



## **UPDATE - Chalcots Estate Major Works Project – 23 January 2024**

### **Scope of the Major Works**

The Chalcots estate has five high-rise tower blocks built in the late 1960s and early 1970s, providing 717 homes for over 3,000 residents, including about 130 Leaseholders. The estate is made up of the following tower blocks: Blashford (73 flats), Bray (160 flats), Burnham (160 flats), Dorney (158 flats), and Taplow (160 flats).

The scope of the major works project is to renew the building envelope of all five buildings whilst residents remain in situ, with the main priorities being to:

- Achieve the highest standard of fire safety within the context of the existing buildings
- Improve the buildings' longevity with associated greater cost efficient maintenance
- Improve the wellbeing of current and future residents

The major works project includes roof replacement with installation of a building maintenance unit, new cladding system, window replacement, brickwork replacement on lower floors, and insulation to the basements/undercrofts.

The structure of Blashford is different, and the project is therefore split into two contracts: Design and build for Blashford, and Build-only for the four similar towers.

Every effort is made to help minimise the disruption to residents by providing respite lounges, noise cancelling headsets or ear defenders, free access to local facilities such as the swimming pool at the Swiss Cottage Leisure Centre, as well as making available home away from home flats<sup>1</sup> to residents where they can move into when the works take place in their homes.

### **Approach to the Major Works**

The works are being carried out at Bray and Taplow first, followed by Burnham and Dorney. The major works at Blashford are done in parallel separately with another contractor and are much more intrusive in terms of duration and disruption to residents.

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<sup>1</sup> The Home Away from Home flats are units on the estate or nearby and are furnished and equipped void properties based on the principle of an apart hotel.

The approach to the first two towers, **Bray and Taplow**, was to commence the installations with a soft start followed by a slower pace of installation to ensure quality throughout. This approach allows us to learn and prepare for issues that may arise during construction. Since June 2023, the pace of the installations has significantly increased, with about 40 homes undergoing work each month.

### **Bray & Taplow Towers - Progress in 2023 and estimated timelines for 2024**

To summarise progress throughout 2023:

- All façade preparation work is completed, and cladding rails installed
- The roof works are completed for both towers
- The Building Maintenance Unit is installed at both towers
- Window installations are completed in about 80% of homes in each of the two towers (close to 85% at Bray and just over 75% at Taplow)
- The individual window replacement approach allows flexibility in accommodating residents' availabilities to carry out the works in their homes
- The scaffold has started to come down since 25 September at Bray tower and since 13 November 2023 at Taplow tower
- The cladding system is fully installed to the top of the towers all the way down to floor 18 at Bray tower and floor 20 at Taplow tower

The estimated completion timescales for 2024 are summarised below:

- Window installations above the bricked area in Bray tower are expected to be completed in March 2024 and in Taplow tower in May 2024, subject to access into homes
- The insulation and cladding panels continue to be installed to the outside of both buildings and should be completed in May 2024
- The new brickworks to ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floors will be built aligned with the new cladding installed
- Works completion and demobilisation is expected in July 2024
- It must be noted that the site cabins on the forecourt of Bray will remain until the end of the project in early 2025

### **Burnham & Dorney Towers – Progress in 2023 and estimated timelines for 2024**

To summarise progress throughout 2023:

- The scaffold building started in May 2023 and was completed at both towers in November 2023
- Brickwork removal for the ground and first floors took place at both towers in October and November 2023
- The telecommunications equipment on Dorney tower was replaced and relocated in December 2023
- The window replacements for the lower part of the buildings began on 28 September, with close to 40 homes having new windows installed. An anticipated increased pace is expected from February 2024.
- Roof works and replacement have been progressing since November 2023

The estimated completion timescales for 2024 are summarised below:

- The roof replacement and Building Maintenance Unit are being installed from January to April 2024
- As mentioned above, window replacement will progress at greater pace from February 2024 with expected completion in October 2024, subject to access into homes
- The scaffolding should start to come down in April 2024
- Works completion and demobilisation is expected in December 2024

## Blashford Tower – Progress in 2023 and estimated timelines for 2024

For **Blashford** tower, the works delivery programme has been shared with residents and includes their feedback and suggestions where possible. The installation work is more complex and more intrusive than at the other towers.

To summarise progress throughout 2023:

- The site setup began in March 2023 and was mostly completed by the end of 2023
- All required final intrusive surveys, test installations, and testing construction methods on the building have been completed to finalise design and progress manufacturing
- The respite lounge for residents has been in place since December 2023
- The brickwork and construction work to the basement started in November 2023

The estimated completion timescales for 2024 are summarised below:

- The installation works to flats and façade take place from 22 January 2024, progressing from the bottom up, four floors at a time
- Roof work and replacements is scheduled from March to October 2024
- The window installation and cladding installation should be completed by the end of 2024
- Works completion and site demobilisation is expected in spring 2025

## Engagement with Residents

The **overriding principle** is to engage and listen to all residents to help address concerns and to work in partnership with each household.

Overall, **residents feedback** across the four similar towers thus far is that:

- Residents are happy with the new windows and with the standard of works
- Residents say that the new windows improve ventilation, reduce external noise, and improve insulation by keeping the home warmer in cool weather and cooler in warm weather
- Many residents comment positively on the quality of the items installed, on the care and consideration given, and on the respectful behaviour of operatives
- Most residents are grateful for the access to the *home away from home* flats when works take place in their home

We have also received helpful and constructive feedback to help improve the delivery of the works.

More recently, residents comment very positively about the appearance of the top of the buildings with the new windows and cladding system and say they are proud to see what their building will look like.

The overwhelming feedback specifically from Blashford residents is to get the works done promptly without compromising on quality, and the resident cooperation is impressive considering the much higher levels of disruption.

Resident's **individual queries** or concerns are responded to or addressed to find the best solution, including at show flat meetings, home visits, surgeries, and open days.

**General queries**, including about technical information, are provided in the resident handbook, the window design booklet, fact sheets, user guides, as well as at virtual resident meetings open to all residents and through regular Question & Answer updates, which are shared with resident and posted on the Chalcots project webpage on [www.camden.gov.uk/chalcots-estate](http://www.camden.gov.uk/chalcots-estate).