

Update on building safety documentation and external wall inspections across East Village

This note provides an update about the process currently underway at East Village to obtain the documentation required to show buildings are compliant with the latest regulations and standards set by the Government and other authorities.

In particular, this note provides information about the documents confirming construction techniques and materials in relation to fire safety.

1. The situation for leaseholders at East Village

At East Village the current situation for leaseholders who need information for their mortgage providers remains unclear.

Although we have now received some initial feedback from the engineering team, and some of their findings have been assessed, we do not have the definitive results that would be needed by mortgage companies and other lenders.

We know this news is difficult and worrying for some residents and leaseholders and we're sorry for the frustration and upset this is causing. However, we hope people will understand this news does not mean there is any immediate risk. Indeed, additional fire safety measures were put in place to ensure the safety of all those living, working and visiting East Village as soon as non-compliant materials were identified.

A briefing note explaining the context and background is [here](#).

Although the technical inspections of the external wall systems are underway, East Village Management Ltd, has informed us that they are not progressing as fast as we or they expected.

We would also like to reassure you that we are doing all we can to resolve this issue as quickly as we can.

2. Have the inspections identified any problems at East Village?

Yes. Although, EVML has received only a draft report for **Festuca House**, it has recommended further testing of some materials used in the external wall system.

The draft report also identified some issues with the installation and, potentially, the condition of cavity barriers in some areas. Cavity barriers prevent fire spread and are a part of the external wall system. In the event of a fire, cavity barriers are expected to provide insulation for 30 minutes. We do not know yet if more substantial work is required to ensure cavity barriers meet this specification.

The draft report also highlights the use of timber on the building. It flags that timber, although commonly used and well understood as a sustainable construction material, is combustible. As such, the latest advice means it might not be permitted.

We are also investigating whether there should be timber decking on balconies and in courtyards.

We are seeking more technical advice for an assessment of the risk of fire spread and if we will need to remove some or all the external timber from this block. We will be in touch with affected residents as soon as we have fully assessed the engineers' findings and advice.

3. Potential wider implications

Although we are still waiting for the reports following inspections at **Lucia Heights**, **Titian Heights** and **Festive Mansions**, the engineer has already raised questions about the cavity barriers.

We understand the engineers are unable to complete the reports until the original construction drawings and associated documentation can be inspected by the specialist cladding engineers. Unfortunately, EVML does not have copies of these drawings. They have requested them from the original contractor who has responded positively to the request.

Because we do not have all the information about the external wall system for these blocks, we believe it is prudent to take a precautionary approach. Therefore, we must consider the possibility that the buildings do not meet the current required standards and that remedial works may be required.

The reports required by mortgage providers ask the engineers to certify that the buildings meet *current* guidelines. These were last updated in January 2020. East Village was built to the Building Regulations standards at the time of construction.

4. Is my home safe?

Your safety is our priority. Our fire safety precautions in place at East Village are comprehensive. All Fire Risk Assessments are up to date and the 24/7 security team is vigilant about fire safety. The team in EVML's control room monitor the fire alarms 24/7 and are trained to respond appropriately in the unlikely event of a fire. We work hard to ensure that all necessary precautions are in place. EVML are also talking to the London Fire Brigade about the engineer's findings and our response.

The external facades across East Village are predominantly made of pre-cast concrete. We do not have any buildings at East Village that are enveloped in Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM) or High Pressure Laminates (HPL), which have both been flagged by the government as a concern. We have identified small amounts of ACM on Karner House, Kotata House, Tayberry House, Fortuna, Calla House and Merle Mansions. We are currently preparing to remove it.

5. What are you doing to resolve this?

Triathlon Homes is committed to resolving this situation as quickly as possible. This means we are in frequent, daily liaison with the directors of EVML, which is the responsible party, in order to obtain the information that is needed for us to make progress.

This includes checking that EVML is being rigorous in assessing fire risk and testing fire prevention equipment. We also seek regular reassurances that EVML is properly

engaged with the Fire Brigade about East Village and that both the Fire Brigade and EVML's on-site team are fully briefed and kept up to date with any changes at East Village.

We have received confirmation that EVML has approached the contractors for the design documentation needed by the specialist inspectors. We understand that EVML has also consulted with lawyers in case the request for drawings does not get a quick response.

EVML's team is also working with the specialist property consultant, Savills, which is providing advice about fire risks and the next steps. Savills has considerable experience of similar situations in other parts of the country.

EVML will be appointing a project manager to progress any works needed. Savills have also put a team in place to support this work.

We are working with EVML and their project management team to ensure a focus on delivery and the needs of residents.

We are aware of the urgency of the situation and we are working with our partners across East Village to develop an action plan to resolve these issues as soon as possible.

6. What does this mean for my sale, staircasing, re-mortgage?

At present, we are unable to provide you with a report that will satisfy your bank or building society. Unfortunately, there is likely to be a long delay until we can provide the type of information your mortgage provider is requesting. We understand this is frustrating and appreciate this is likely to be a significant inconvenience for some people.

Before deciding on your course of action, we do recommend that you seek professional advice. While we are unable to advise you on what is best for you, we do want to be clear that, at this time, we are not able to provide an estimate of how long it will take to obtain the appropriate professional documentation.

7. What about blocks that have not had recent inspections?

The plots or quadrants at East Village were designed and built by different architects and contractors. Therefore, it's not possible to advise if issues identified so far might also apply to blocks not yet inspected. However, we believe it is right to be cautious. We are currently unable to guarantee the final inspection report will provide the confirmation of compliance to the latest government advice that mortgage and financial companies have decided to request.

We are waiting for confirmation of inspection dates for **Karner House, Meander House, Kotata House, Tayberry House** and **Tucana Heights**. These buildings have been prepared for inspection and we are currently ensuring the engineers have all the documentation they need for the inspection. EVML have about 90% of the project documentation. They are currently seeking the additional detail required.

The programme is running behind schedule and we'll update you soon with a new timeline.

EVML is working with building health and safety professionals at Savills to identify alternative engineering firms with the capacity and professional expertise to carry out the inspections. However, because this is a nationwide issue, it is proving difficult to secure additional, suitably qualified engineers.

8. What next?

We are unable to specify the extent of any remedial work or the timetable until we have the information from the cladding and fire safety engineers, and it is assessed by EVML's technical advisors. We will plan with our partners across East Village the best way to manage remedial works. We will take into consideration the fire safety risk as well as logistical and cost concerns.

We are preparing for receipt of the reports so we can respond quickly. A decision-making project team has been established with members from Triathlon, Get Living, EVML and their technical advisors.

Regular communication to residents and transparency is a key objective of the project team.

9. Will I have to pay for any remedial works?

We have not yet had discussions about the nature of the remedial works or the potential costs. We need to see the reports and assess the installation/condition of the components of the external wall system against the 2020 guidance and the 2010 Building Regulations. The outcome of this evaluation is likely to determine whether we approach leaseholders for a contribution or seek recompense from the original contractors.

We are joining forces with other large housing associations to lobby for government funding to meet the costs of implementing new government guidance for building safety. The government have agreed to pay for the removal and replacement of ACM cladding and have stated they want to protect leaseholders from meeting the cost of this work. We'd like to see this extended to other fire safety works.

10. Can you buy us out?

The Board have discussed buying back shares in your home or buying you out and we have taken some legal advice. Our legal advisors have clarified the position and have stated that the terms of the lease and our agreements with funders, including our lenders and the Greater London Authority (GLA), do not allow this.

11. Where can I get further advice or help?

We understand this news is concerning. Everyone involved in the management of East Village is committed to putting your safety and well-being first. Please get in touch if you have any questions. At this stage we won't have all the answers, but we will do all we can to get back to you as soon as possible.

The following organisations may also be able to help:

LEASE, the Leasehold Advisory Service have been given some additional government funding to help advise leaseholders on fire safety issues. Their website is here:

<https://www.lease-advice.org/>

If you are concerned about your ability to pay your mortgage or rent/service charge, the following independent advice agencies may be able to help:

StepChange Debt Charity: Call 0800 652 7069 or www.stepchange.org.uk

National Debtline: Call 0808 808 4000 or www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

If you are concerned that your ability to re-mortgage, staircase or sell your home might be affected by these changes, please seek advice directly from your lender or mortgage broker.

12. What next?

We understand how important it is to keep everyone as informed as possible, even if we do not have the complete answers ourselves. Therefore, we will do our best to keep you updated about our plans, our progress and how you might be affected by this situation.

Obviously, some residents may have very specific questions that relate only to them and their personal circumstances. In this instance we will respond to your query by contacting you directly. Otherwise, please email your questions and we will post answers on our website (where applicable).

We plan to host an information session for everyone affected by the changes to the advice provided by government and the other authorities responsible for building standards and regulations.

If you have any further questions, residents of Triathlon Homes can contact info@triathlonhomes.com