

Report to: Management Committee – 6 September 2018

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Subject: Argyle Street – ‘B’ and ‘C’ Listed Properties

1. Background and Introduction

- 1.1 The Association has been in dialogue with the Council’s Planning Department since 2012 regarding the undertaking of remedial works on the Argyle Street’s listed properties. The discussions were initiated due to the requirement for work at one of our properties at 1243 Argyle Street.
- 1.2 Issues with stone and roof repairs were the primary considerations for this particular property. The Planning Department’s specification for stone works included the renewal of stones or the fitting of ashlar indents. Our proposals to apply liquid plastic to repair roof flashing were initially rejected but after a lot of time and effort we managed to convince the Planning Department to accept this solution. Although our initial consideration was for the property mentioned above, all of our ‘B’ (Franklin Terrace) and ‘C’ listed properties need attention now due to the length of time since Comprehensive Tenement Improvement and the method of repairs used during this initiative.
- 1.3 The stipulated method for stone repairs being insisted upon by Planning is a significant obstacle to us maintaining the integrity of this kind of building. Our most pressing difficulty, however, is improving the energy efficiency of the properties. We are keen to reduce our carbon footprint and contribute toward alleviating fuel poverty. But with current planning restrictions inhibiting the installation of efficient double glazing this is a significant challenge. The current installations are over-due for renewal and we are keen to provide our tenants with the modern and energy efficient windows they require.
- 1.4 The Association made a planning application for remedial work and window replacement at 1287 to 1323 Argyle Street. The application has been given consent with conditions.
- 1.5 The Planning Application decision notice dated 19 December 2017 states:
 - “...areas of stone requiring to be built up by more than 25mm should feature replacement natural stone to match the original stonework in every respect including colour, geological character, texture and coursing pattern.”
 - “New windows shall match the originals in all aspects of their design: proportions, profile, framing thickness, detailing, method of opening and materials.”

In summary this means that repairing stone-work may prove very challenging in meeting their specification and consequently could be very expensive. It also means that the existing tilt and turn windows

which look like sash and case will need to be replaced with 'actual' sash and case.

- 1.6 Although there will be challenges we are now able to initiate consultations with owners of properties with an interest in 1287 to 1323 Argyle Street. With the conditions applied costs may inhibit acceptance by owners of the fabric work we may propose. However, irrespective of consultation outcomes, we will renew the windows in Association properties in these blocks. This will allow the Association to provide modern energy efficient windows for our tenants and at the same time assist in meeting our EESSH (Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing) targets. Although we can address the window issue in these properties, stipulated conditions on the windows in our 'B' listed properties is inhibiting progress.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 The consultation exercise will provide three options for consideration:

- Replace tenants' windows using a scaffold and rub back flaking stone while on site;
- Replace tenants' windows, hammer test stone from scaffold to determine the extent of work required and repair; and
- Replace tenants' windows only.

Note: The first two options will include an offer to property flat owners to have their windows replaced during any awarded contract. Also note: Commercial properties are contained within 1287 to 1323 Argyle Street but window replacement will not pertain to them.

3. Energy Context

- 3.1 The Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government made a statement on energy efficiency which says "The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. It will help to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases. The standard will also contribute to reducing carbon emissions by 42% by 2020, and 80% by 2050, in line with the requirements set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. As part of the Transition Programme for Energy Efficient Scotland, we are making £3.5 million available to social landlords to support energy efficiency and decarbonisation of heat supply."
- 3.2 With regard to Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP) phase 2 it is stated "**The Scottish Government has designated energy efficiency as a National Infrastructure Priority**, the cornerstone of which will be Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP) – a 15 to 20 year programme. SEEP will help local authorities to pilot new and innovative approaches to energy efficiency with community groups and businesses, helping reduce costs and improving warmth in homes, schools, hospitals and businesses. The Programme for Government commits to investing more than half a billion pounds to SEEP over the next four years setting out a clear commitment to develop this programme with substantial annual funding. By 2050, through

SEEP we will have transformed the energy efficiency and heating of our buildings so that, **wherever technically feasible, and practical, buildings are near zero carbon.**”

4. Meeting the Standard (ESSH)

- 4.1 Although we will need to address the issues regarding the fabric of our listed properties, in particular affordability for owners or their willingness to participate, we need to consider our requirement to meet energy efficiency targets and our desire to reduce fuel poverty. Fitting high specification energy efficient double glazed windows will make significant in-roads.
- 4.2 Our experience to date has been frustrating. The Planning Department’s stipulation is that “New windows shall match the originals in all aspects of their design: proportions, profile, framing thickness, detailing, method of opening and materials. Reason: To safeguard the character of the listed building.” **This is despite their own observations that “The properties currently contain a variety of modern windows, some with proportions differing from the originals and others with outward opening bottom panes.”**
- 4.3 A report to the Services Sub-Committee on 20 April 2017 noted ““Current Position. G.C.C. have confirmed their view that a failure to provide astragals (front-elevations) extending between double-glazing-panes will alter the profile of windows and be considered as having a detrimental visual appearance.” We have offered an astragal solution.
- 4.4 The situation at the moment is that the Heritage and Design Section of the Council’s Planning Department will not accept a window type that, in our opinion, is the best solution to providing an energy efficient product that meets, as far as possible and practical, the aesthetic requirement being stipulated. The Heritage and Design Section’s suggested solution is one that we believe will not provide a cost effective long term option for this type of installation. Our position is based on information from the Glass and Glazing Federation and a national window manufacturer. Our opinion is also supported by the architect commissioned to submit the planning application.

5. The Glasgow Tenement - The challenge ahead

- 5.1 The issues regarding the need to maintain our current tenement properties is well documented and a cross party working group, chaired by Ben Macpherson MSP has been established. The Association’s Compliance Manager completed the Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum membership survey – June 2018 ‘The challenges of investing in older stock’. Although apparent to central and local government, housing associations’ and representative bodies, and high on the agenda for the Scottish Government, our efforts to maintain the integrity of properties with historic significance and our tenements in general are no less challenging.

6. Where are we now?

- 6.1 Because of the difficulties we were encountering regarding the completion of our window renewal programme, a decision was taken by Committee to progress with the ‘C’ listed properties on their own. The Association will initiate a consultation exercise regarding major repair and improvement works for

these blocks. Following this we will be able to gauge what work we will be able to undertake here. This will also give us an idea of what will be possible for Franklin Terrace. As noted, irrespective of the consultation, we will renew our tenants' windows as we have approval (with conditions) for this. This still leaves the problems with Franklin Terrace.

7. Moving Forward

- 7.1 With regard to Franklin Terrace ('B' listed), if we are to improve energy efficiency for the reasons noted previously, we need to re-open dialogue with the planners. Given the concern over pre-1919 tenements generally we need to keep pressing for ways to undertake fabric repairs, but out-with that we need to consider our energy use reduction obligations.
- 7.2 Although we will have significant challenges in addressing the issues relating to the fabric of the properties in Franklin Terrace and beyond, it may be worth considering concentrating on window renewal for now. If we can make headway in this respect it would allow us to complete the window renewal programme which would mean that all Yorkhill Housing Association tenants' would have double glazed windows.
- 7.3 Given the commitment by Government to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty, we could re-open dialogue with planning with energy efficiency as our main focus for now.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 There are significant challenges ahead if we are to maintain the integrity of our pre-1919 tenements. Although the situation is well documented, there is cross party support at government level and our representative groups are actively lobbying, progress is slow. Also, in a mixed tenure environment, when owner occupiers can be property rich and income poor, financing major work is inhibitive. The situation has been apparent for a long time but little has really been done to address the issues.
- 8.2 As alluded to previously our immediate focus may need to be on improving energy efficiency through completing our window renewal programme. By doing this we can reduce our carbon footprint, contribute toward the alleviation of fuel poverty, improve the comfort of our tenants' homes and meet our EESSH targets.

9. Recommendation

It is recommended that Committee:

- 9.1 Note the content of this report.
- 9.2 Approve that Association staff approach the Planning Department seeking reconsideration of the window specification, focusing on our energy reduction obligations and aspirations, and the Government's commitment to energy efficiency in social housing.