

23 September 2021

Dear Leaseholder,

Building Safety Update: Meander House & Zeller House

We are writing to give you an update about the fire safety and cladding issues in your blocks. EVML is currently arranging the replacement of the ACM cladding. This note refers to other issues identified by the fire engineers that need to be resolved before a valid EWS1 form can be issued.

Some residents have written to us with specific queries, so we've used these to provide a Q&A.

Please could you provide a copy of the fire engineers reports?

We are unable to share the fire engineers reports for legal reasons. We appreciate this may be frustrating, but it is to protect your interests should the document be used in any legal case in the future.

We have given information about the contents of the reports to residents and you should be able to find more information about this at the dedicated [East Village microsite](#). Please let us know if you don't find what you are looking for.

What work has been proposed by the fire engineers to mitigate any risk?

The fire engineers have proposed that a valid EWS1 form could possibly be issued without full remediation of the defects but instead, by implementing and assessing other mitigating measures. The fire engineers wrote a report for EVML's independent fire risk assessors and for the London Fire Brigade. The purpose of the report was to assess any impact on safety from the defective cavity barriers, to consider the risk and appropriate mitigation.

The fire engineers proposed that any increased risk could be mitigated by smoke alarms which do not need to be linked between flats and that any escape route is adequately protected.

The fire engineer stated that some work may be required to remove timber from some, but not all balconies. This is currently being investigated further.

What is the process for agreeing the fire engineer's recommendations?

The London Fire Brigade has commented on the report and has asked for the view of an independent fire risk assessor. The fire engineers have had a number of discussions with

EVML's fire risk assessors who have rightly been seeking additional clarity and assurance.

The fire risk assessors have a statutory responsibility for fire safety. They have not yet stated they are fully satisfied with the mitigating measures proposed. They have recommended a specific Fire Risk Assessment be undertaken in the buildings. The assessment will be more intrusive than the standard assessment carried out annually by EVML. The focus will be on escape routes and fire detection systems.

EVML is in the process of commissioning this work and we are waiting for confirmation of a start date. It is possible that the outcome of the assessment proposes some work to the buildings to ensure the safety of escape routes.

There will need to be a review of the fire strategy for the building to ensure this approach remains compatible with the strategy. [The current approach is a 'stay put' policy, which has not changed.]

EVML has also completed an audit of the smoke detection systems in each block.

We will contact residents as soon as we have the outcome of the assessment.

Why is this taking so long?

We appreciate this has been a slow process and it must be frustrating. At the moment, we are unable to confirm when we can get you a valid EWS1 form. We are sorry that we've not met the timetable we outlined when we met with you in March.

In the main, the delay is due to two things. It's a complex area of work and there is no set blueprint to follow. Fire engineers are analysing specific circumstances and materials. They need to review test data and need to understand how different materials may behave in a fire. Secondly, the pressure on the sector (fire engineers and fire risk assessors) is significant at the moment. EVML has a very good relationship with the fire engineer and fire risk assessors, but they are one of a number of clients, and are subject to time constraints.

EVML is continuing to progress this work and it remains a priority.

Will new Government guidance make a difference?

The fire engineers and fire risk assessors are considering the impact of new legislation which might have an impact on the outcome of their decisions, such as in the Building Safety Bill and the Fire Safety Act 2021. This is also to ensure their advice meets the requirements of the new Act.

You may be aware that in July, the now-former Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government made a statement to parliament about building safety issues.

The Minister stated that the [MHCLG consolidated advice note of January 2020](#) is due to be withdrawn. This was a key document used to assess the fire safety of the external walls at East Village. This guidance will be replaced by a new Code of Practice; **PAS 9980: Fire risk appraisal and assessment of external wall construction and cladding of existing blocks of flats – Code of practice**. The consultation period on the new Code has ended and it is currently being drafted and should be published in December 2021.

We understand that the government want to prevent full remediation if the work is not necessary. The Code aims to provide a standard methodology which can be used to consistently assess the risk of fire spread across external walls and help make decisions about the extent of remediation.

EVML's fire engineer will review your block in the light of the proposed new guidance. While the Code is currently in draft form, it is important the new government guidance is taken into consideration in making decisions about any necessary remedial work. We'll keep you updated about this.

How much are mitigating measures likely to cost, and will the costs be passed on to leaseholders?

At the moment we are unable to give you the full information about costs. We'll update you when we know what work, if any, will be required. There are some costs related to the fire engineers reports and for the fire risk assessors. We do not yet have a price for the fire risk assessment.

These are eligible service charge items. They are not included in your current service charge. EVML is keeping a separate service charge account of all cladding related costs and we will share this information with you when more costs are certain. If costs do need to be passed onto leaseholders, these will be apportioned on the same basis as your services charge is.

Will you still need to fix the underlying defects in the building?

A decision has not yet been made about making good the underlying defects and we need to be certain it is the right decision for current and future leaseholders. The decision-making process will be robust, and we will scrutinise the technical advice, the costs, the impact on value, the view of the building's insurers and take further legal advice.

We have not yet heard from the Government's Building Safety Fund and do not yet know whether the work is eligible for the fund. In the short-term, our priority is to focus on ensuring each building has a valid EWS1 form.

We wish we were in a position to give you more certainty about this. We are working through all the issues in turn and will keep you updated about progress. Some leaseholders have already commented about this and your feedback is welcome.

What is being done to chase the original contractors for our buildings?

We are unable to comment on legal matters but can confirm that no formal legal action has started in respect of your plot as we are still ascertaining the full remedial strategy and costs. A number of different contractors and sub-contractors were involved in the construction of your plot and we are unable to comment about them specifically.

We will do what we can to keep you updated about any legal processes but will not be able to share specific details with you. This is to protect any legal case and while it sounds as though we are being evasive, it is in the best interests of residents.

Next Steps

- We will continue to work with EVML for a clear timeline for the beginning and completion of the more detailed risk assessments and will update you as soon as this is commissioned
- We will inform residents as soon as any news on any issues impacting N02 becomes known to us

More Information?

If you have any further questions, please get in touch by emailing buildingsafety@triathlonhomes.com

Kind regards,

Triathlon Homes Building Safety Team