



Information about fire safety at The Archer Tower, Nock House, Spotter House, Boss House & Bowman House

Here are some questions that were raised at the residents meeting on Tuesday 4 June, together with our answers.

We are committed to making sure you are kept informed. If you have any fire safety queries, please contact us using one of the following methods:

1. Visiting the office, located at The Archer Tower, between 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday
2. Contacting the Fire Safety Team on 020 8782 4244
3. Email: firesafety@networkhomes.org.uk

What cladding is on my buildings?

There are two main wall finishes (cladding), which include:

- Terracotta tiles
- Petrarch cladding panel

The external walls of the blocks are mostly covered with non-combustible terracotta tiles. The terracotta tiles are fixed to metal rails. Behind the rails are a foam insulation board and then a cement particle board. This separates the external cavity from the internal wall you will see inside your flat.

In addition to the terracotta tiles, horizontal cladding panel have been used on feature walls and around the balconies. These comprise Petrarch cladding panels (made of re-constituted stone). The Petrarch cladding panels are fixed to the building using timber supports.



What about the green wall?

The Archer Tower also has a large green wall. At the time of inspection, the green wall could not be safely accessed. The wall will therefore be inspected as part of further investigations.

What is a cavity barrier?

The cavity is the space in between the terracotta tile and cement particle board.

External wall cladding systems are designed with a cavity space to allow ventilation behind and prevent outside water or moisture from reaching inside your flat.

Cavity fire barriers are installed to stop fire and smoke spreading through the cavity space. They are designed to resist fire and smoke for a set period of time, usually 60, 90 or 120 minutes.

Cavity fire barriers are required at each floor level to stop fire spreading up or down the building and between two neighbouring flats on the same floor.

What issues have been identified with the external walls?

The inspections we undertook found the following defects:

- Missing cavity fire barriers
- Poorly installed cavity fire barriers
- Timber used behind the black cladding panels around balconies and feature walls,

Who carried out the inspections?

We employed Phillip Pank Partnership LLP, to investigate the design of the blocks and lead the inspections. Phillip Pank Partnership is a multi-disciplinary construction consultancy practice experienced in undertaking these types of investigations.

Why were the issues not identified sooner?

The buildings were inspected and signed off by appropriate authorities at the time of construction, so we had no reason to believe there were any problems. The defects are concealed behind the fabric of the building and would not have been visible without the intrusive investigations.

Since the summer of 2017, the focus has been on a type of cladding called aluminium composite material (ACM). In December 2018, the Government recommended landlords investigate high rise buildings with other types of cladding. We started the inspections after this.

Are my family and I safe to still live in this building?

We have spoken at length with our fire safety experts, Savills, and the London Fire Brigade (LFB). Both have confirmed that the buildings are safe to live in because we have changed the fire strategy for the building exceeding 18 metres (The Archer Tower) from stay put to total evacuation. We have also introduced fire marshals and we are in the process of installing a linked smoke and heat detection system in the flats and communal areas which will alert all residents if a fire occurs in the building.

Both Savills and the LFB have agreed that our other blocks on Berger Road (Nock House, Spotter House, Boss House & Bowman House) can continue to operate the stay put fire strategy due to these buildings being under 18 metres.

Are the London Fire Brigade (LFB) aware?

We have told the LFB so crews and fire safety teams are aware of the issues and the temporary measures put in place. We have also met the LFB on site a couple of times already to talk through the interim measures and will continue this until the issues are resolved.

Was a Fire Risk Assessment carried out on the buildings?

All blocks at Berger Road have valid Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) undertaken by Savills. We publish all FRAs for our high-rise buildings (six storeys or over) on our website. The link is:

<https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/news/latest-news/2019-news/publishing-our-fire-risk-assessments/>

Due to these issues, we are in progress of carrying out new fire risk assessment at all the blocks at Berger Road and will publish these on our website once completed.

What action has Network Homes taken so far?

As soon as we were aware of the issues we took the following action:

- Appointed and trained fire wardens who will patrol The Archer Tower 24/7 - they will raise the alarm if there is a fire by knocking on doors and using horns.
- Met with the London Fire Brigade and talked them through the issues and the temporary measures put in place and
- Informed residents of the change to the fire strategy at The Archer Tower, to total evacuation
- Changed all fire signage in communal areas around The Archer Tower to explain the new fire strategy
- Informed residents within Nock, Boss Bowman and Spotter House of the measures put in place at The Archer Tower, and reiterated that their fire strategy will remain as 'stay out'
- Arranging for a linked audible smoke and heat detection system to be installed in the flats and communal areas

What are the wardens there to do?

The fire wardens are there to patrol The Archer Tower 24/7. Every 15 minutes they will patrol each floor, corridor, stairwell plus the external perimeter of the building and roof garden to make sure there are no signs of a fire and remove anything blocking fire exits.

There are currently seven fire wardens patrolling but this will reduce once the temporary alarm system is installed. Each has a radio and mobile phone to communicate with colleagues and emergency services. These staff members will also have high-vis jackets and identification on them at all times.

If you see any of them not performing their tasks, please let us know.

How much will the work cost, what is the long-term plan of action and will we be charged?

We are unable to answer this question at the moment as the full scope of the works and costs are yet to be determined. We are committed to being open and transparent and will keep you updated as this becomes clearer.

What is the fire strategy for my building?

The Archer Tower – Total evacuation. This means if there is a fire you must evacuate the building immediately and make your way to the assembly point, **opposite Homerton overground train station, Berger Road**, before contacting the emergency services. A location map is enclosed.

Nock House, Spotter House, Boss House & Bowman House – Stay put. This means unless you are directly affected by a fire or are advised by the emergency services or someone from Network Homes, you should stay in your flat. This is based on advice from our fire safety consultants Savills, who advised that buildings less than 18 metres can continue to operate the stay put strategy, while we fix the issues identified with the fabric of the building.

Installation of Sprinklers at Archer Tower

In 2018 we committed to retrofitting sprinklers in all the flats at The Archer Tower. Our contractor Engie are currently on site completing the first installations. If you live in The Archer Tower and haven't already been contacted by Engie they will do so soon to discuss the intended work. You will also have the opportunity to view our show flat to see what a completed installation looks like. The project is expected to be completed by this September.

If you want to know more about this, Engie are based on site in the office at The Archer Tower, Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm. Alternatively, you can email us at firesafety@networkhomes.org.uk or call us on 020 8782 4244.

How is Network Homes going to keep us informed?

We're intending to hold regular residents' meetings over the next few months. If you have any queries in between these meetings, we can be contacted on any of the following methods

1. Visiting the office, located at The Archer Tower, between 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday
2. Contacting the Fire Safety Team on 020 8782 4244
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