

Safety in your building

1 July 2021

11 and 17 Robsart Street, 1 and 7 Thornton Street,
Stockwell,
SW9 0BL

Dear Residents,

The Hive
22 Wembley Park Boulevard
Wembley
HA9 0HP

www.networkhomes.org.uk
customerservice@
networkhomes.org.uk
0300 373 3000

Update on Robsart Street project start date

Following our update at the end of April, we'd like to share the latest position with you.

Contractor negotiations

Firstly, we would like to apologise for the lengthy negotiations which have had to take place with Higgins, the original contractor who developed your buildings. We would like to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to get the best outcome possible for you. Network Homes is also responsible for the rented properties in your blocks, so it is in both your and our best interest to ensure we reach an acceptable agreement.

We continue to meet with Higgins on a regular basis discussing both the commercial and technical positions. The commercial position has almost been completed with some due diligence checks being undertaken before the final agreement can be drafted and sign off.

The technical details have not proved as simple as we first thought – questions were raised regarding the classification of the aluminium panels which are fitted to some areas of the buildings. This has meant a great deal of additional investigations were required by all parties to try and establish if these panels can remain on the building or will ultimately need to be replaced.

These delays are out of Network Homes control to a certain extent and are controlled by many others who are working on conducting these further investigations. Our building surveyors have worked closely with our fire engineer, Higgins and the panel suppliers to obtain critical test data regarding the panels. This has taken considerable time, which we could not have envisaged would be required to progress this particular job.

Current expectations for a start date

We had originally hoped to start on-site in March, as Higgins had advised this was feasible. However, due to the above technical issues relating to aluminium panels, we're still not able to give you a confirmed start date. We must ensure we know the scale of the above issue and have plans to address this going forward before we can pin down a start date.

I know this is not the news you're hoping for. Thank you again for your patience and understanding. We continue to work hard towards getting a new start date as soon as practicably possible and are hopeful we will be on-site in Q3/Q4 of 2021. Until we are clear what needs to be stripped off the building and what needs to be replaced, we must continue to negotiate with Higgins and the wider professional team regarding this matter.

What we do know is that Higgins has provided a programme of work based on what we know now (pending aluminium cladding issue). We expect work to take approximately 44 weeks once started.

Clarification on cost of project

Also, just to clarify, there seems to be some confusion on the costs conveyed in recent email communications. To be clear, Higgins will be remediating those areas of the building which at the time of construction were deemed to be non-compliant with Building Regulations and Approved Document B. Other areas which have been identified as a concern will be covered by our Building Safety Fund application which has been approved. Depending on the outcome of the technical questions raised about the aluminium panels and any proposed solution, we may need to submit a variation to our fund application. We will take the government's advice on how best to proceed with this once we know more.

We have also had our application to the Waking Watch Relief Fund approved, which will cover the cost of the Fire Alarm system installed earlier this year. However, we are not able to guarantee that leaseholders will see no costs passed on to them and do not want to make false promises to you. We are doing everything we can to avoid costs being recovered through the service charge and doing so is always a last resort. We have communicated this in the resident webinar and subsequent FAQ document sent out in January 2021.

We hope that our next communication will be inviting you to a webinar to give you some confirmed information about start times. We expect to write to you again in September, unless we are able to agree anything before.

Once again please accept our apologies for the delay in these works, it is not without good reason and we are doing all we can to progress this.

Best wishes

Peter Park
Project Manager (Building Safety)