

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This is the latest set of FAQs as of Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

### **Intrusive surveys and remediation**

#### **What's the latest on the intrusive surveys carried out?**

The planned programme of intrusive survey work on the properties we own at the Hamptons was carried out by independent surveyors appointed by our solicitors. On Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019, we delivered a letter to all our residents on The Hamptons, alongside surveyors' reports for each building type. This report contains the results of that in-depth survey and the remedial work that is now required. St James conducted their own surveys on their properties across The Hamptons and sent similar letters to their residents.

St James, as the original developer, are leading these remedial works, and MTVH will ensure that they are overseen by appropriate independent experts to check that works are carried out correctly and safely. All proposed remediation solutions will also be subject to comment and approval where required from the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and the London Borough of Sutton's Building Control.

#### **How disruptive could remediation work be?**

Our aim is to complete the works that are necessary quickly, with as little disruption as possible. St James, as the original developer, are leading the remedial works, and MTVH will ensure it is overseen by appropriate independent experts to check that works are carried out correctly and safely. MTVH has a dedicated project team at The Hamptons which provides oversight and keeps MTVH residents informed of the latest activity in each block. All proposed remediation solutions will also be subject to comment and approval where required from the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and the London Borough of Sutton's Building Control.

We will be working closely alongside St James and ask that residents contact us directly regarding the remediation works to discuss any specific needs that residents may have.

#### **What progress has been made with the remediation works?**

MTVH has now agreed the first licence with St James for external remedial works to Canton House, Crayton House, Drummond Court, Shefford House and Weare House, and work has now commenced on site.

#### **How do residents keep up to date with remedial works?**

Now that the first remedial licence has been agreed we will be communicating with all residents regularly and providing information about the schedule of works on a block by block basis. To do this, we have built a web portal and each resident has their own log-in area with all information and updates relevant to their property, and we will also provide hard copies for those who aren't online. If you can't find your registration code please email [TheHamptons.Residents@mtvh.co.uk](mailto:TheHamptons.Residents@mtvh.co.uk) or call 03330 151619.

#### **Will my property be left in the same state that it was found in?**

Yes, the general finish and decorations of the properties will be as they were prior to the commencement of the remedial works. If there is a situation where a specific wallpaper for

example is out of production or difficult to source, will we endeavour to match this as closely as possible.

### **Will you be compensating residents of The Hamptons for any losses over and above the direct costs related to remedial works disturbance/decanting?**

If you are considering a compensation claim that would be something for you to take independent legal advice on. MTVH can't provide legal advice and we have not confirmed that any compensation will be paid.

### **Will this affect me if I am considering selling my home?**

If you are considering selling your home during this period, please get in touch with MTVH directly to discuss the matter in further detail.

### **Will car parking be affected during the remedial works?**

We are currently working on a plan for parking on the estate, however, some residents will be allocated a suitable alternative car parking whilst the external remedial works are being carried out to their building. This is mainly to create space for scaffolding. We have contacted affected residents within the first phase of the external works individually.

### **I live in Drummond Court/ Canton House, what will happen to my balcony?**

Both MTVH and St James have commissioned risk assessments from their respective fire engineers and a scope for the works to the balconies has been agreed. It is proposed that the Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) elements to the balconies, for instance, the GRP boxing to the columns, spindles, handrails and cornice will be replaced with polyester powder-coated aluminium.

These works will be undertaken at the same time as the works to the external façade and at no extra cost to residents.

### **What is the London Fire Brigade's role?**

The LFB have been present at discussions with the remedial teams for both MTVH and St James and have reviewed the survey works findings of both sets of experts. They have issued Enforcement Notices setting out the remedial works required to the MTVH Properties. The works required will all be covered within the remedial solution. In particular, the LFB have provided that:

1. Defects to the compartmentation within flats must be rectified.
2. Consideration is to be given to identification and removal of fire hazards, and measures to mitigate the spread of fire and smoke including measures that should be in place in the structure, cavities and voids.
3. Fire Risk Assessments must be informed by a full structural survey of the adequacy of the fire precautions that would be expected to be in place in consequence of the functional requirements of the Building Regulations applicable at the time of construction, as set out in Approved Document B.

The LFB has confirmed that MTVH have until 30 April 2021 to comply with the Enforcement Notices. We aim to complete the works as soon as possible and in a way that causes the minimum disruption to residents that is necessary.

## **Why has there been a delay with remediation works taking place across the estate?**

MTVH has been working hard with St James and our experts to get a set of agreed details for the works that need to be undertaken. We have also needed to put a legal agreement in place with St James to allow them to physically carry out the works on the MTVH residences. This has been a complicated piece of work and has been rather protracted but the first licence for external works to Canton House, Crayton House, Drummond Court, Shefford House and Weare House has now been signed and work has begun on site.

Whilst this combined with the impact of Covid-19 has put pressure on us starting the works, we remain committed to completing these vital safety works as quickly as possible.

## **Fire safety measures on The Hamptons**

### **What's the latest on the new fire alarm system being installed?**

We have worked with The Hamptons' original developer St James to install new communal fire alarm systems across the entire estate. We have now commissioned these systems in all of our blocks across The Hamptons.

The design and specification of these systems have been agreed with London Fire Brigade (LFB). They include heat and smoke detectors within flats and common areas which are linked to new central fire alarm panels in the common stairwells of blocks. This work has been signed off by LFB and has enabled the Waking Watch to be significantly reduced.

### **Can the temporary fire alarms be made permanent? If not, why?**

The installation of new fire alarms across the estate is a temporary measure being put in place for the duration of remedial works and has enabled the presence of the Waking Watch to be wound down. Once this programme of work is complete, the fire alarms will no longer be required as a precautionary measure and will be removed. The LFB have been present at discussions with the MTVH remedial team and have stated they are satisfied with this approach. We will ensure that all remedial works are complete before removing the alarms.

### **What other reassurance can you provide to residents in neighbouring blocks not affected directly by the fire, who are concerned about their safety in the event of a fire?**

MTVH has been continually liaising with the LFB since the fire. While these investigations have been taking place, and in coordination with the LFB, a 24-hour Waking Watch has been put in place at the properties we manage, as a safety precaution. New communal fire alarm systems have been installed across the entire estate, and the design and specification of these systems have been agreed with the LFB. On the advice of LFB, we have changed the evacuation policy for the blocks from a "Stay Put" policy to a "Simultaneous Evacuation", this now means that all properties within a building are evacuated in the event of a fire. St James has taken the same action for the buildings that it owns on the site.

### **What is the latest on the inspection of fire doors?**

We wrote to residents living in blocks of flats in late 2019 to advise that we have started a programme of fire door inspections in their buildings. If you are yet to have your fire door inspected, please make an appointment to do so by calling CLC Site Supervisor, Ken

Farmer on 07816 543183. This is part of the wider fire safety work we are carrying out at The Hamptons.

### **Can residents be sent a copy of the most recent fire risk assessment (FRA) on their building?**

Unfortunately, we are unable to share full FRAs with residents at this time. We did however share a summary of the findings of our programme of intrusive surveys with residents in November 2019, which we are happy to reshare with residents.

## **Richmond House**

### **What's the latest on Richmond House?**

On the 2nd September 2020 Sutton Council's Planning Committee granted planning permission for a like for like rebuild of Richmond House. MTVH will now continue to work with the dedicated Rebuild Steering Group, which includes residents of Richmond House, during the detailed design phase to ensure that their views are heard and incorporated into the rebuild. MTVH will oversee its construction and will ensure that it includes all the necessary fire safety measures.

We worked with residents to ensure that as many of their retrievable possessions as possible were recovered before and during demolition. The retrieval of possessions from Richmond House has now been completed and we are in the process of assessing and, where possible, decontaminating items and returning them to residents.

### **When will access to the pond walking platform be restored?**

With the demolition of Richmond House complete, arrangements are under review for access to the pond walking platform to be restored.

### **What is the latest on the police investigation into the cause of the fire?**

Sutton Police identified an individual in CCTV footage recovered from Richmond House, showing them near the building before the fire. Following this development, the Metropolitan Police Service and London Fire Brigade put out a joint press release on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 2020 to try to identify this person and have appealed for witnesses.

The press release has been made available on their Twitter channel - @MPSSutton. If you have any information that may be used to identify this person, please call 101 or CrimeStoppers if you wish to remain anonymous and quote Crime Reference 4010869/19.

## **Crayton House**

### **What's the latest on Crayton House?**

All Crayton House residents have now returned to their homes with the support of our housing team. Working with the London Fire Brigade, we've carried out a range of work at Crayton House in advance of the residents returning to their homes:

- A new communal fire alarm system has been installed at the block
- We've replaced entrance doors to flats

- We've completed electrical inspections at each property and ensured that gas safety inspections are fully up to date for every home at Crayton House
- Fire risk assessments have been completed at the building
- The Waking Watch remains in place, alongside additional security at the Richmond House site

### **Ongoing communication**

#### **What support is being provided to the residents who are directly affected by the fire?**

Richmond House and Crayton House residents are being supported by the MTVH housing team through designated caseworkers. Additionally, there is a dedicated phone number (0203 846 0123), which residents can call from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Residents can also send email enquiries to [Richmond.house@mtvh.co.uk](mailto:Richmond.house@mtvh.co.uk) or [Crayton.house@mtvh.co.uk](mailto:Crayton.house@mtvh.co.uk).

#### **What are the opening times of the Residents' Support Centre?**

Due to the situation regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19), our Resident Support Centre will be temporarily closed. We ask residents to please use the contact details provided in the first instance, should you experience any issues.

#### **Beyond visiting or calling our temporary office directly, how do residents speak to someone at Metropolitan Thames Valley?**

For more general enquiries residents can contact us on 0300 456 2929 between 8.30 and 5.30 Monday to Friday or email the dedicated team inbox [thehamptons.residents@mtvh.co.uk](mailto:thehamptons.residents@mtvh.co.uk). Our switchboard also has a number for out of hours emergencies.

The residents web portal can also be used to contact a member of the MTVH team, if you can't find your registration code please call us on **03330 151619**.

#### **Emotional and mental health support**

If residents are feeling overwhelmed, stressed or anxious, and would like access to mental health support from the NHS, we encourage them to speak to their GP for a priority referral to Sutton Uplift – a health and wellbeing service available to borough residents. They can also contact the service directly on 0800 032 1411 or find out more about what support is available at [www.suttonuplift.co.uk](http://www.suttonuplift.co.uk). Following priority referrals made by the MTVH team, Sutton Uplift will aim to arrange an assessment within a week.

If residents are worried about the effect of the fire on their children, we encourage them to speak to their school in the first instance for support. Every school has an appointed 'SENDCo' member of staff, who can talk to parents about any additional support available and can call on the expertise of the Educational Psychology Service if needed. Any residents who need support in approaching their child's school can ask a member of the MTVH team for help.