

COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING SERVICE
MID-TOTTENHAM SUB-COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 1985

REPORT OF THE BOROUGH HOUSING OFFICER AND
CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER

Summary: To report as a matter raised by the
Tenants' and Residents' Association.

ASBESTOS ON FERRY LANE ESTATE

Information
Item

1. Introduction
 - 1.1 At the request of Ferry Lane Tenants and Residents Association, a report was presented to the last Mid-Tottenham Sub-Committee concerning the known presence of asbestos materials on Council Estates within the Mid-Tottenham area.
 - 1.2 Since the last sub-committee, the Housing Service has received a copy of a report by the London Hazards Centre at the Polytechnic of the South Bank, on the presence of asbestos in building materials on Ferry Lane Estate. The investigation was requested by the Tenants and Residents Association.
 - 1.3 The purpose of this joint Environmental Health and Housing report is to make comments on the findings of the report from the London Hazards Centre. Each occurrence of building materials containing asbestos is commented upon separately in paragraphs 2.0 and 8.0.
 - 1.4 Again, appended to this report is the current known status of building materials containing asbestos on estates in Mid-Tottenham. (With the exception of Ferry Lane, the information for which is contained in the main body of the report). The point levels have been allocated according to the Council's Condition Index, which prioritises the occurrence of asbestos so that those in worst condition are removed first.
 - 1.5 With reference to appendix I, point levels for locations containing blue and brown asbestos building materials, differ from those quoted in the previous report to the last Mid-Tottenham Sub-Committee of 9 July 1985. The Council's Condition Index originally gave a weighting to those building materials containing blue or brown asbestos. (Blue, having a greater weighting than brown). The weighting was dropped because it discriminated against white asbestos building materials which were in poor condition, and being unweighted, would have a points level, which would mean a low priority for removal.
2. Cold Water Storage Tanks.
 - 2.1 There is no sealant on the tanks, although they appear to be in good condition and non-friable. In flats, tanks are situated in cupboards and can be considered as being liable to abrasion and damage. Damage, is often caused to tanks during installation. This damage and potential abrasion has been taken into account when awarding points.

At present, there is no evidence to indicate that there is an increased risk from the ingestion of asbestos fibres contained in a water supply. Water from storage tanks, however, is not to be considered as drinking water. The amount of water ingested during teeth-cleaning has been shown to be so minimal as to be insignificant.

- 2.3 It is proposed that a further random survey be carried out; the results of which will be made available to the Tenants and Residents Association and the London Hazards Centre. Should this survey indicate a significant number of damaged tanks, consideration will be given to the extension of the survey.

Analysis : White. Points: 23

3.0 Integral Garages - Duct Access Panels.

- 3.1 Some small areas of damage were noted. The duct access panels are situated at the far end of the garage and run from floor to ceiling. They are therefore vulnerable to impact damage. Both existing damage and vulnerability have been taken into account when awarding points.

Analysis : Brown. Points: 20

4.0 Integral Garages - Ceilings.

- 4.1 Of those previously inspected, all appeared to be in good condition without localised damage. They are safe by position, that is to say, they are on the ceiling, and not within the living space of the dwelling. Although not covered or treated there was no visible evidence of fibres.

Points: 4

5.0 Houses - Porch soffits.

- 5.1 Almost identical to integral garage ceilings, except that it is possible, and may be assumed that some tenants drill or make holes in the soffit to fit some bracket or light, etc. The pointing is, therefore, higher to take account of this.

- 5.2 Where boards are cut prior to fixing, exposed fibres of asbestos are often seen at the cut edge of the board. This can be effectively sealed by painting, but where this is not done, the risk of fibre release is minimal, except where the cut edge suffers further damage or abrasion.

6.0 Cladding and roofing tiles.

- 6.1 The cladding and roofing tiles are of asbestos cement composition, which characteristically contain a low percentage of asbestos, and have been used widely on many types of buildings. Surface deterioration and embrittlement may result over a long period of time but are not expected in properties of this age. Tiles will be damaged by impact.

- 6.2 Tenants should have no need to interfere with either the cladding or roofing tiles, as any repairs are carried out by the Council. Any replacement of tiles is with matching ones which do not contain asbestos.

7.0 Floor Tiles.

7.1 Some floor tiles do indeed contain asbestos, but due to the very nature of wear and tear the tiles are designed to withstand, the matrix is securely bonded. It is not known if these particular tiles do contain asbestos, but it is intended that a sample is taken for analysis; points awarded in accordance with the Council's Condition Index, and the findings reported to the Tenants and Residents Association.

8.0 Fire doors.

8.1 No fire doors on the estate have surface-mounted asbestos cement sheeting. Some fire-resisting doors do contain asbestos within their core; however, it is not known if this is so in this particular case. An attempt will be made to check the door specification with the G.L.C. Even if the doors were found to internally contain asbestos, this could only be exposed by quite severe damage to the door itself and it is unlikely to score highly on the Condition Index.

9.0 Glass Fibre Insulation to District Heating
Main Distribution Pipework.

9.1 The latest research is not conclusive as to the health hazards of the various fibre thermal insulation products, including glassfibre. The location of this particular insulation is only within garages, not living spaces. If repairs to insulation are required and reported, then these will be carried out so as to prevent undue heat loss from the district heating system.

10.0 Labelling.

10.1 Within the London Hazards Centre report, recommendations are made that the Council label certain occurrences of asbestos in building materials - namely the water tanks and porch soffits.

10.2 It is the view of both the Chief Environmental Health Officer and Borough Housing Officer that labelling would give rise to undue concern among tenants and residents, and the permanency of any label must be questioned. Once removed, the previously labelled asbestos building material effectively becomes non-asbestos. The Housing Service is, however, willing to provide information to tenants and residents relating to the location of asbestos building materials and any necessary warnings.

11.0 Ethnic, Gender and Disabled Comment.

11.1 It is not considered there are any ethnic, gender or disabled implications contained in this report.

12.0 Recommendations.

12.1 That the report be noted.

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