



View from Bastion House

DECEMBER 2023

# TOWN HALL 10TH JANUARY

## ST GILES' CRIPPLEGATE 7PM 10 JANUARY 2024

Please save the date of January 10th on your calendars for an important town hall meeting.

The Barbican Association (BA) and the Barbican Resident Consultation Committee (RCC) work hard to represent the concerns of Barbican residents. This Town Hall Meeting is an opportunity for residents to share with members of the BA and RCC, and other residents, their concerns and

aspirations for the Barbican. The Town Hall Meeting is part of a new initiative to help residents cut through the bureaucracy that makes it difficult for their voices to be heard. Please come along to this resident focussed meeting. The agenda will be driven by residents, based on questions that have been asked in advance or questions asked on the night.

## BARBICAN ESTATE OFFICE TRANSFORMATION

The Executive Director responsible for the Barbican Residential Estate (BRE), Judith Finlay, and her renewed team are working to deliver the transformation that is sorely needed in the BEO. Sandra Jenner and Adam Hogg, Chairs of the RCC and BA, are members of the Board overseeing progress.

The critical appointment of a new Assistant Director, working solely for BRE, is well in hand. The final interviews were on 4th December, so we anticipate an announcement of the successful candidate soon.

There is still much to do but changing processes, procedures, management structures, attitudes and

behaviours takes time, as do significant changes to the workforce. We expect that with the new Interim Assistant Director, Pam Wharfe, our many concerns about services and the maintenance of the fabric of our homes will improve from the low base that we have been enduring and that service charges will stabilise.

### Staffing

A Service Improvement Manager has been brought in to drive and deliver the Transformation Programme.

A number of staff have left. Vacancies are being filled in the short term on an interim basis.

**Adam Hogg - Chair, Barbican Association**  
**Sandra Jenner - Chair, Residents' Consultation Committee**

# LEGACY OF NEGLECT OF THE BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL ESTATE (BRE) AND HISTORICAL SERVICE CHARGES

We have asked the City, as our Landlord, how it intends to deal with the legacy that over time leaseholders have paid for some services which have not been provided, e.g. lack of management of third party contracts and others provided to a poor standard and at excessive cost.

The legacy of City mismanagement has resulted in the neglect of the fabric of and services to the Barbican Residential Estate with residents experiencing repeated water penetration to their homes; repairs which have not been addressed in a timely way, not remedied first time and costs which have not been managed. **All resulting in ever escalating service charges which do not bear scrutiny as having been justified.**

A summary of the most concerning matters is below:

1. The BEO Review discovered that service charges had never been audited. An in depth audit is planned and discussions are being held with external auditors on the detailed specification. Three Residents with the appropriate expertise are involved in defining the scope of the audit and will continue their involvement throughout.
2. Lack of management of 3rd party contractors - an internal audit and the Altair review confirm this. This has resulted in costs which are out of control and quality of work so poor that repeated visits are necessary by contractors and frequently issues remain with which the leaseholder is dissatisfied. The current contract with the major contractor has been in place since early 2019 and is having to be extended because the management did not prepare for its expiry early next year.
3. No planned, preventive maintenance based on risk assessment and trend analysis since the estate was built, for example the failure to recognise that the topmost, exposed windows, not protected from the elements by balconies above, required more frequent redecoration and maintenance than other windows which has led to substantial repair costs. Further analysis is required of the actual condition of the fabric of and services to our buildings, to properly understand the real need, costs and risks of works arising from a high-level survey undertaken by Savill's in 2021. There will be further costs incurred for these surveys and the programme of work that results will be long and have a hefty price tag.
4. A long term failure by the landlord to undertake a programme of work to repair/replace the topmost, exposed windows of terrace blocks. The issue was identified and a commitment made in June 2021 that a programme was needed. This was reinforced on many occasions subsequently. Despite this there is still no programme of work in place, resulting in:
  - repairs/replacements undertaken on an ad hoc basis only after water penetration into residents' properties, damaging their homes and causing stress and emotional upset;
  - none of the financial benefits, e.g. economies of scale, longer term warranties, arising from a programmatic approach.
5. A detailed survey of repairs work undertaken by Ben Johnson House leaseholders is indicative of the effect of 2, 3 and 4 above and the resulting situation across the estate regarding disrepair and the problems that leaseholders have had to put up with and pay for. It demonstrates:
  - that repairs have not been effective resulting in repeated work undertaken with associated cost and prolonged problems with water ingress to residents' homes;
  - no systemic approach undertaken when it was clear that there were fundamental issues.
6. Still no reconciliation of electricity bills that stands scrutiny for 2021/22 and 22/23 to identify any overpayments following inaccurate recording of usage by meters. We have been calling for this since told of the problem over a year ago.

The City has committed to an audit, by external auditors, of the usage and charges for those two years to determine any overcharging. Any overcharges will be reimbursed. The audit will also review the processes and procedures to determine our energy usage and costs.

Residents are involved in the commissioning of this work.

7. Indicative of the lack of concern for its obligations as Landlord is the City's behaviour following its failure to undertake S20 consultation with residents in 2017 before entering into a contract for agency workers, which is unlawful. Moreover,
  - it did not respond for 6 months when it was pointed out by a leaseholder;
  - it did not take action to apply for a dispensation from the Tribunal for a further year.
  - it withdrew the Application to the Tribunal on the premise that it wished to negotiate a settlement.

A month later and there had been no approach from the City on settlement!

Our lawyer has written to the City pointing this out and reminding them that some related past charges remain unlawful and that we would expect the December service charge bill not to seek further unlawful charges.

We have applied to the Tribunal for the City to pay our legal expenses associated with the withdrawn Dispensation Application.

**Adam Hogg - Chair, Barbican Association**  
**Sandra Jenner - Chair, Residents' Consultation Committee**

## WINDOW SURVEY REPORTS

As you know, window replacements are a huge part of our service charges.

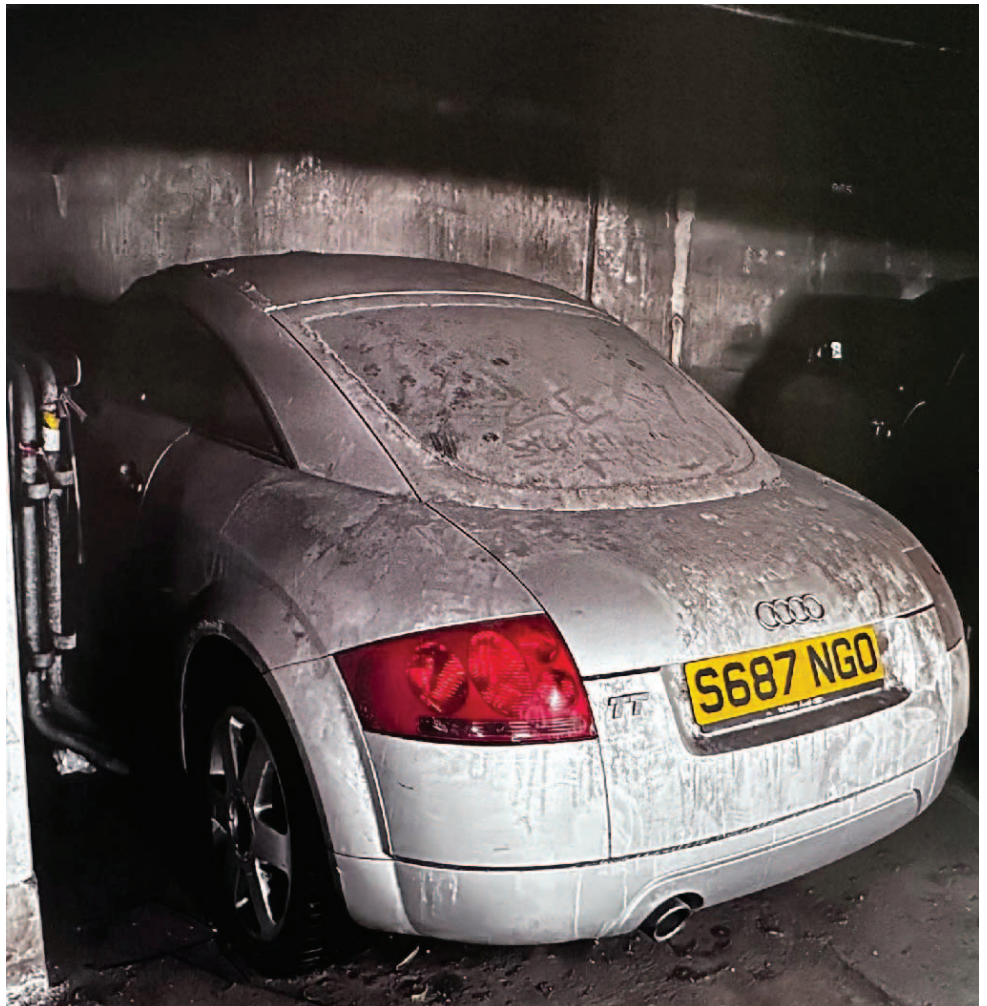
For two years now residents have been asking for a project to be organised which rolls out efficiently costed replacements and/or repairs.

Property Services have, to our understanding, commissioned 4 surveys which incorporate window frames. The RCC has managed to obtain the reports from the surveys but flat numbers have been redacted so not as useful as they could be. Please find the links to the reports as follows on the BA website at [barbicanassociation.co.uk/window-survey-reports/](http://barbicanassociation.co.uk/window-survey-reports/)

- The Savills stock condition survey. The RCC has been given access to summary reports.
- The K+M "survey while decorating the externals" survey. The RCC has asked for these reports.
- Keldea terrace blocks top floor window frames survey. The RCC has been given access to the block by block reports.
- Abseiling survey after the RCC pointed out that Keldea had failed to survey the frames not accessible via balconies. The windows like this are only on the blocks north of Beech Street.

## ABANDONED VEHICLES

The BA is pushing to have this abandoned vehicle removed. If you notice any others please notify [barblifeedit@gmail.com](mailto:barblifeedit@gmail.com) and we will add those to the current campaign.



# LONDON WALL WEST UPDATE: DESTINATION OR DEMOLITION CITY?

**CITY OF LONDON APPLIES FOR PLANNING PERMISSION TO DEMOLISH MUSEUM OF LONDON AND BASTION HOUSE AND BARBICAN QUARTER ACTION (BQA) TO LAUNCH A CROWD-FUNDING CAMPAIGN**

## BACKGROUND

On 29 September the City announced its intention to proceed with a planning application to allow for the demolition of the former Museum of London building and Bastion House and their replacement with two massive office-blocks.

BQA will vigorously oppose this application, which has now been submitted.

There are two main reasons to oppose demolition:

**Climate change.** Demolition would result in more carbon emissions than any other option. Industry experts have shown that these buildings are safe and suitable for re-use.

**Heritage.** The buildings are of pioneering post-war urban design by renowned architects, Powell and Moya, and included in the 20th Century Society's Risk List. Their location is historically significant and the site has huge cultural potential.

The City's application carries with it substantial risk. Planning policy and case-law are moving rapidly against demolition of buildings unless there are very strong grounds for doing so. The City's own soft-market test revealed an appetite among developers for retaining, adapting and re-using these buildings.

## NEXT STEPS

Once the application is validated and published, we will launch a crowd-funding campaign to pay for professional advice.

We have engaged:

- Leigh Day Solicitors who have advised us so far.
- Carney-Sweeney - award-winning town-planning consultancy.
- Simon Sturgis - renowned low-carbon building and sustainability expert - a member of the team which opposed plans to demolish the M&S flagship store in Oxford Street.
- Alec Forshaw - leading heritage consultant.

We will shortly be issuing advice on how to object most effectively, and will be seeking volunteers with relevant technical expertise.

With your support we believe we can defeat this application, and we have the legal, planning, environmental and heritage experts lined up to help us do so.

Please consider supporting the crowd-fund to enable us to fund the professional support we require to stop unnecessary demolition and set a vital marker for the future. Details will be issued shortly.

Meanwhile, sign up to our **BQA website** to get campaign updates at [londonstartshere@co.uk](mailto:londonstartshere@co.uk) You can also contact [action@londonstartshere.co.uk](mailto:action@londonstartshere.co.uk) to register offers of help and suggestions.



*Diagrammatic section through of the proposed LWW scheme*

# CONSIDERATE LIGHTING CHARTER – ANY EVIDENCE YET OF ITS ADOPTION?

On 24 October 2023, the City of London's Lighting SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) was adopted. This SPD provides both planning guidance for developers on lighting buildings and the spaces between them. More pertinently for residents, the SPD also included the 'Considerate Lighting Charter' which, the City encouraged "all those involved in lighting the City to commit to".

On the specific subject of residential amenity, the document states that "Lighting can adversely impact residents' quiet enjoyment of their properties after dark... Light spill through windows, even those fitted with blinds and curtains and the direct view of bright external and internal lighting schemes and light sources can not only cause a nuisance but also contribute to health issues including anxiety and sleep deprivation through the disruption of circadian rhythms". It also goes on to say that "All developments should ensure all external and internal lighting is turned off when not needed to help reduce obtrusive pollution.."

## **Actions however would speak louder than words....**

Having set out these bold aspirations we note, however, that little seems to have changed given the significant levels of light pollution visible every evening across the City. The Charter appears to have been cleverly designed to ostensibly meet the four goals of reducing light pollution, avoiding unnecessary electricity consumption from office buildings, cutting down on nuisance near people's homes, and helping protect wildlife from unnatural lighting.

Indeed, throughout 2023, a number of very public commitments were made to fund and promote the Charter, seemingly to provide a very visible indication that the City was moving to net zero at pace. In May 2023 for example a City press release announced that the Corporation had also signed up to the Lighting Urban Community International declaration to tackle light pollution.



*Lights on 24/7 directly opposite residents' bedrooms*

## **....But funding for promoting this initiative then withdrawn**

Sadly, and rather strangely, twelve days before making this commitment, on Thursday, 6 July 2023 the City resolved to withdraw all funding from the work to "promote a 'Considerate Lighting Charter'". Even more strangely, the Policy and Resources Committee felt that no work was needed because "there was enough organic interest in this policy, which should lead to good, early adopters coming forward and building momentum amongst the property operators".

## **....Moor Lane pilot scheme therefore put on hold**

So while the City's Lighting SPD, containing the Charter, has been formally adopted we have to date not yet seen any evidence either of the "early adopters" or of any attempts to curtail light pollution across the City. The City has also not yet announced that any building owners/managers have signed up to the Charter and, regrettably, the lack of funding means that an important pilot scheme with residents and businesses along Moor Lane has been put on hold. Reinstating funding will enable a "whole street" project to go ahead – providing useful lessons for the behavioural changes needed throughout the City. Until such time that that happens, residents will continue to "enjoy" unfettered light pollution 24/7.

**Sue Cox, Planning & Licensing, Barbican Association**

# BUILDING CONTROL REQUIREMENTS

Should you be thinking about a refurb, then please be aware that there seems to be a new and tedious process as a result of the Building Safety Act 2022. We have had this information back from the City of London District Surveyor's Office:

Under the Building Safety Act, and under transitional Regulations, the Building Safety Regulator as part of the Health & Safety Executive, became the Building Control Authority for all High-Risk buildings in England.

A high-risk building is a building is defined as having a floor over 18m or over 6 storeys and containing at least 2 residential units.

Most blocks in the Barbican fall under this definition and therefore most building control matters have now passed to the Regulator.

Any application for Building Control approval must now go to the Building Safety Regulator as under the Building Safety Act, they are now the Building Control Authority for us and not the Corporation. The freehold and all management responsibilities for our building are not affected.

Any application for Building Control approval should be submitted to the Regulator through their gov.uk website and further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/managing-building-control-approval-applications-for-higher-risk-buildings>

**Editor's note:** Now here is where it seems to get a bit convoluted...

The Building Safety Regulator does not employ any surveyors directly, so Under Section 13 of the Building Safety Act, they will ask the Local Authority to help them carry out their function.

The City is in constant communication with the Regulator and working to support them in this new role, and at this time, the District Surveyors will be helping them undertake their duties and inspections.

Under the new guidelines for helping the Regulator, if the local authority own or manage the building, then they are not allowed to assist the Regulator, due to a possible conflict of interest. In this case, as the Corporation are the freeholder and manage the common areas, they are not permitted to assist.

Therefore another local authority building control team will be appointed. In the one case the City have so far, that has gone to Southwark.

The City has been in constant discussions with the Regulator about all the Barbican buildings as they are unique and complex, and the City of London District Surveyor's Office's team will "support" the surveyor from Southwark. They are doing this at no cost to the applicant, and will attend site to advise on the unique works required in these buildings. The Southwark surveyor will advise the Regulator accordingly.

The City of London District Surveyor's Office's team is working with the Regulator to try and "streamline" the process, but this will take time as they are working across the whole of England and its difficult to get a process for one group of buildings that is different to the rest of the country.

Regarding fees, the Building Safety Regulator requires a set fee on submission of an application of £180 and then will charge on a cost recovery basis. They do not work on a preset determined fee. Further information can be found at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/building-safety/assets/docs/charging-scheme.pdf>

**Residents have requested that the Residents' Improvement Pack and Building Control webpage are updated.**

**BARBICAN SALVAGE**  
 ...would appreciate your help! We need more original fittings that have been replaced during building work - specially the items shown here:

Original bath taps and mixer tap

Hob knobs

Electric control panels, switches and sockets (various)

Original sinks

Four inch wall tiles

'Flying saucer' knobs

Door furniture

Original taps (all styles)

Sliding light fittings

Please contact [barbicansalvage@gmail.com](mailto:barbicansalvage@gmail.com)

# ESTATE SECURITY

**Please continue to report anti-social behaviour on [asb.barbicanassociation.co.uk](http://asb.barbicanassociation.co.uk)**

A report based on 12 months anti-social behaviour data June 2021 to June 2022 together with findings & recommendations of the Barbican Estate Security Committee has been provided to appropriate Corporation Members & Officers and discussions are ongoing. As an initial outcome a Task/Finish Joint Action Group was formed and met, just once, in December last year. This group has since been replaced with a new "ASB Strategic Meeting". Unlike the previous group, however, this is not an open meeting. An information leaflet for residents, revisiting and advising them of who to contact, for which type of anti-social behaviour and a brief explanation of what they should expect from making such contact is awaited.

Meantime, please continue to report any anti-social behaviour you may witness occurring across the estate. Any crime, such as phone, bag or laptop snatching should be reported directly to the City of London Police and not included here.

Please remember that the intention of the ASB Reporter is purely to gather evidence of anti-social behaviour. Therefore, if you witness an ASB incident please use the website to record the event but if immediate action is also required then you should follow normal procedure such as calling the Police on 101 (or 999 but only if URGENT); Barbican Estate Office; City Noise Team etc...

If it is the City of London Police that you call, it is essential that you are provided with a reference/case number – please include this case number in the "action

taken" section of the ASB Reporter. IF YOU DO NOT this incident will not be "officially" counted and the police will assume that no additional measures or activity is required.

**David Bradshaw - Chair, Barbican Estate Security Committee**

## EMAIL UPDATES – PLEASE SUBSCRIBE

You may already be familiar with the BEO's weekly e-newsletter, which provides updates and information about what is happening on the Estate. However, we'd like to encourage you to take a moment to sign up for the Barbican Association (BA) e-newsletter as well. This will allow us to ensure that you stay informed about critical developments related to service charges, planning issues, and calls to action within the Barbican community.

Even if you are already a BA member, it's important to note that, due to privacy and communication regulations, we are unable to freely send you emails regarding matters that may directly impact you without your explicit consent. By signing up for the BA e-newsletter on our website at [barbicanassociation.co.uk](http://barbicanassociation.co.uk), you'll be taking a proactive step in staying engaged and well-informed.

To join our mailing list, simply visit our website, scroll down, and you'll easily find the link to "Join our mailing list". Your participation in this communication channel will help us ensure that you receive timely updates and are an integral part of the Barbican community's ongoing dialogue and decision-making processes.

## LEASE EXTENSIONS

### **Need More Information?**

Barbican Life are planning a series of meetings (some in person, and some on Zoom) with solicitors in the coming months. Let us know if you are interested and we'll send you invites.

Email: [barblifeedit@gmail.com](mailto:barblifeedit@gmail.com)

If you have questions and don't enjoy Zoom or email, please contact us and we'll share what we know to get you started. Phone: 078 42 23 52 68 or drop in a note with your contact details to 15 Defoe House and we'll call you back.

Search on the Barbican Talk website for "SHARE YOUR LEASE EXTENSION EXPERIENCE" and see what other folks have done.



# Barbican Association Discount Scheme Participants

A list of organisations offering discounts or other incentives to Barbican Association members. **If you are not already a BA member, make sure you join the Barbican Association to qualify – for most of these just one visit will more than cover your annual BA membership subscription cost.**

*Local businesses which wish to participate and offer a discount or other incentive to BA members should contact Helen Hudson, 07842 23 52 68 or [barblifeedit@gmail.com](mailto:barblifeedit@gmail.com) for further information.*



## FOOD AND DRINK

3SP Moorgate: any day - **NEW**  
 Artillery Arms - **BACK!**  
 Barbican Brasserie  
 Barbican Kitchen  
 Bengal Tiger  
 Chiswell Street Dining Rooms  
 Coq d'Argent – Bank – **UPDATED**  
 FARE Restaurant + Bar  
 Fish Central  
 The Jugged Hare  
 Moshi Moshi Sushi  
 Pham Sushi  
 Pho Vietnamese Cafe/Restaurant  
 Mayura Barbican - **NEW**  
 Vecchio Parioli  
 Wood Street Bar and Restaurant

## HEALTH, BEAUTY AND WELLBEING

Barbican Dental  
 Barbican Physio  
 Barry's Bootcamp  
 City Psychotherapy  
 Counselling and Coaching  
 Cranio-Sacral Therapy  
 Cubitts Optometrist & Spectacles - **NEW**  
 Health in the City



Please visit [barbicanlife.com](http://barbicanlife.com) to see more details and contact information for our local firms or scan the QR code with your cell phone camera.

London Eye Optique  
 No74 Hair & Beauty  
 Personal Training  
 Psychotherapy City

## LEARNING

Languages 2000 - **UPDATED**

## SALES AND SERVICES

Citi Clean  
 Crispins Removals and Storage - **NEW**  
 Mail Boxes Etc, Barbican  
 Prince of Wales Dry Cleaners  
 Urban Locker Self Storage

## CULTURE

Charterhouse  
 Ed Cross Gallery  
 LSO Live  
 Velorose Gallery

## FURNISHING

Adams Blinds  
 MILK Concept Boutique  
 MyDreamKitchen