Crescent House Residents' Liaison Group (RLG) Meeting

Date: Thursday 27 November, 6 - 7.30pm
Venue: Sir Ralph Perring Centre

Expected Attendees:

Bunmi Ali	CoL Project Manager
Kindy Bansal-Shah	CoL Golden Lane Estate Co-ordinator
Greg Wade	CoL Head of Major Works Department
Nick Condon	Consultant Project Manager
Colin Davis	Studio Partington
Dan Bewley	Concilio Communications Limited
Luke Tatton	Concilio Communications Limited
Dawn Frampton	Cripplegate Ward Cllr/resident
Gaby Robertshaw	Cripplegate Ward Cllr/resident
Ognjen Ristic	Leaseholder
Pablo Abellan	Leaseholder
Jacqueline Swanson	Leaseholder
Pavels Smacko	Tenant
Matthew Carter	Tenant

Apologies:

Agenda

1. Welcome and introduction to new members
2. Project/programme update
3. Preview of Architect's information boards to be shared at Planning Consultation event on Monday 1 December
4. Potential removal of gas from Crescent House
5. Potential upgrade of Communal Door entry system - resident consultation
6. Electrical domestic compliance works – request for members to help with resident access
7. AOB

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome & introductions
Welcome and introductions were made.

2. Project / programme update

Nick provided an update on the Crescent House project, focusing on key issues relating to the planning submission, fire safety, structural works and programme.

- Further detailed fire risk assessments have been undertaken. A full FRAEW (Fire Risk Assessment of External Walls) is still required for Crescent House.
- Significant concrete repair work will be needed—not just to external panels but also to the wider building structure. The work being prepared for the planning application has required more detailed examination of these elements.
- A new electrical/services riser will be required. Structural assessments are underway to determine the most appropriate location to accommodate new wiring and services.
- Substation replacement: discussions with UKPN are ongoing regarding the provision and location of a new substation, not only for Crescent House but potentially for other blocks.
- Fire doors have continued to be reviewed as part of the emerging fire safety design.
- The planning application is being progressed. Historic England and the Twentieth Century Society have indicated an early positive response. The team had hoped to submit before Christmas, but City Planners have requested that submission takes place in January 2026.

An update on programme was provided:

- The programme presented at the April community meetings remains in place.
- Target for tendering remains May 2026, with expected start on site Autumn 2027.
- The team continues to review progress against this programme.
- Despite increases in scope, GW confirmed he is satisfied with the progress and position of the project team.
- All leaseholders should now have received the Section 20 Notice for post-contract professional services (contract administration, quantity surveying and clerk of works) relating to the entire programme for the estate. The procurement of these services is likely to run alongside the tender period for the works at Crescent House, with the consultant appointed just before the works contract is awarded.

Q (OR): Have any findings since April affected the baseline programme? GW/NC: A number of unexpected issues have been identified and added to the scope, but none are expected to have a major impact on the programme from a design perspective. Internal governance remains challenging, and the Gateway processes could create delays as the response and requirements of the Building Safety Regulator remain unknown at this stage.

Q (PS): Was a Gateway 2 application required for the Great Arthur House roof refurbishment project? (currently being progressed by the New Developments and Special Projects Team) GW: The project is not at this stage yet – a Gateway 2 application can only be submitted to the Building Safety Regulator once a principal contractor has been appointed. The works have not yet been tendered and Planning approval has not yet been obtained.

Q (PS): Is the new substation also related to gasworks? NC If the gas is taken out from Crescent House, then additional electrical capacity is needed. Therefore, a new substation would be considered likely, particularly as the existing one is in poor condition.

It was noted that Citigen will be providing energy for the Leisure Centre. The project team said they are monitoring Citigen as a possible alternative heat source, there is currently no proposal or timetable for this.

3. Preview of Architect's information boards for the Planning Consultation event on Monday 1 December

CD provided an overview of the information boards prepared for the forthcoming planning consultation. The planning permission sought is a supplement to that granted in December 2023, due to the increased scope of works.

Specific comments on the boards included:

- JS asked to review the wording regarding the trunking of the smoke and heat detection installed for LD level of Smoke/Fire detection as it relates to Leaseholders. As this work is not part of the compulsory package, the current wording gives the impression that it is.
- JS also suggested being more specific about which flats will require additional lighting at their front doors.

GR requested that once the boards have been updated they be uploaded to the website on Friday to ensure residents had the opportunity to read them before the exhibition. GR and JS said they could communicate this via their networks.

During CD's run through of the boards a number of other discussion points were raised:

PA noted that with the first planning application (previously submitted for the window refurbishment and roof replacement works only), it was clear what the extent of disruption for residents might be. PA commented that given the new planning application combines more elements of work, how will the Project Team intend to progress with gas removal and electrical upgrade works without disrupting the whole block of residents. NC noted the detail is still being looked at and that it is a very complex programme which needs to be put together carefully. This will be explored further once the planning application is approved. PA asked if there will be an outline of programme within the planning application. NC confirmed this was not the case. GW added that there will be a detailed construction programme provided by the appointed contractor, which will fully outline how the schedule of works will be delivered in a competent manner, whilst being co-ordinated and managed with minimal disruption to residents at the forefront of the planning.

PA continued and asked if hypothetically the contractor said all residents needed to move out in order to remove the gas distribution pipework, what would the project team's reaction be? NC said he was confident this would not be the case, primarily because there will be a constant electrical supply and that gas disconnection will be progressed in a phased manner to minimise disruption.

Discussions continued on whether electrical installation should be phased by small groups of flats or whole corridors. PA stated it made more sense to go from the basement up into six flats at the time instead of going through the corridor. PA expressed concern that the new proposals affect all flats at once and may be significantly more disruptive than previous plans. JS noted that given the scale of overall works, disruption is unavoidable. CD also added that the primary reason for not being able to do it is that current electrical regulations prohibit taking a shared supply through multiple dwellings. GW acknowledged these concerns but emphasised that the electrical upgrade must be carried out and cannot realistically be separated from the rest of the works package due to the high priority nature of the works.

CD stated that the issue had been explored extensively, but it was concluded that the M&E subconsultant would provide a response which responds directly to the points raised by PA. This response will be fed back through the project team.

PA asked if the upgrades to the refuse chutes from the basement were to do with preventing fire or smoke. NC replied both. PA asked if it was in a concrete basement how could the fire come out. NC replied that fire could spread through the hoppers if they aren't appropriately fire-rated.

On the third floor PA noted the space above the front doors is owned by the Corporation and is not part of the leasehold demise, and therefore could potentially be used to install recessed lighting to replicate the appearance on lower floors. Current proposals suggest installing lighting within the balustrade railings, but this does not address lighting immediately outside front doors. The project team clarified that the proposals include a combination of wall-mounted fittings and roof-mounted fittings, depending on location.

PA emphasised that the original design used concealed lighting, and expressed concern that a wall-mounted fitting directly facing residents when they open their doors would be visually intrusive. CD confirmed that the lighting designer will attend the planning consultation event on Monday, and will bring sample fittings for review. Residents were encouraged to raise these comments directly at the consultation.

It was noted that some elderly residents may not wish to see the introduction of movement activated lighting. This concern is that movement-activated lighting can be discombobulating for some elderly residents.

On decorations PA expressed support for reinstating original details such as the Shakespeare head and crescent motif above it. PA also noted it is positive that decoration budgets are included.

There was a query whether the black columns in the courtyard were originally finished in gloss paint, noting that the recently redecorated railings—finished in gloss—look different and may not match the historical treatment of the columns. CD noted that the original specification may be referenced in the heritage and decorations report, which will be checked.

A further question was raised about whether the rear doors differed from the front entrance doors, and whether both had historically been redecorated to match. It was confirmed that both sets of doors are treated the same.

PA shared background on the colour known as “Holly Bush Green”, noting that this was the original colour used on front doors and was historically sourced from a now-closed local shop. CD confirmed that paint samples for the stone colour and door red will be available at the consultation event for review.

GR raised concerns about flats without balconies and whether softwood window frames present a fire risk. CD stated softwood frames comply with current regulations and that the difference in fire behaviour between hardwood and softwood for this purpose is negligible.

GB noted under 'building fabric' there are repairs to asphalt edge detail and inquired what is being done to the asphalt that was placed on the third floor walkway edges over the

light bricks that fed the second and first floor internal corridors? CD confirmed for asphalt areas there are no current plans to reinstate. Twentieth Century Society have asked whether lighting could be introduced but this is technically challenging.

JS raised the flexibility of the 2023 planning permission regarding window repair vs replacement. CD advised that the permission allows for repair with selective replacement if necessary. JS asked that the project team investigate the option of fully replacing the softwood framed windows (located on the internal facing windows, i.e. kitchen and bathrooms etc). JS felt in light of historical reports regarding the condition of the soft wood windows and residents' concerns over the duration of the programme, the skilled labour required for refurbishing, cost of the works, and future maintenance that this option should be fully explored and not be precluded by the current planning permission. GW/NC confirmed that they would explore this option and report back to the RLG by early January as to its viability within the context of the current programme.

Action: Update the consultation boards to reflect comments raised (CD)
Action: Upload consultation boards to website before Friday COP (CD)
Action: Obtain a formal response from the building services engineer regarding questions on electrical routing, phasing, and regulations raised by PA (CD)
Action: Check heritage and decoration reports for original finishes, including whether courtyard black columns were gloss (CD)
Action: Project Team to provide a response as to whether full scale replacement of soft wood windows can be presented as a credible option for further discussion (given that the current planning permission for windows does not allow for large-scale replacement).

4. Potential removal of gas from Crescent House

CD summarised the position regarding possible removal of gas:

- Recent fire strategy has flagged gas installations as a high-risk issue, particularly due to gas pipes and meters being located within escape routes (internal corridors and external escape routes).
- An independent gas safe assessment concluded that having gas installations in these areas is not safe in the event of a fire.
- GW noted the City has received this report and is undertaking an internal technical peer review, involving specialist advice.

At this stage no final decision has been made but the project team is working to the assumption that gas removal is likely to be required, so that the design process and planning application can accommodate this if needed.

JS asked whether leaseholders would be charged for gas removal from their flats. GW confirmed that the City Corporation would seek to ensure leaseholders would not bear the cost of removing gas infrastructure from communal areas. He added that the City Corporation would not seek to recover costs from leaseholders for individual domestic heading switches.

5. Potential upgrade of communal door entry system – resident consultation
The project team provided a short introduction on the potential upgrade of communal door entry system which included the option for phone-based (wireless) entry.

PA noted that most residents would welcome a more modern system, including options for (wireless) entry. Some consideration will be needed for residents reliant on landlines, but this is expected to affect only a small number.

PA noted that there were wider resident concerns about the cost implications of removing gas and moving to all-electric systems as well as the increased energy bills that this may bring. PA did also note that improved glazing and energy efficiency measures will reduce heat loss and could therefore reduce overall usage and energy bills.

6. Electrical domestic compliance works – request for support with gaining resident access

GW noted this item relates to separate compliance works in tenanted properties, not part of the main Major Works programme. Access rates have been low and the appointed contractor team is struggling to carry out essential electrical works within tenants' homes. Members were asked to support by encouraging residents to provide access.

Action: GW to provide the list of non-responding tenants will be sent to GR, who will ask local Councillors to support with follow-up and engagement. (GW/Concilio)

7.AOB

A question was raised about whether the window glazing can be altered to reduce mirrored or textured appearance, noting that the current example on the estate was not well liked. CD will seek clarification from the design team.

JS requested that relevant reports—e.g. overheating desktop study—be uploaded to the website. Project team will confirm which reports can be published.

JS also asked that the website information, particularly the landing page, be reviewed to ensure it is still relevant.

Action: Check reports for website and general website wording (Concilio)