Crescent House Residents' Liaison Group (RLG) Meeting

Date: Thursday 25 September, 6.30 - 7.30pm
Venue: Sir Ralph Perring Centre

Attendees:	Ceri Wilkins	Cripplegate Ward Cllr/resident
	Dawn Frampton	Cripplegate Ward Cllr/resident
	Gaby Robertshaw	Cripplegate Ward Cllr/resident
	Sue Pearson	GLERA
	2 x tenants from Crescent House	
	Greg Wade	CoL Head of Major Works
	Kindy Bansal-Shah	CoL Golden Lane Estate Co-ordinator
	Bunmi Ali	CoL Project Manager
	Nick Condon	Project Manager
	Lillian Serunkuma	CCUK
	Hannah Grogan	CCUK

Apologies: 1 tenant and 4 x leaseholders from Crescent House

This is the twenty seventh official meeting of the Crescent House RLG.

Agenda:

1. Project update:
    a. Current works & surveys
    b. Critical Design Development
    c. Programme, including Planning application & Committee update
2. AOB
    a. Meanwhile Repairs
    b. Winter measures
    c. Summer measures

Meeting Notes

1. Project Update: Current works & surveys

a. Structural Engineer

The appointed Structural engineer (STAND Engineering ltd) has been looking at the movement of the roof slab and movement joints in Basterfield House. The work undertaken there will ascertain how to address the movement joints in Crescent House and develop some design options. STAND Engineering has also updated the roof loadings to Crescent House and looked at how to structurally accommodate a new electrical riser.

It was noted that the reported cracks in flat 307 have been assessed and a report issued to the affected resident. It is confirmed that these issues are not structural cracks and the Repairs team will pick these up. The issues in the paving outside the flats on Goswell Road, causing the pavement to move, falls to Highways colleagues to address. There are no structural problems with the basement of Crescent House.

b. Fire Strategy

Since Crescent House was designated as an HRB, it has been necessary to undertake more fire safety-related surveys and go into more detail than initially anticipated. The Corporation's appointed Fire Engineer BB7 has been commissioned to produce fire strategies for all the blocks across the estate generally but has carried out a compartmentation survey for Crescent House specifically that shows what the structure is made of and how it is divided. This has taken some time as they have had to check all of the building materials to get an understanding of their fire rating. BB7 has also completed a retrospective fire strategy for Crescent House which took some time.

They are in the process of carrying out the FRAEW survey (Fire risk assessment for external walls). A lot of work has been done in preparation for the Gateway 2 application, to ensure that it is cohesive with the building work planned.

c. M&E Engineer/Heating

The Corporation's appointed Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) consultant Watkins Payne has been reviewing the heating options. New storage heaters and hot water cylinders were installed in the pilot flat to test one of the options that are being considered.

There are several further options that are being considered including:

- To have slimline electrical panel heaters instead of storage heaters. These will be more expensive to install and run and are unlikely to be wholly funded by the Corporation.

- Exhaust air source heat pumps have been researched as an option, but they will require a lot of ductwork and the heaters will be too large to fit in the service cupboards. The radiators will also need to be changed to accommodate pipework of a larger diameter throughout the entire property.
- A review is being undertaken to see if the gas boilers can be substituted with electric boilers. This would mean that residents could keep the existing radiators, cylinders, pipework etc and will mean potentially a lot less disruption. The only consideration is the expected higher running costs associated with electric boilers (although this will be offset by improved glazing and thermal insulation of the building).

Further to an assessment of the electrical wiring in Crescent House, it was highlighted as being in poor condition. Given that the wiring is assumed to be the original installation from 1962, it does not meet the standards of current electrical legislation.

SP asked whether the fire in the electrical shed a few years ago should have prompted them to look into the state of the wiring and expressed surprise that nothing had been done about it. It was confirmed that further to assessment, the wiring has exceeded its serviceable lifetime (general guidance suggests around 35-40 years) and that according to best practice, should have been replaced by now.

Action: Can GW/NC find out when the last survey of electrics/safety certificates for the wiring had taken place. **Post-meeting note.** The last Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) undertaken for Crescent House was in 2020.

GW explained that he had commissioned an Electrical Condition Survey programme of all CoL estates when he started in his role, including all the blocks on the Golden Lane Estate. CW asked if the condition of the electrical wiring would have an impact on budget. GW said that high-level costs for major electrical upgrades have already been included in the original budget estimates.

PS asked about fireproof chutes for rubbish. NC confirmed that there needs to be a fire damper at the bottom of each chute. This is being picked up by the M&E consultant Watkins Payne and specified in the design drawings which will be shown at the public consultation.

d. Wiring/Access controls

A significant amount of wiring is needed for other elements within the building (not just electrics) including CCTV, phones, telecommunications, access controls etc. This will all need to be either removed and reinstated or replaced in a sensitive and proper way.

Access controls – there was a discussion about options for a new wireless access control system for the building. Having a remote system would lessen the need for excessive cabling (when there will already be a significant amount for the new power supply) and residents could operate the new system using their phones if needed (as well as a physical fob). KBS showed an example of how this works, as she has it on her own building. DF raised an issue about people not being tech-savvy and how it would impact them, particularly vulnerable residents. PS mentioned the recent systems upgrade to the access control, which still doesn't seem to work with deliveries and calls are still being missed. Intercom is not working well as a result.

Action – to bring more information about the system to the next meeting to explain to residents how it would work.

e. Gas supply

NC explained about gas safe legislation and the issue of boiler flues on Crescent House, which currently penetrate window glazing or are located too close to openable windows. There has been a separate exercise to assess the current risk associated with gas supply pipework which runs along means of escape corridors within the building and in particular the location of that gas meters along those same escape routes. A risk assessment has just been undertaken by a gas safe engineer. The report will be shared in due course once completed.

f. Sub-station

UKPN have inspected the existing substation. One of the key concerns is whether the substation has enough power/capacity for the new electrical system, including the properties which need to be switched from gas to electric heating and hot water, because of the boiler flue issue. Watkins Payne are currently exploring whether there may be an option to have a hybrid gas/electric installation within Crescent House i.e. to leave some of the existing gas pipework untouched and only install electric to a fixed number of properties within the building. The UKPN condition report is currently under review.

SP: Is the electrical substation fit for purpose? NC responded to state that it does not have sufficient capacity for the planned electrical works but cannot be upgraded either due to spatial limitations. Therefore, a new substation is likely to be required in a different location to the existing one. NC added that the power supply to all buildings on the estate is currently being reviewed, to understand how they are currently being supplied (some of the substations may be off site). This will be discussed further at subsequent meetings when more information becomes available.

g. Communal repairs & decorations

The appointed architect and lead designer Studio Partington is looking at communal repairs and decorations, which includes taking paint samples from a representative batch of all front doors on the estate. The same has been done on Crescent House to ensure the Corporation complies with Historic England's requirements for Grade II* listed buildings.

h. Drainage

Successful drainage surveys were carried out in w/c 22 September. The contractor Drain Doctors found that 10 out of 11 gulleys were blocked at the time of inspection and removed 22 blockages in the system, which will help with reducing future flooding over the winter. They have put cameras down to establish the quality of the drains and have also cleared roof gulleys of grass and debris.

i. Concrete façade works

Surveys have taken place and the team had wanted to use a sample panel as a benchmark for cleaning. However, the planners have said that due to the listed building status of the estate, this would need appropriate consent. Therefore, the team will trial these works once planning permission and listed building consent has been granted. They will need to establish the details of the actual work and submit a method statement in the planning application.

2. Programme updates

NC explained that there were some delays to the programme.

Gerda have carried out surveys of the fire doors which include the front doors, store doors and riser doors, but have been slow to issue the design drawings. These were due at the end of July, but they had only issued one drawing by mid-September. This late delivery is impacting the programme and has been escalated to Senior Management. Gerda has since provided a number of preliminary drawings over the past few days.

The appointed Fire Engineer BB7 has had to do a lot more surveys than anticipated, with more POs having to be raised. There were also some resourcing issues within BB7 over the summer break which has contributed to the programme delay.

Overall, the programme is about 12 weeks behind schedule (an increase of 6-8 weeks from the 4–6-week anticipated delay in May). The team expect that they can recover

some of this time, but they will be later than expected in going to tender. The master programme has been updated and will be shared at every RLG meeting.

Higher Risk Buildings (HRB) Registration / Building safety case (BSC) Submission – it was asked if the HRB registration is approved for Crescent House yet, as this is part of the HRB process. GW confirmed that there is a Building Safety manager working on cases for all CoL estates and Crescent House has been registered as an HRB due to its connection to Cullum Welch and Hatfield Houses. To date the Regulator has asked for Building Safety Cases in a new format, so this is being delivered. The only Building Safety Case requested from CoL to date is the one for Petticoat Tower at Middlesex Street Estate. It was confirmed that the Building Safety Case (if required specifically for Crescent House) should be finalised comfortably in advance of when the Gateway 2 application will be submitted, but this is subject to a request being made by the Regulator.

GW expects the tender process to start in April 2026, contract to be ready for signing and sealing in late Autumn 2026 and the Gateway 2 application process to have a comfortable window from Winter 2026 through to Summer 2027.

PS asked about communal lighting – is this forming part of the major works, or happening in advance? BA confirmed that there will be interim repairs to the lighting, carried out by Chigwell, but these will all be carefully co-ordinated. The intention will also be to retrospectively address the current issues where incorrect lighting has been installed as part of prior reactive repairs. The interim lighting project will aim to totally replace these and manage the process properly going forwards.

GW also confirmed that due to the programme running a bit behind schedule and the need for some key considered decisions, that the public consultation for the planning application would likely be towards the end of November 2025.

3. AOB

Meanwhile works

LS gave an update on the meanwhile repairs – there have been 46 emails or messages reporting various window issues. The team has visited to assess 4 so far – 2 are major window repairs and the others relate to issues of damp. LS will be contacting residents to request access to the outstanding flats and a letter has been drafted for issue to all residents by mid-October.

A lot of issues relate to damp and mould, which is hard to address with people in occupation. There are various initiatives to help people deal with this, including the possible distribution of dehumidifiers. However, there is the question of how this would be funded in terms of hire costs and electric bills. GW queried whether any official City of London Corporation literature around the management of damp and mould was available for distribution to residents.

Action – KBS to follow up and coordinate the circulation of an appropriate booklet to the estate.

Winter measures

GW confirmed that a paper was submitted to Corporate Projects Board in August and having been approved, the same report was now scheduled for presentation to DCCS committee in November. DF asked why it was so late and GW explained that the deadline for submitting papers to the September DCCS committee had unfortunately been missed due to changes in internal personnel within the Governance Team. Despite attempts to get it added onto the agenda as a late inclusion, unfortunately this wasn't permitted. The team understood this was not ideal as approval will be later than planned but are confident that some measures could start to be implemented within the next 5-6 weeks. The interim health and safety window repairs have already been started as an initiative. GW will take responsibility for securing interim funding.

SP asked what measures are in the report and suggested that Karcher window vacs would be a great idea for affected residents and at a relatively low cost. KBS advised that other measures such as curtains (including option for tracks, not just poles), draft excluders, weighted blankets, electric heaters, dehumidifiers etc, were all being actively considered, although the paper still needed to be approved at CCS Committee.

Action: Investigate costs of Karcher window vacs and explore potential for general distribution.

KBS will be working with Repairs and the M&E Measured Term Contractor TSG to determine whether they can assist. GW pledged that the residents would see some activity on this before the end of November. SP asked about financial support or a possible heater exchange system (electric for oil). KBS advised this would need to be explored.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 27 November 2025.

ENDS