

Thursday 17 December 2020

All Triathlon Leaseholders at East Village

Dear Leaseholder,

BUILDING SAFETY UPDATE

We are writing with an update on the recent inspections undertaken on the external wall system in buildings across East Village, to give you more information about the inspection programme and progress made and to keep you informed about some key findings and the expected next stages.

Update on the inspection programme

There are 26 blocks with leaseholders and EVML has now inspected 13 of these blocks with six more inspections taking place before Christmas. A further four blocks have had extensive desk-top assessments and we are waiting for confirmation that they will not require intrusive inspection. An update on each of the blocks is detailed below.

The engineers are expected to complete their reports approximately six to eight weeks after inspection, and we will write to residents of each block with the findings when we receive them. The engineers will issue EWS1 forms with the reports.

Accessing the materials behind the concrete blocks has slowed the programme down. As a result, going forward, EVML is looking at a new approach to access the external wall system. Next week they will be undertaking inspections from inside and it is likely this approach will be adopted in those blocks where access is challenging. We'll try to use empty properties to do this work, but in a very small number of blocks, we may need to ask residents to give us access to their homes to enable the inspections to take place more quickly.

N01

Inspections took place at Titian Heights last month, and have commenced at Sable House this week. We are expecting the report for Titian Heights imminently and will communicate the findings, and any required action, to residents as soon as we receive it.

N02

Inspections at Zeller House and Karner House were completed in the first week of December. The inspection at Meander House will be completed this week.

The process of removing and replacing the ACM has not yet finished. EVML's technical advisors have stated that provided the external wall inspection does not reveal any material issues with the remaining cladding, we anticipate having the necessary information to obtain an EWS1 form before the completion of the ACM works.

Another block in the plot, Fortuna House, has been inspected and has received an EWS1 form which states that no remedial work is necessary. While we can't be certain this will be replicated in the other blocks in the plot, this is a positive indication.

N03

Inspections were completed at Lucia Heights and Festive Mansions in early November. We are currently awaiting the final reports and expect these imminently.

Samphire Heights was inspected in early December.

Another block in the plot, Applegate House has been inspected and has received an EWS1 form which states that no remedial work is necessary. While we can't be certain this will be replicated in the other blocks, this is a positive indication.

N04

Titan House and Aurelia House were inspected last week. Inspections are taking place this week at Verna House and Rye Mansions.

N07

Tayberry House is scheduled to be inspected next week. We will be using an empty flat to undertake the inspection from the inside.

We are waiting for an apartment to be vacated at the end of January to complete the inspection at Kotata House. We will confirm the date of the inspection in the New Year.

The process of removing and replacing the ACM has not yet finished. EVML's technical advisors have stated that provided the external wall inspection does not reveal any material issues with the remaining cladding, we anticipate having an EWS1 form before the completion of the ACM works.

Another block in the plot, Raywood Mansions has been inspected and has received an EWS1 form which states that no remedial work is necessary. While we can't be certain this will be replicated in the other blocks, this is a positive indication.

N09 and N10

EVML have received additional information from the developer for these plots including evidence of the quality of the construction. The engineers are undertaking desk-top reviews of the information and we are hopeful reports can be completed based on this detail. We'll update residents of Vesta House, Vega House, Ursa Mansions and Tucana Heights when we receive an update from the engineers. This is likely to be in mid-January.

N13

We have received preliminary findings from the inspection of Burgundy House. The inspection identified some imperfections of fit of the fire barriers due to gaps between barriers and the external cladding.

We are awaiting the final report, in the interim, fire engineers have told us a change to the current evacuation strategy is not required. We will continue to work with experts and residents to ensure this remedial work is completed as quickly and as safely as possible.

N14

Following inspections in the summer, engineers have confirmed that Festuca House and Asterid Heights will need remedial work.

In Asterid Heights, the inspections identified that some fire barriers are missing or incomplete. However, the engineers stated no interim safety measures were required, and have said there is no immediate risk to residents or their properties.

At Festuca House, the inspections showed that the insulation material was of a combustible type, and that the building was also missing parts of the expected fire barriers. However, the engineers stated no interim safety measures were required, and that again, there is no immediate risk.

We are working closely with EVMML's technical advisors to clarify the plan for our next steps and will inform you as soon as these are settled. EVMML are looking at the available warranties and next steps with their legal advisors.

The form of construction at N14 is unique to this plot at East Village.

N15

Galena Heights will be inspected next week. The engineers will undertake the inspection using an empty property.

We are waiting for an apartment to be vacated at the end of January to complete the inspection at Cavesson House.

We do not yet have a confirmed date for the inspection at Saddlers House. If you are able to let us use your home to access the external wall system, please let us know. This is likely to enable us to schedule a date for inspection more quickly. This will involve removing two areas of your internal wall in one room. All damage would be made good including redecoration. Please contact us if you are interested and we'll let you know what this involves in more detail.

N26

Recent inspections into the structure of the buildings in the N26 plot highlighted some problems with the external walls that require further investigation and works. A review of the 'stay put' policy was recommended, and a fire risk assessment was carried out to review the fire strategy.

As a result, EVML has engaged a team of 24/7 fire marshals to support evacuation of the building in the unlikely event of a fire.

EVML has responded quickly to this situation and they have appointed a project manager and undertaken a tender process to enhance the fire alarm system. This will remove the need for the additional fire marshals. EVML is planning to undertake the work early next year. The Government announced a new fund today to cover the costs of the installation and we will work with EVML to make an application.

EVML have also begun discussions with the developers as the first step of progressing any remedial work. They have consulted their lawyers regarding the warranties and viable claims.

The form of construction at N26 is unique to this plot at East Village.

Timber Decking

The fire engineers have evaluated a significant number of blocks with timber decking on the balconies. They have not yet recommended any of the timber requires replacement. In each case so far, the timber is not considered a fire risk because of the nature of the construction of the balconies and the materials used.

N02 and N07 ACM Removal Update

All of the ACM cladding has been removed from the blocks in plot **N07** (Calla House, Merle Mansions, Kotata House and Tayberry House), and in **N02** (Meander, Karner, Maya, Mara, Fortuna and Zeller Houses, and Colville Mansions) over 50% has been removed with the remainder due to be removed before the end of January.

The MHCLG has approved funding for this project, although they have not yet approved the detailed expenditure. At this time, we have no reason to believe the work will not be funded. The MHCLG has already made payments for some of the work carried out.

The Building Safety Fund

This is an important government fund designed to enable the necessary works required to make buildings safe and to protect leaseholders from the cost of the repair work. The MHCLG is administering the fund.

EVML has registered all of the Triathlon Homes buildings for the fund as a precautionary measure. Further detail has been submitted to the MHCLG for all buildings where defects have been found. We understand the fund is oversubscribed and the Triathlon Board have written to Robert Jenrick, the Minister responsible, asking him to increase the funding available. Today the government extended the deadline for information and we will work with EVML to progress detailed applications.

Your Safety

Some of the reports received are worrying. In each case the fire engineer's reports are shared with EVML's Fire Risk Assessors who review the need for any additional safety measures within the block. EVML will implement the recommendations quickly.

EVMLs fire safety procedures are thorough, and they have been independently audited. All of the fire alarm panels are monitored by the 24/7 security control room which is in East Village. The team are trained to respond quickly in the unlikely event of a fire.

Costs of Remedial Work

We know that some of you will be concerned about the potential impact on the sale of your home and about the costs of any interim measures and remedial work. We will do all we can to protect leaseholders from these costs by pursuing government funding where it is available and by seeking costs from those responsible for any building defects.

Selling your Home or Staircasing

We recommend you wait until we have received the fire engineers report before you start the process of sale or staircasing. If you would like to talk to our team about your next steps please contact them at Sales.ServicesNorth@shgroup.org.uk

We realise that the inspections process has been tough. We know how challenging this has been for many of you, particularly in a year that has been extra-difficult for most. Thank you for your ongoing understanding and patience.

We will continue to make sure we keep you updated with progress and will contact you again when we have more information regarding the building safety programme.

If you have any further questions, we are always here to help – you can contact us at BuildingSafety@triathlonhomes.com

Best wishes,

Triathlon Homes Building Safety Team