

Jason Crawford  
Department of Community & Children's Services  
Property Services  
3 Lauderdale Place  
Barbican  
London EC2Y 8EN

July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017

Dear Jason Crawford,

**RE : NOTICE OF PROPOSALS FOR REDECORATIONS AT CRESCENT HOUSE**

I write in response to your letter of 12<sup>th</sup> July giving notice of a proposal to enter into a qualifying long-term agreement for the redecoration of Golden Lane Estate.

Having visited the estate office to obtain copies of the documents, I would like to make the following observations:

**Background**

As a leaseholder and resident on the top floor of Crescent House, my observations will focus on this block, although similar observations are likely to apply across the estate.

**History of Neglect**

Having lived in Crescent House since September 2006 I am aware that there have been no external decorations carried out during that period. The last comprehensive external redecoration was carried out in 2004, some 13 years ago. As an architect, I am aware that the generally accepted maximum period between external redecoration cycles is 5 years and the reason for this is to avoid the possibility of damage to the building fabric.

For many years residents have expressed concerns about the obvious damage taking place to the building fabric due to the lack of external redecoration. As an example, please see below link to a website from February 2015 which contains photos showing this damage. In the communal open-air areas of Crescent House the damage is particularly severe, with much of the timber joinery and metalwork damaged well beyond the point of straightforward repair or redecoration.

This damage is a direct result of the decision by the Corporation to delay the redecoration cycle. Whatever the reasoning behind that decision, it is particularly concerning in a building listed at Grade II\* where the fabric can be difficult and costly to appropriately repair or replace.

## **Current Proposals**

The redecoration proposals I have obtained from the estate office cover a basic redecoration cycle. Two quotes for the works to Crescent House appear to be included; £126,484.93 by Polyteck and £96,705.00 by Axis Europe Plc. Of the latter sum, 60% of the total (£38,814 + £18,330) is for access equipment and solar reflective paint to the roof, leaving £39,561 for the redecorations. Of this, a provisional sum of £5,000 is included to cover 'repairs or unforeseen works'.

£5,000 is woefully inadequate to repair the obvious damage to Crescent House before painting can commence. It is clear therefore that no attempt has been made to establish a realistic actual cost of the repairs required to the fabric.

## **Responsibility**

As leaseholders, we have a clear responsibility to pay for our share of works to the building. We should not however have a responsibility to pay for additional costs resulting from the Landlord's neglectful maintenance over the past decade which I fear could be significant.

On that basis, I would like to establish an agreement with you that as leaseholders we will be billed for these redecoration works in accordance with the quotes obtained above, and will not be held responsible for any increases in the provisional sum noted or be held liable in any way for costs resulting from damage that would have been avoided had an appropriate redecoration cycle been in place.

Your clear acceptance of this straightforward principle would be appreciated.

## **External Windows**

I note that this is a separate matter from the above formal notification as works to the windows to the external perimeter windows of Crescent House are excluded from the quotes in hand.

However, I would like to put on record here some additional observations as this matter is of particular concern to residents of Crescent House.

The external timber hardwood windows make up the full external elevations of the flats, and they include pivoting opening lights, bay windows and built-in book shelves amongst other details. The frames are formed of a Jatoba hardwood from South America which, on cost and environmental grounds, cannot be specified today and the façade could not be closely replicated with other materials. The facades are therefore irreplaceable and as they form an inherent part of the character of the block, are protected by the Grade II\* listing.

The frames are painted externally and generally exposed with a dark stain internally. As noted above, the lack of external redecoration has had a serious impact on the condition of these windows, as cracks in the paintwork allow water to rot the timber and cause lasting damage which has been accelerating. This damage is not always immediately obvious but is

now widespread and illustrated by some recent repairs to our flat shown on the attached pictures.

You will be aware that the upgrade of these window is long overdue. The single glazing has a very poor thermal and acoustic properties. The impact on all residents from condensation, mold, expensive heating bills, noise ingress, and overheating during summer are well documented.

Heritage double glazing can be fitted within the existing frames and I understand has been carried out on certain leaseholder's flats with permission in the past, and this approach should be adopted for the whole block.

However, as more damage is done to the timber frames through lack of redecoration, the cost and difficulty of this upgrade increases significantly and this matter must be addressed urgently.

Are you able provide reassurance that these issues are understood and are being managed by your department and, as redecoration are not to be carried out as part of the works above, a separate urgent programme has been established to ensure a timely upgrade and protection of the existing windows.

Regards,

Steve Smith  
[stesmif@gmail.com](mailto:stesmif@gmail.com)  
07910 504 984

Photos of repairs Jan 2017



# CRESCENT HOUSE UNDER THREAT

Grade II\* listed Crescent House, part of the Golden Lane Estate, is falling into disrepair due to a lack of maintenance by the City of London Corporation.

This website has been set up by residents of Crescent House and the [Golden Lane Estate](#). As a community we are passionate about our unique estate and have become increasingly frustrated about years of neglect that have led to the current state of the buildings seen in the photos below.

[POSTS](#) [LIKES](#) [ARCHIVE](#)

The estate is well known as a model for social housing and urban living and has been hugely influential on generations of architects. English Heritage gave Crescent House a Grade II\* listing "*for its place in the evolution of post war architecture and for the sophistication with which the contrasting materials and geometry of the facade are handled*". In terms of importance, this places it within the top 8% of listed buildings nationwide, and indeed on a [select list](#) within the City of London itself.

We are currently gathering support to help fight for Crescent House and if you are a resident or other interested party please get in touch at [crescenthouseunderthreat@gmail.com](mailto:crescenthouseunderthreat@gmail.com) and we will add your name to our list.

- Why has Crescent House not been redecorated in over 10 years?
- Why has significant damage to the fabric of the building been allowed to take place as a result?
- Why is Crescent House treated so differently to other Grade II\* listed buildings in the Square Mile?
- Who will meet the eventual cost of the additional damage caused by the ongoing neglect seen in the photos below?



















