

## Questions from Resident to Arup and the Council

27.11.17.

### Questions for Arup

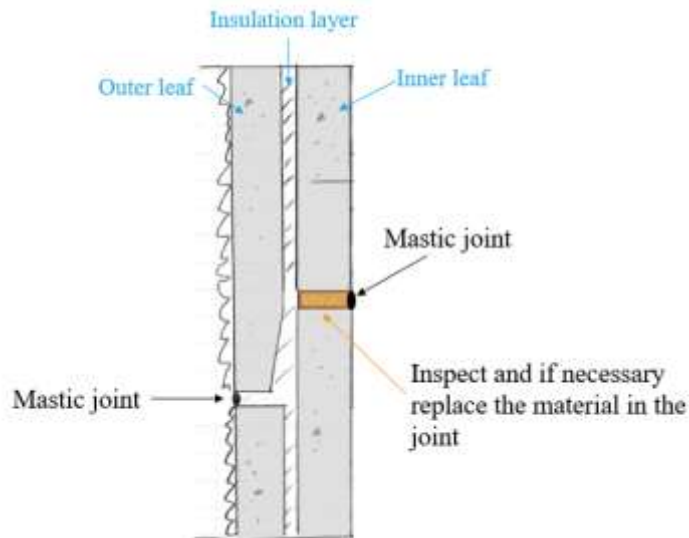
1. I would like to ask the council that being the tower block walls are still going move; will the permanent mastic fix need attention every summer after the strengthening? If not how often will it need maintenance? and will leaseholders be charged or will we be compensated for disruptions it will cause?

This is a question for Southwark Council.

The response from Southwark Council is that at this point it is intended to renew all the mastic fixings to the gaps and cracks as part of any future refurbishment works . It will be necessary for the areas to be monitored at intervals and therefore there will need to be some sort of covering that is easily removal. This will form part of future discussions with the Ledbury Residents Project Team. If the blocks are refurbished, the Council have committed to not recharging leaseholders for the major works required to deal with the fire stopping and structural strengthening. However like any other any ongoing maintenance to blocks with leasehold homes in Southwark, such works if required will be re-charged to leaseholders following our usual section 20 consultation. For any form of maintenance and inspections there is inevitable disruption which would not be compensated for. Leaseholders will not be compensated for any disruption this would cause, as the lease requires leaseholders to give access for works to the block.

2. The report says that the joints between the panels should be inspected and if necessary renewed with grout and dry pack in order to ensure that the block have sufficient wind resistance. How will this work? Does this mean that the mastic between the panels is not strong enough for the blocks to be safe at the moment?

The mastic is just on the outer surface. Behind the mastic there is dry-pack in the horizontal joints between external wall panels, and grout in the vertical joints at the ends of the external wall panels where they meet the internal cross walls. As a sensible precaution to ensure the long term strength of the building, we recommend the grout and dry-pack are inspected to ensure there are no gaps or voids. Based on our inspections so far we are not aware of any short term safety issues.



3. What documents did Arup have available to them when writing the report? The report says that the cracks had been present for at least 17 years – where did you get this information.

We had no documents available to us which specifically related to Ledbury Estate. We learnt this information from talking to long-term residents of the estate.

4. What records have Southwark kept of the condition of the blocks since they were taken over from the GLC? Did Arup have access to all of these? Have there been any stock condition or other structural surveys done over the years?

This is a question for Southwark Council. We are concerned only with the current condition of the Blocks.

The Southwark Council response is that the Southwark Council archives were searched as part of the background information into Ledbury Estate. Searches were also made to the London Metropolitan archives. No information in any form was obtained from the Southwark Council archives, A limited number of planning and architectural drawings, showing only basic building outlines, but no technical details, were located at the London Metropolitan archives, as were receipts for a total of £53,700 “remedial” works between 1968-1969 which would have been during the period of construction and following the collapse at Ronan Point. However, no details or description of what “remedial” works were carried out exist. No construction drawings were located.

The Council have periodically carried out stock condition surveys to the stock: this information allows for us to prioritise major works needed. The surveys are outline and not detailed structural surveys. Results of any stock surveys including to the Ledbury Estate are held on the Council’s Stock Condition Data Base which was available to Arup.

5. Did Arup have access to the reports on the condition of the building which led to the replacement of all the mastic between the panels in 2016 – 2017?

No. However, we note that the mastic is a soft material that does not contribute to structural strength.

6. I am a bit confused by the diagrams at the end of the report. In particular, [SK02](#) and [SK03](#) (pages 36 and 37) appear to be identical – please can you explain the difference?

You may be looking at the first issue of the report? This version mistakenly showed SK02 and SK03 as identical. The corrected version was issued a few hours later on November 20th.

In the version of the report currently on the Southwark website, SK02 shows the strengthening required on internal cross-walls on the first five floors of Bromyard House and Sarnsfield House.

SK03 shows the strengthening required on internal cross-walls on the top six floors of Peterchurch House and Skenfrith House.

Bromyard and Sarnsfield House have 1 and 3 bedroom flats from Level 0 to 4, above which there are only 2 bedroom flats.

Skenfrith and Peterchurch House have 1 and 3 bedrooms flats throughout. The differences in floor layouts require different strengthening options.

7. Please can you give some further explanation about the works that will be done? How will the steel bands shown in [SK05](#) (p. 39) be fixed to the floor panels and how will this strengthen the structure of the building.

The floor screed (the in-situ concrete topping on top of the precast floor slab panels) will be temporarily removed.

The steel straps will then be bolted directly to the precast panels. The steel straps will provide the floor panels with additional bending strength to resist an accidental load – acting in a similar way to steel reinforcing bars.

The straps are on both sides of the floor slabs because the accidental load could be either upwards or downwards so both scenarios need to be designed for.

8. On page 23 section 6.4.5:  
"This strength resistance relies on a significant contribution from the external wall panels. Because the reliability of this load path is contingent on the quality of the horizontal joints between these wall panels and the vertical joints at the ends of the panels, it is recommended that every such joint is inspected and repaired by replacing the material in the joints with good quality non-shrink grout and drypack in order to secure this load path for the long term."

and section 7.1

"The design strategy for the strengthening works is to satisfy a combination of LPS criteria 2 and 3 (see Section 6.3.2). In other words, if a structural element does not satisfy criterion 3,

then the purpose of strengthening works is either to provide alternative load paths or to enhance the element strength to resist 17kPa directly such that alternative load paths are not needed."

Although the executive summary says "The structure of each building meets wind loading requirements as defined by current building codes [13]" which suggests that criterion 3 on wind assessment seems to be satisfied the above recommendations suggest that it's dependent on the implementation of these measures as detailed later in appendix B. If so, please convey to us and the council that this is actually a requirement to satisfy the BRE document mentioned on page 16 section 6.3.1

The wind assessment is entirely separate from the disproportionate collapse assessment. The three criteria defined by BRE (mentioned on page 16) are relevant to disproportionate collapse only.

The wind assessment showed that the blocks meet wind loading requirements as defined by current building codes. These are the codes that we use to design or assess any type of building.

The disproportionate collapse assessment showed that the blocks fail all three criteria for LPS blocks as defined by the BRE/DCLG. We have recommended strengthening measures to rectify this. After the strengthening measures are implemented, the building will satisfy LPS criterion 2.

9. Page 11 of the report describes a bowing of panels which results in gaps.

- Is this bowing consistent from ground floor to 13th or is it variable from floor to floor?

The bowing may vary slightly. However, verticality surveys confirmed that the panels are very well aligned on all four blocks so any differences will be minor.

- If variable, would this create friction between panels given that they are resting on each other?

Because the panels sit on the panels below and are exposed to the sun in the same way, we would expect them to bow in tandem. There is no evidence of differential bowing on the outside of the building.

- Would the insertion of ties as described in appendix B SK09 cause the panels to expand/contract/move in tandem?

SK09 notes that the additional bracket tying the centre of the panels back to the slabs should accommodate thermal movements so in this respect relative movements between adjacent panels shouldn't change.

10. Would Arup be kind enough to give an opinion on the impact of drilling holes in the walls as follows:-

- From the fuseboard to the kitchen via 2 crosswalls and adjacent to the ceiling to facilitate cables for electric hob and cookers.
- Through the flank wall in the kitchen to facilitate a pressure expansion pipe from the HIU. There is already one there for the old combi boiler but it's slightly too narrow for the head on the pipe for the HIU. Bear in mind there is already a much bigger hole in this wall to allow for the flue from the gas boiler.
- If we want to install a sprinkler system we would need holes for the pipes throughout.

In general, provided that no reinforcing bars are cut (which would be easy to control), drilling small holes (less than 200mm diameter) through the concrete panels for the three scenarios outlined above would not affect the overall strength of the building.

## Questions for the Council

1. If there is a need for annual checking and refixing of fire stopping mastic where the outside panel wall moves due to heating through sunlight, will leaseholders be charged or will we be compensated for disruptions it will cause?

If the blocks are refurbished, the Council have committed to not recharging leaseholders for the major works required to deal with the fire stopping and structural strengthening. However like any other any ongoing maintenance to blocks with leasehold homes in Southwark, such works if required will be re-charged to leaseholders following our usual section 20 consultation. For any form of maintenance and inspections there is inevitable disruption which would not be compensated for. Leaseholders will not be compensated for any disruption this would cause, as the lease requires leaseholders to give access for works to the block.

2. Will the Council be refunding leaseholders monies back on Major Works from over the years that were incorrectly diagnosed, not warranted, or done to a unsatisfactory standard, such as external mastic works? We now know that the source of some of the problems such as leaks were due to service stacks.

There is no evidence that any works were incorrectly diagnosed, not warranted or completed to an unsatisfactory standard and therefore it would not be appropriate to refund any major works charges.

3. How is it possible that did Southwark not realise that the cracks were a systemic problem, given that they are in the same positions on each floor and each block (as now shown in the Arup report)?

The cracks were not identified as a systematic problem, as the repairs records show that they were very few reported incidences.

4. Have you reached any conclusions about the causes of the water penetration in the flats?

The water penetration in the flats has a number of sources. Since the Ledbury Team has been in place the causes of the leaks can be broken down into three main categories:

- a. The age of the pipework/ general wear & tear – Total reported 28
- b. Method of bathing /accidents – Total reported 12
- c. Works associated with installing the HIUs, temporary heating cylinders, cold water tank removal. Total reported 12

5. Can you confirm how many of the flats have been suffering from leaks and water penetration and how the works suggested are going to address this?

Since the Ledbury Team came together on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017 they have dealt with 52 leaks in individual flats, although the flats this has affected is greater as the leaks have travelled down into the homes of neighbours living below. Total identified as affected by leaks from all sources including primary location is 108

The suggested works to deal with these issues are:

- a. Repairing and where necessary renewing wastes and associated pipework, including isolation valves
- b. Sealing the bathroom and WC areas to stop water penetration from one flat to another and providing advice to residents on the how their bathing could affect their neighbours.
- c. Reviewing components such as bath panels to make it easier to identify leaks

These works will be discussed as part of the scoping of the works required to the blocks that will be subject to resident consultation.

6. What will happen to leaseholders during the works if they do not wish to sell?

The offer to buy back leaseholders properties is entirely voluntary and for each individual leaseholder to decide whether to stay or sell. If the decision is made to refurbish the blocks, we would hope that by doing either one or two blocks at a time, it will mean that we will use refurbished empty homes within the blocks not being worked upon to provide temporary accommodation. This accommodation will be provided rent free.

7. Will Ledbury leaseholders get any temporary accommodation paid for if they have to move out during the works?

If the decision is made to refurbish the blocks, we would hope that by doing either one or two blocks at a time, it will mean that we will use refurbished empty homes within the blocks not being worked upon to provide temporary accommodation. This accommodation will be provided rent free. If leaseholders wish to make their own arrangements for temporary accommodation in agreement with the council, they can claim a contribution of 60% of their reasonable rental costs.

8. Will Ledbury leaseholders have any say in what works are done/ which contractors are used in their flats?

As outlined at the meeting on 23rd November 2017, residents will play a big part in agreeing the scope of the works to the blocks. The Resident Project team which includes both leaseholders and tenants will be agreeing a draft scope of works to be costed by the independent cost consultants. This scope of work will then be consulted on with all residents before a final decision is made.

With regard to having a say in the appointment of contractors, although leaseholders will not be asked to contribute to the works, Southwark Council is still committed to following the statutory requirements to formally consult leaseholders on the appointment of the contractors to carry out the refurbishment contract. It should be noted that we are required to following the council's contract standing orders when procuring work contractors and also subject to the estimated value of the scheme are likely will be required to follows EU directives . We would hope to have representatives from the Ledbury RPT to work with us during the procurement process to help select the right contractor both in terms of cost and quality.

9. Have all the relevant s.20 notices for the Ledbury Estate been disclosed? If not, why not – and can they be disclosed?

All the Section 20 notices from past schemes since 2012, have all been available for leaseholders to inspect at the Ledbury TRA Hall in response to an earlier request.

10. Southwark has recently stated that the buyback offer will be open “up to the point that any major works programme commences on your block” – is this still the case? How exactly will this timeframe be defined?

The offer will remain open at least until the Council have made a decision on the future of the blocks, following consultation with residents. At that stage the offer will have to be reviewed depending on the option chosen.

11. What happens to the buyback offer (and right to return) if it is decided that the major works on the Ledbury Estate are too costly to go ahead?

If the options appraisal shows that the major works are too costly to go ahead, one of the options to be considered will have to be demolition. In the case of demolition a number of options will be developed for leaseholders in line with what we offer on other regeneration schemes in the borough and they will be subject to consultation with leaseholders. The buy back offer as it currently stands will remain on the table as one of those options for leaseholders.

The right to return offer for leaseholders is a different matter and this will have to be worked up as one of the additional options available to leaseholders should the demolition option be chosen.

12. Does the buyback offer still stand if it is decided that the blocks will need to be knocked down?

If the blocks have to be demolished, the buy back offer as it currently stands will remain on the table as an option for leaseholders.