Crescent House Residents' Liaison Group (RLG) Meeting

Date: Thursday 5 March, 6:30 - 8pm
Venue: Golden Lane Community Centre

Expected Attendees:

Bunmi Ali	CoL Project Manager (online)
Greg Wade	CoL Head of Major Works Department
Dan Bewley	Concilio Communications Limited
Charlie Lovett	Concilio Communications Limited
Dawn Frampton	Cripplegate Ward Cllr/resident
Gaby Robertshaw	Cripplegate Ward Cllr/resident
Pablo Abellan	Leaseholder
Jacqueline Swanson	Leaseholder and GLERA representative
Pavels Smacko	Tenant
Roddy Langmuir	Leaseholder

Apologies:

Agenda

1. **Welcome**
2. **Actions from the previous meeting**
3. **Project/programme update**
4. **Expected disruption and decant strategy**
5. **Communal door entry system – residents' vote**
6. **Questions**
7. **Date of next meeting**
8. **AOB**

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome & introductions

Dan Bewley (DB) opened the meeting, thanking attendees for coming and noting apologies from Sue Pearson, Ogi Ristic, Jacqui Webster, and Nick Condon. DB explained a slight change to the meeting format: questions would be taken at a designated point at the end of the updates, rather than throughout, to ensure all agenda items could be covered in a timely manner.

A round of introductions was made.

2. Actions from the previous meeting

Consultation boards to be updated to reflect comments	Studio Partington	Complete
Consultation boards to be added to the project website	Concilio	Complete
Provide a response on the feasibility of full replacement of softwood windows, and whether this could be presented as a credible option for further discussion within the current programme	Studio Partington	To be confirmed
Check on technical reports and which of them would be suitable to upload to the website	Project team	The reports are technical in nature and so not appropriate to upload. Questions regarding the reports' content can be answered by the project team
Review project website	Concilio	Concilio has updated the website, but will continue to keep it under review to make sure it meets the needs of residents.

DB provided an update that the consultation has taken place since the last meeting, and thanking the RLG for their contributions and feedback on the boards. It was confirmed that the consultation boards have been uploaded to the website and planning application submitted.

Greg Wade (GW) confirmed that following advice from planning consultants Grade Planning, the position was that the existing planning consent does not encompass wholesale softwood window replacement. Individual windows that are found to be beyond repair during the works may be replaced on a case-by-case basis, but this will be in ad hoc fashion and strictly dependent on survey and assessment by the appointed Contract Administrator / Clerk of Works / Contractor.

Gaby Robertshaw (GR) queried whether listed building consent was required for like-for-like window replacement. GW confirmed that advice had been sought and the parameters had been clearly laid out by the planning consultant.

On technical reports, DB confirmed that as these are technical in nature and could lead to confusion, they will not be uploaded to the website in their current form. Questions from residents on report content can be directed to the project team for a response.

On the project website, DB confirmed that Concilio has updated the website to ensure accuracy, and a full review to improve navigation will be completed by end of March.

3. Project/programme update

GW provided an update on the programme, noting that Nick Condon sent his apologies and that GW had contacted Studio Partington (SP) for a summary of activities since the last RLG meeting.

Planning

- The planning application has been submitted and validated. The target date for determination is 20 March 2026. (Note: the portal initially showed 6 March, which caused concern among some residents – it has been confirmed by Grade Planning that 20 March is correct)
- Paint samples of the proposed finishes and perforated metal panels have been provided to the planners. GR requested that a specification be shared so that a sample could also be obtained for members' own reference.
- The planners have raised a number of questions on the colour of paint to slab edges, clarifications on lighting design, and other minor details. This dialogue is ongoing.
- The planning consultant, Grade Planning, has a meeting with the conservation officer scheduled for 19 March.
- Historic England has confirmed they are happy with the proposals. The Twentieth Century Society has yet to respond.

Pablo Abellan (PA) raised that at the last RLG, questions about the paint samples had been discussed – specifically whether the first coat of paint found during investigation represented the original finish or whether it had always been unpainted. PA noted this uncertainty appeared to have resulted in some colours being incorrectly described in the planning application (e.g. front doors listed as olive green when they were originally a different green, known as 'Holly bush'). PA offered his knowledge of the building and its history to assist the project team and suggested that a heritage specialist could potentially research photographic records (such as those held by the RIBA or Architectural Journal) to identify the 1962 finishes.

Q (PA): Could a heritage specialist be commissioned to research photographic archives for evidence of original 1962 paint finishes, rather than relying solely on physical samples?
GW: This has been noted and will be explored with Studio Partington to see if it is feasible.

Electrical design

- Studio Partington has been working closely with electrical consultant Watkins Payne on the electrical design.
- The location of electrical meters is under review. There is potential to relocate meters from the communal meter room into individual properties, which would allow residents to access smart meters. This is a significant piece of work and options are still being explored.
- GW noted that meter relocation requires individual arrangement between each occupant/owner and their supplier and cannot be undertaken by the City of London as a mass exercise. However, the project team is looking to facilitate this process and has indicated it is likely to be progressed during the period between contract award and works commencement. It may even be possible to commence that activity earlier, with an appropriate level of resident engagement.
- Further discussions with UKPN are ongoing regarding the potential installation of a new substation in the lower ground floor/car parking area of Crescent House. Additional electrical capacity will be required, particularly if gas is removed from the block. Outline details have been shared with UKPN to allow them to assess feasibility.

External fabric

- Detailed inspections of the concrete are ongoing. Spalling concrete has been knocked off and removed to reduce health and safety risks, and testing has been carried out to establish approximate quantities of loose concrete. Trial repairs have been undertaken in areas where reinforcement has been exposed.
- Work on the bespoke doors is progressing with Gerda, who are close to confirming budget costs including fire testing.

- Studio Partington has been working with Watkins Payne on electrical and fire-stopping details and is also obtaining samples for replacement quarry tiles.
- Fire Risk Assessment of External Walls (FRAEW) surveys have been completed for Crescent House; the report is expected later in the month or in April.

Programme

- The project team is targeting going to tender by the beginning of June 2026.
- GW confirmed that sufficient float is built into the programme to accommodate planning determination and governance processes, including the possibility of the application going to committee. August and December have been treated as 'dead months' for tendering purposes. The critical objective is to have a contractor appointed and in place by the end of Autumn 2026, after which the Gateway 2 application to the Building Safety Regulator will commence, with a target start on site of October 2027.

Q (JS): Does the programme take into account the possibility of the planning application having to go to committee?
GW: Yes, float has been built into the programme for this. A couple of weeks' slippage is not a concern. The critical milestone is having the contractor in place by Autumn.

Q (PA): The main concern is not a delay of a few weeks but one of months – is there sufficient contingency?
GW: Yes, significant float has been incorporated, including allowing up to 12 months for the Gateway 2 process, which could be as short as six months. There are opportunities to recover time at several points in the programme.

DB noted that access is required to carry out fire door inspections on 18 and 19 March for flats on the first and second floor corridors (flats 123–146 and 223–242).

Members were asked whether they would be willing to provide access. GR confirmed she could be available subject to commitments. Pavels Smacko (PS) indicated he could potentially make his flat available. DB confirmed he would follow up by email.

GW provided an update on the scope of door replacements. He noted that following a review of costs – particularly given the significant increase in the electrical works scope – the current position is that doors will only be replaced where required by the fire strategy. Other tenanted doors will be repaired and redecorated, there will be no requirement to undertake repair or redecoration of Leaseholder doors. The bespoke Gerda door product represents a significant cost, and a blanket replacement approach is no longer felt to be appropriate.

PA raised the issue of leaseholders and ventilation, noting that for dual-aspect flats where residents can open a window, there may be a question of whether ventilation measures are mandatory under the lease. GW acknowledged this and noted the position on other estates in the portfolio: extractor fans are fitted but connected only to a fused spur as part of a typical window replacement project, with the connection from the spur to the consumer unit left to the leaseholder to complete at their own cost and arrangement. This is intended to avoid the City of London taking on liability for the consumer unit and entire electrical installation.

The challenge of persuading leaseholders to give up their individual gas supply was discussed. GW acknowledged this is a complex issue and not something the Corporation would undertake lightly.

Action: DB to follow up with residents who offered access for the fire door inspections on 18–19 March (DB)

4. Expected disruption and decant strategy

GW summarised a paper prepared for the Major Works Programme Board in January 2026, which sets out initial thinking on the decant process. GW noted that the paper is at a brainstorming stage rather than a formal policy document, and covers a range of issues raised by residents including: how many residents will be decanted at a time; the length of displacement; temporary accommodation location and suitability; storage of possessions; the status of leaseholders and private tenants of leaseholders; the level of support from the Corporation; council tax and utility bill arrangements; and the extent to which temporary accommodation will be furnished.

Key points from the discussion:

- The tender documentation will include a dedicated section on decanting, setting out the expectations of the contractor. The contractor will be required to provide their own Resident Liaison Officers (RLOs) as the day-to-day contacts for residents during the decant.
- The City of London (CoL) will appoint at least two Resident Decant Officers (RDOs), dedicated to the Golden Lane Estate programme, to oversee contractor RLOs and address escalated issues where necessary.
- The Corporation is proposing to decant Crescent House and Cuthbert Harrowing House concurrently, but under separate contracts, which is why two CoL RDOs are considered necessary.
- Approximately 14–15 temporary units are being planned (6 per building plus a ‘float’ of 2-3 properties), either on the estate or close by. These will be secured from general needs voids and refurbished as necessary.

- The question of whether the decant will proceed horizontally or vertically through the building is still being determined, as the electrical works and window refurbishment sequence may not naturally align.

Q (PA): Will the decant be managed by Concilio or by the contractor?
GW: Day-to-day decant management will be the contractor's responsibility. Concilio will remain involved in communications, but the contractor RLOs will be the primary contact for residents. CoL RDOs will oversee and deal with escalations where needed.

Q (PA): The concrete works specify a full scaffold across the block – where in the programme would that fall?
GW: This is difficult to confirm at this stage, but logically external cleaning should take place at the end of the programme.

Q (PA): There is graffiti residue (white paint drips) on the underside of concrete from a previous cleaning exercise – will this be attended to?
GW: Yes, this will be addressed.

JS highlighted that a Crescent House-specific Decant Policy was approved by committee following considerable effort. JS recommended that this policy be referenced in the brainstorming paper, as it provides residents with reassurance and contractors with binding parameters. GW wasn't able to recall the Crescent House-specific policy (as distinct from the City-wide policy) given that it was presented shortly after he joined the Corporation. JS offered to share the link for GW's review.

Action: JS to share the link to the Crescent House Decant Policy with the project team (JS)
Action: Project team to review the Crescent House Decant Policy and reference it in the decant paper (GW)

5. Communal door entry system – residents' vote

DB provided an update on the communal door entry system resident vote. A letter and ballot were issued to all residents, with voting open until Monday 16 March 2026. Results to date: 26 in favour, 1 against. DB noted that residents can vote online, by email, or via a physical ballot box located in the building.

GR noted that the letter does not explain what will happen to the existing videophone units in residents' homes, or whether a wall-mounted device will be provided for those without smartphones. PA also noted that several residents had asked about this. GW confirmed that the system is wireless and cloud-based, managed by the City of London, and will include the ability to add and delete numbers as needed. A wall-mounted

handset will be available. The project team agreed that a visual of the new unit would be helpful to share with residents.

GR raised concerns about security implications, including tailgating and late-night misuse of the door entry system by unknown individuals. GR also noted concerns for elderly residents who may not have smartphones.

PA noted the cost of the new system has been asked about by multiple residents. GW confirmed the door entry system is part of the leasehold recovery. PA and JS noted that uncertainty about the total cost of the works is causing significant anxiety among leaseholders, and that getting an indicative offer to leaseholders sooner rather than later would help manage this. GW acknowledged this concern. GW also noted that delivering all the works as a combined package represents a significant cost saving compared to doing them separately over a number of years.

Action: Concilio / Studio Partington to source a visual of the proposed new door entry unit to share with residents (DB/Studio Partington)

6. Questions

Questions were taken from members at the end of the meeting updates. The following matters were raised:

Substation costs: Roddy Langmuir (RL) confirmed he was satisfied with the response that the substation cost would be borne by the City of London.

Fire doors: RL asked whether fire doors were a leaseholder responsibility. GW confirmed they are not, as set out in the letter previously sent to residents.

Cable trays and routing: JS and PA raised significant concerns about the visual impact and practicality of the proposed cable trays in the communal corridors and courts. Key points raised included:

- The trays are proposed in grey, whereas existing carrier trays match the ceiling colour, which provides some visual integration. Grey powder-coated trays would be visually intrusive.
- Only one visualisation of the corridor tray has been produced (for internal corridors). No visualisation exists for the external court areas. Members of the GLERA technical group have attempted to mock up the appearance and have found it concerning in terms of proportions and scale.
- The trays are felt to be of a commercial scale that is inconsistent with the domestic proportions of Crescent House. PA noted that nobody wants 21cm trays below existing ceiling heights.

- A specific question was raised: on the third floor, the existing trunking is being used (as there is no roof to accommodate new trays). If this solution works on the third floor, why cannot the same principle be applied to the first and second floors? The project team agreed this question could be answered and committed to providing a response.
- PA suggested that if services are being run through floor slabs anyway (e.g. for gas pipe removal), the opportunity should be taken to route cables more discreetly through the building fabric, rather than via surface-mounted trays.
- JS noted that in the lobby areas in particular, the tray proposals appear especially intrusive.

Action: Project team to provide a response explaining why the existing trunking solution used on the third floor cannot be replicated on the first and second floors, and to explore alternative cabling routes. This should be presented at the GLERA technical group meeting with Studio Partington and Watkins Payne in attendance (SP/GW)

Technical reports: JS requested that technical reports previously shared with the Project Board be made available to the GLERA technical group, whose members are prepared to sign a commitment not to share them further. JS noted that access to these reports helps the technical group to understand the rationale for design decisions and to assist in disseminating information to residents. GW indicated that the technical group would be an appropriate forum for this and agreed to explore what can be shared.

Action: Project team to consider which technical reports can be shared with the GLERA technical group and discuss at the technical group meeting (GW)

Website: JS asked about the project website, noting that the landing page still shows a Winter 2025 update and an out of date preamble, making it appear out of date to new visitors. DB acknowledged the concern and confirmed the full review would be completed by the end of March.

TV aerial feed: GR asked whether the internal television aerial feed would be retained. GW confirmed this is being assessed by Watkins Payne as part of the overall services review, and that he would double-check the current position.

Action: GW to confirm with Watkins Payne whether the internal television aerial feed will be retained (GW)

Fibre communications during works: GR raised the question of how BT and Community Fibre connections will be maintained when carrier trays are removed during the works. GW noted that on similar projects, this has been managed by providing temporary clipped alternatives and that maintaining communications continuity is standard practice.

Decant and services: PA made a broader point that the decant presents an opportunity to fix all services within each set of properties at once – including leaking tanks, redundant underfloor heating pipes, and holes left by gas pipe removal. PA suggested that six-flat decant phases should be used to address all services comprehensively rather than returning multiple times. GW acknowledged the logic but noted the significant cost implications and the fact that the full extent of the works will only be known once the paintwork is stripped back. GW noted the overall programme budget is approximately £105 million for Crescent House and £211 million for the full Golden Lane estate programme.

Painting/colour scheme: JS raised concerns about the change to door and column colours (from red/Holly Bush green to black), noting that residents have an emotional connection to the existing colours and that a previous survey of residents had been conducted on this matter. JS recommended that the research undertaken be shared with residents and that further consultation be carried out, rather than the change being imposed. JS also suggested that sharing this information proactively with planners – alongside historic photographic evidence – would reduce the risk of resident objections to the planning application.

PA shared photographs of the building from 1997 (at the time of listing), showing the original colour scheme including Holly Bush green doors, dark cream walls, and unpainted T-section conduits. PA suggested that the listed scheme – rather than speculative original finishes – should be the reference point for the heritage discussion.

Gas removal and electrical supply capacity: GR noted she had recently had a survey carried out regarding electric combi boilers and was informed that for her two-bedroom flat, a combi boiler would not be feasible due to hot water demand and electrical supply constraints (estimated requirement of 100 amps). GW acknowledged that current electrical capacity at Crescent House is insufficient to accommodate all-electric heating and hot water across the block, which is a key reason why the new substation is needed. GW confirmed that the intention is to offset the cost for leaseholders switching to electric heating/hot water and that meter relocation will be progressed during the year prior to works commencing on site, so that a significant proportion of properties are already converted by the time works start.

GR queried whether the de-gassing of the building could be limited to the internal corridors (where gas pipes in escape routes present a known fire safety issue), leaving some supply to upper-floor properties. GW indicated this was a question better directed to Studio Partington and Watkins Payne.

Written questions: PS noted that he had a series of additional questions to raise. DB confirmed these would be incorporated into the meeting notes and written responses provided.

Action: DB to incorporate written questions submitted by PS into the meeting notes and provide written responses (DB/Project Team)

***Insert questions from PS when received**

7. Date of next meeting

The next RLG meeting will be held on Thursday 30 April 2026, at 6pm. All future meetings will be held at the Sir Ralph Perring Centre, subject to availability (a block booking is in place).

8. AOB

The reason for the change of venue this meeting (from the Sir Ralph Perring Centre to the Golden Lane Community Centre) was queried. DB confirmed that the Sir Ralph Perring Centre was unavailable on the date.

DB confirmed that the minutes would be circulated to all attendees within one week and published on the project website the following week.