

GOLDEN LANE ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

19 January 2026

Peta Caine
Director of Housing
City of London Corporation

Working Group to Review Programme and Design Approach for Golden Lane Estate

Dear Peta

GLERA welcomes the confirmation that additional funds have been approved in order that a comprehensive refurbishment of the estate (to now include electrics, redecorations etc) can be undertaken across the estate. This is good news and we very much appreciate the efforts of Officers and Councillors in securing this promise – it is a significant commitment from the Corporation.

Last year GLERA set up a resident Technical Group made up of built-environment professionals (see appendix) whose purpose is to represent the interests of all residents regardless of tenure. As industry professionals the group fully comprehends how complex and challenging this project is. In their own professional practice they are also tackling the challenges of working on HRB buildings and the significant governance involved.

The group seeks to develop a positive working relationship with the Project Team and other stakeholders, and in doing so to make a useful contribution. They want to help in building trust between the Corporation and residents by being able to support the programming and design decisions. For this to happen they need a clear understanding of how key design and programme decisions have been made and the multiple factors that have fed into the decision-making process.

In the current block by block programming, the intention appears to be to try and reduce disruption to residents in doing all the work on any given block at one time; if this was a three or four year programme GLERA and the Technical Group would unlikely question this approach. However, as the works are projected to last at least ten years, then the questions of fairness and community cohesion have to also factor significantly in the standard design|cost|programme matrix.

It's deeply inequitable for some residents to be waiting 7, 8, or even 9 years longer than their neighbours for warm, draught and leak free homes. This is without taking into the account the financial consequences for the Leaseholders scheduled for the latter part of the programme with continuing costs for reactive repairs and increasing construction costs (way above the general rate of inflation). We are concerned that the block by block approach will create bitterness and despair – already some residents believe they will die before they see any improvements to their homes.

The early indicative 20 year programme packaged the roof, fire safety and electrical works separately (Package 1) – we would like further consideration of an approach that would bring incremental benefits across the whole estate under a more acceptable time frame.
<https://www.goldenlaneprojects.co.uk/programme>

These concerns have already been raised at RLG meetings (see appendix), along with queries over the refurbishment only approach. Now that the additional works have been given the greenlight, time really is of the essence and the RLGs are not the place to address these concerns, and instead we ask for a workshop with select members of the GLERA Technical Group and the Project Team as soon as possible. We understand that there is extreme pressure to commit to a programme so as to start the tender process, but we strongly believe that time spent now co-working to agree the approach to programming will pay dividends, and that this approach would be of benefit to all stakeholders, including the Corporation.

The GLERA Technical Group would also support a ‘big picture’ independent third-party review of the project to focus on methodology, procurement and governance, particularly in light of the numerous extensions of scope and late confirmation of HRB status of almost all the estate. In many parts of local and national government an independent peer review is a requirement for a project of this size and complexity.

Our belief is that this level of scrutiny is essential to build trust that unfortunately is at its lowest point, despite the progress with funding. Additionally, the outputs of this review would bring a deeper understanding of the complexity of the project to Councillors, Officers and residents and provide confidence for all (including the Project Team) that the best strategy under the challenging circumstances has been arrived at.

The Corporation already recognises that the resident support is key to the project’s success – non-cooperation is a significant risk factor. It is essential that residents believe that decisions affecting the programme are taken with their interest and wellbeing at heart, that as many residents as possible should benefit as soon as possible, and that the programme is not primarily dictated by governance issues. An independent third-party review would be powerful in providing much needed clarity; at the moment there is no single voice or entity that can provide reassurance.

We again reiterate that the GLERA Technical Group intention is to support, not undermine, the Project Team, and would welcome a date for a co-working workshop as soon as possible. We are deeply concerned that once packages for tender are signed off then the window of opportunity to review is closed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Pearson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Sue Pearson
Chair GLERA, 2024-2026

APPENDIX

GLERA Technical Group:

Pablo Abellan | Architect
Ros Diamond | Diamond Architects (Director)
Adrian Friend | Friend and Company (Founder)
Tim Godsmark | HTC Architects (Regional Director)
David Gregory | retired (Architect)
David Henderson | Howells (Partner)
Charles Humphries | Heat Architecture (Director)
Anna Parkinson | BDP (Architect - QA & Risk Management Co-ordinator)
Sue Pearson | retired, previously Atkins (Director)
Steve Smith | AHMM (Associate Director)

Jacqueline Swanson | communications

Additional Notes:

Refurbishment / Repair

Note 1: A refurbishment only approach was approved at the March 2023 Community and Children's Services Committee, however this was largely informed by the work being undertaken on Crescent House. Residents there had been very keen to save the heritage hard wood windows from being scrapped and replaced with triple glazed units. It was Crescent House residents who put forward vacuum glazing as a solution, pointing to the Corporation's use on other heritage buildings. Until this point the Project Team had been investigating both repair and replacement options (see appraisal reports from December 2022 and January 2023).

Note 2: from 27 November 2025 Crescent House RLG

'JS raised the flexibility of the 2023 planning permission regarding window repair vs replacement. CD advised that the permission allows for repair with selective replacement if necessary. JS asked that the project team investigate the option of fully replacing the softwood framed windows (located on the internal facing windows, i.e. kitchen and bathrooms etc). JS felt in light of historical reports regarding the condition of the soft wood windows and residents' concerns over the duration of the programme, the skilled labour required for refurbishing, cost of the works, and future maintenance that this option should be fully explored and not be precluded by the current planning permission. GW/NC confirmed that they would explore this option and report back to the RLG by early January as to its viability within the context of the current programme.'

The historical report referenced was the 1998 Windows Condition Survey by Adrian Brooks Associates which can be viewed here: https://glera.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/1998_CH-window-survey_Adrian-Brooks.pdf:

Packaging

Note 1: from 24 July 2025 Wider Estate RLG summary notes:

‘Residents also queried the staging of the packages and whether they could be split out differently, particularly with reference to roof refurbishment/ replacement. GW explained the reasoning for the full package option (which involves carrying out all of the identified works to each block and at least two blocks being decanted at the same time) but acknowledged that it does need further discussion at tender stage. He also explained the delays associated with obtaining Grade II Listed Building consent and HRB Gateway 2 applications, adding that the City is trying to reduce this by bundling works together wherever practically possible.’

Note 2: the Technical Group would like to understand which elements of the work could be done without the requirement for decanting. What would be the impact on programme and cost of separating out as packages so that work can be undertaken as soon as possible? If these elements can be done without scaffolding (eg kitchen and bathroom windows in the maisonettes) could it bring some flexibility as to approach for example prioritising vulnerable residents, or working around resident life challenges – illness, children’s’ exams, life events, etc.

Independent Peer Review

24 July 2025 Wider Estate RLG meeting notes and Crescent House RLG August update

We understand a peer review was proposed by the Project Team earlier last year. This was modified to become part of the Meet the Contractor event, with discussions focusing on decanting and resident engagement.