required. The risk of downtime can bring with it compensation claims from the contractors to cover unpredictable circumstances. This could increase costs, where delivery of this work using scaffolding would, be agreed as a fixed cost, limiting the risk of additional charges for downtime.

This will be discussed further when a full assessment is undertaken prior to the project starting.

**If scaffolding is used then there are regulations stating netting must be used which would leave residents in permanent darkness over the winter period.**

We understand that this is inconvenient; however the netting of the scaffolding is required. It plays an important part in preventing any falling

debris and helps contain dust being generated during the raking out of deteriorated pointing whilst the works are undertaken.

**Much of work can be done without scaffolding. Some necessary work could be done now using cradles and funded from the sinking fund.**

Whatever means of access is chosen, it will have its advantages and disadvantages.

Scaffolding is a fixed price and provides safe controlled access to all areas and permits multiple tasks to be undertaken simultaneously. Cradles may be initially less expensive to setup, but they need to be constantly repositioned, there is a weekly hire charge and you need different sizes for accessing the projections and recesses of the block. In addition, should the weather become adverse for a long period of time then the project will be put into down time and the contractor will be able to levy compensation event charges against the contract.

There are other factors to be considered, all site operatives will need to be trained, cradles will need to be inspected, large areas will be cordoned off and a banksman will be needed to constantly supervise teams to limit the risk of materials being accidentally dropped and risk injuring anyone.

There is a sinking fund, this has been confirmed in our responses, the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and the FAQs included with Stage 1. It is intended that the balance is used towards the cost of the major works.

**15. When will you be able to confirm the start date for this work since it is important that our tenants are kept fully informed**

We had hoped to start works in Oct/Nov 17 depending on when the S20 consultation completed and we can instruct contractors to commence. However due to the procurement process this has now been delayed and we would look to instruct a contractor following the end of Stage 2 of the S20 process. This is likely to be early December dependent on observations received. We will keep residents updated and give notice before any works commence on site.

**16. I do not believe these works should be classed as 'major'. It is a simple roof job, repointing and treatments to the building. They have been turned into major works on price alone.**

We do not class the works as identified in this contract as minor works. The work required includes: -

- Roof renewal to main blocks including other lower roofs
- Brickwork pointing
- New cavity wall insulation
- New insulation and facade panels

- Removal of redundant flues and associated brick work
- Communal TV aerial system
- Washing down of windows
- External decoration

**17. As I understand the present political situation the government does not take kindly to management companies visiting unnecessary costs on residents**

We have a duty of care to make sure this work is implemented and delivered in accordance with the current HSE guidelines. This includes listening to contractors and their views on how best to implement this work in a safe and controlled environment.

**18. What is the relationship between Aster Group and Aster Property? Is Aster Property, in fact, a profit making company that earns Aster a sizeable 15% profit from contracted work, much more than is needed for administrative costs?**

Aster Property is a legacy brand which now no longer exists. Aster Property now forms part of Aster Group.

We will use external specialists' to deliver the planned works scheduled for Wimbledon Hall. There will be a 15% administration charge applied to the overall costs of the project and this is for the management of the project. This will cover the development of the project plan, surveyors' time, management of the works and monitoring of the contractors which is not unusual for this work.

**19. Given that there is going to be a major review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety Standards following the Grenfell Towers tragedy how do you know that the combination of insulating material and upgraded panels will meet new requirements? Would it be more sensible to wait for the results of tests and new regulations**

We have carried out extensive research into the insulation and cladding products available on the market today, the products selected are:

- Rockwool Duo Slab insulation (This is leading brand of fire proof insulation and has been used for years safely in the industry)
- Tyvek Fire Curb façade wrap (This is a fire retardant underlay that covers the supporting framework and insulation)
- Astroflame fire barriers (These are intumescent strips fixed at the entry and exit points of panels and will expand under extreme heat to stop the spread of fire)
- Trespa Meteon FR (Fire Retardant) panel cladding, this is the higher specification panel, it is not an aluminium composite material,



The areas located under the windows at Wimbledon Hall are of a block work construction so the actual materials in-situ are designed to prevent the spread of fire.

**20. The life of the roof was quoted at 20 years in the minutes of the April meeting you circulated. The roof has been on 18 years. Are you replacing the roof earlier than necessary because you want to install solar panels?**

The roof has been patch repaired in many places and this can only continue for so long. Managing the situation now before it becomes a forced issue is the best approach and means that we are able to consult with residents, advise leaseholders why this is happening and to provide an appropriate notice period.

There are no current plans to install Solar/Photovoltaic panels on the main roofs.

**21. Is it true that the speed with which you have proceeded with these proposals has more to do with maintaining Aster Property's work flow, revenues and profits, then the interest of the residents at Wimbledon Hall?**

We own and manage 78,000 properties across Hampshire, Dorset, Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. We invest our budgets into projects in need of attention. We do not carry out work that is unnecessary, and where possible we always look to identify cost efficiencies like including works that will likely be required in the near future into any planned programme of works. This means that we can keep costs as low as possible for leaseholders.

**22. Have the contractors been given a deadline to complete works**

There are no proposals to introduce a penalty clause into our contract for works. The scaffolding costs will be priced by the contractor for the duration of the works. If works are not completed in time they would be liable for any additional costs. As this forms one of the most expensive items within the specification this should ensure works are completed in a timely manner.