

Ridgway Windows Committee

1/ Introduction

- 1.1 This paper reports on the activity undertaken by the Windows Committee during the year, seeks the AGM's thoughts on the 3D images showing what a revised Ridgway could look like and on what the Windows Committee's next steps should be. The Committee's activities during the year are set out in section 3 and next steps in section 4. The questions the AGM are requested to consider are set out in section 5.

2/ Windows Committee

- 2.1 The Windows Committee met twice during the year, on 11 April and on 27 September. The April meeting reviewed the work to measure Ridgway agreed at the last AGM and the initial projected drawings based upon these measurements. The September meeting reviewed the 3D images showing what a revised Ridgway could look like based on these drawings. The Windows Committee's thoughts and the issues arising are reported below. The date of the Committee's next meeting will be dependant on the outcome of decisions taken at this year's AGM.
- 2.2 The initial membership of the Windows Committee was sought from interested owners and the following have been members during the year: David Robson (chair), Ffion Green, Jonathan Campbell-Jones, John Simister, Kathy Cruddas, Peter Rowell, Roy Elliot, Rob Lilley, Tracey Fletcher.

3/ Activity

- 3.1 To minimise issues with the existing windows, the Management Committee has included windows' maintenance in the annual maintenance schedule. To benefit from this, owners need to allow their flats to be accessed when this maintenance is due.
- 3.3 Ridgway's archives were explored to understand its construction and history more clearly and to identify past issues that might still be affecting the current situation. It was clear from this that Ridgway's windows have been an issue since it was constructed in the 1970's. Indeed the initially installed windows had to be replaced before people were first able to move in. The current windows were installed in the 1990's when some of these initial replacement windows failed and had to be replaced as a matter of urgency. The Windows Committee seeks to avoid the need for a further emergency response by developing an agreed plan in good time to minimise both cost and inconvenience.
- 3.4 The first step in working along the five to ten year planning horizon agreed at last year's AGM has been to survey Ridgway so that precise drawings can be made and specifications drawn up. The survey was completed during the year.

- 3.5 The second step, based on these measurements, has been to develop drawings to show what a revised Ridgway could look like to act as a catalyst for the detailed discussions and agreement by owners that will be required. Following a tender, HTP Architecture (a Richmond firm) was asked to survey Ridgway and then to develop these images.
- 3.6 The goal behind this work has been to ensure that when the current windows are eventually replaced, the replacements significantly increase levels of insulation to minimise condensation and improve comfort - both through minimising fuel bills in winter and by reducing solar gain in summer. A replacement should also make it easier to clean windows and should enhance Ridgway's appearance, along with flats' saleability and value.
- 3.6 To maximise improvements in insulation, HTP developed images showing Ridgway with cladding, which would also minimise inconvenience to residents from refurbishment works. Replacing the windows themselves will improve insulation to a degree, while cladding Ridgway will in effect wrap Ridgway and increase insulation further. In practice the difference between HTP's images and replacing the windows alone involves insulating the side walls and lift shaft, (which was included as they thought the images looked odd when it was omitted).
- 3.7 The 3D images are to prompt and aid discussion. Given that we may decide not to explore such a solution further and focus just on the windows themselves, only one view of the front was created to minimise cost. In developing them however HTP examined a number of different approaches, systems and materials to ensure the images were practical given the novelties in Ridgway's construction. The architect has confirmed that the ones on which the images are based would also work on the rear and images of the rear can be developed dependant on our responses to the images of the front.
- 3.8 Three alternatives were prepared which have also taken into account current building regulations and planning permission. Two of these differed in appearance and two had the same appearance but in different colours. All members of the Windows' Committee preferred the same design although some preferred the darker version and some the lighter. These images are shown in the Appendix and larger versions will be at the meeting.
- 3.9 The architect's decision to show Ridgway with cladding to increase insulation was driven by two developments this year; the first being the intention to set a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) level of rented flats of C from 2025 and discussions with mortgage lenders to require a minimum EPC level for mortgages, and the second, the increase in the cost of electricity which was likely in a transition to renewables but which is now real. Increased insulation should also help to improve comfort during hotter summers resulting from climate change. This was not an issue when window replacement was initially considered.
- 3.10 Although owners can do a number of things themselves to improve EPC levels (e.g. draught proofing and tank and pipe insulation, installing LED lighting, installing responsive heating controls, heating appliances and floor insulation etc.), the main determinant is the glazing and insulation of the building itself. Although EPC levels are not known for all flats, it is known that some top floor flats and those at the edges of the building are rated F, though one sandwiched in the middle is rated C.

- 3.11 This movement to increase the EPC rating of properties able to be rented (and also possibly mortgaged) is likely to be further raised as the regulations for residential property follow commercial, (i.e. from 2023 offices need a minimum E rating, rising to C in 2027 and to B in 2030). The London Assembly has already proposed that the requirement for rented accommodation should be raised to B¹.
- 3.12 The potential impact of improving EPC ratings on energy use is shown in the following table. This is taken from one developed to support mortgage lenders. It shows percentage changes in fuel costs between each EPC level as their relationship will not have changed despite the energy cost increases since the report was published.²

Estimated Fuel Bills for a Two Bedroom Apartment

EPC Rating	Difference	Reduction
	%	%
A	8%	92%
B	31%	69%
C	52%	48%
D	67%	33%
E	86%	14%
F	100%	0%

- 3.13 Whichever route is decided upon, a number of issues will need to be addressed and resolved before any plan is agreed: i.e. longevity of the proposed solution, maintenance needs and costs, safety, the demands of building regulations and planning permission, practical issues regarding installation (e.g front and back in separate phases etc), and not least, cost and how this could be financed.
- 3.14 When the windows are eventually replaced the improved glazing and potential appearance should be reflected in each flat's value. When a flat in Ridgway was sold this May, a comparison of its cost per square foot with the 40 other two bedroom apartments then for sale within 1/4 mile of Ridgway showed that if Ridgway's value increased to the average of these 40 (excluding the Star and Garter), the value of each flat would increase by around £35k. And if Ridgway's value increased to the average of the 25 flats which had a cost per square foot higher than Ridgway (excluding the Star and Garter), the value of each flat would increase by around £83k. While these figures can not be banked upon they do suggest that the cost of replacing the windows might be matched to a greater or lesser extent by an increase in each flat's value, in addition to providing immediate comfort benefits and reduced heating costs.

¹ 'Retrofit London Action Plan' - published by London Councils July 2021

² <https://www.epcmortgage.org.uk/>

- 3.15 To get an outsiders opinion, a member of the Windows Committee has shown the 3D images to Andrew Jourdain of Chancellors Estate Agents who he knows and who estimates that the value of each flat is likely to rise in line with the cost to each flat of a refurbishment. The net cost of refurbishment therefore, if finance costs are excluded, could be nil.
- 3.16 Although it is not the Windows Committee's remit to determine what is to be done or how work is to be funded, it does need to be mindful of the potential costs, their value for money and their affordability. Accordingly the Committee has discussed options for how work could be financed:

Option A: Allocating a pro rata cost of the project to each owner, leaving each owner with the responsibility for procuring the necessary finance e.g. directly from savings/capital, or by raising a personal mortgage to defray the cost. The benefit of this approach is simplicity and alignment with how Ridgway has financed major works in the past. The difficulty of this approach however would be that the overall financing of a project – and its progress – would be dependent on all 24 owners paying promptly and to a timetable. It is possible that some owners, even if they supported the project, for various reasons could be unable to do this.

Option B: Consideration could be given to RMC securing finance for the whole cost which would be secured against a legal charge to meet outstanding costs placed on all owners prior to any sale of their flat. Some owners might decide to pay off their share immediately. Others might wish to make regular repayments over different time periods. Some might wish to pay off nothing until a sale transpired, at which point the capital and interest accrued would be claimed as a charge against sales proceeds. The benefits of this approach could be to provide owners with greater flexibility and ensure that refurbishment work could proceed without delays (avoiding further costs arising from delays). It is also one through which support may become available as government turns to improving the insulation of residential property - see the report *Retrofit London Action Plan*, noted above.

- 3.17 The Windows Committee agreed that Option B should be explored further.

4/ Projected Next Steps

- 4.1 The September Windows Committee agreed that the next steps should include:
- i. Developing an estimate of the level of insulation cladding Ridgway will provide, together with the current level of insulation, and that provided if the windows alone were changed, so that comparisons may be made and the potential benefits seen. These improvements should be related to differences in EPC levels;
 - ii. Developing a cost estimate for the refurbishment shown by the 3D images and compare with a cost estimate to change the windows alone. (This will include continuing discussions with specialists);
 - iii. Further examine how a project could be financed;

- iv. Develop visuals showing the garage front improvement and the rear in the agreed option once further work has been done and an agreed route forward is decided;
- v. Develop an outline project timetable, with phasing and durations of work per phase;
- vi. Develop a summary of anticipated risk factors and constraints.

4.2 The Windows Committee considers a further budget of £10,000 (to be funded by the service charge / reserves) should be sufficient to progress these issues in the next year.

5/ Decisions Requested

5.1 The AGM's decisions are requested on the following:

i. Membership

The Windows Committee is a sub-committee of the Management Committee. If any other owner wishes to join, please let the Chairman or myself know.

ii. 3D Images

The AGM's thoughts on the 3D images are requested and the AGM's agreement is sought to continue working along the lines set out in Section 4.

iii. Incur expenditure

The AGM is requested to authorise the Windows Committee to incur further expenditure as set out in Section 4.

David Robson

8 November 2022

Appendix

1/ Ridgway - Current



2/ Ridgway - 3D Image preferred by Windows Committee



3/ Ridgway - 3D Image in lighter colour cladding



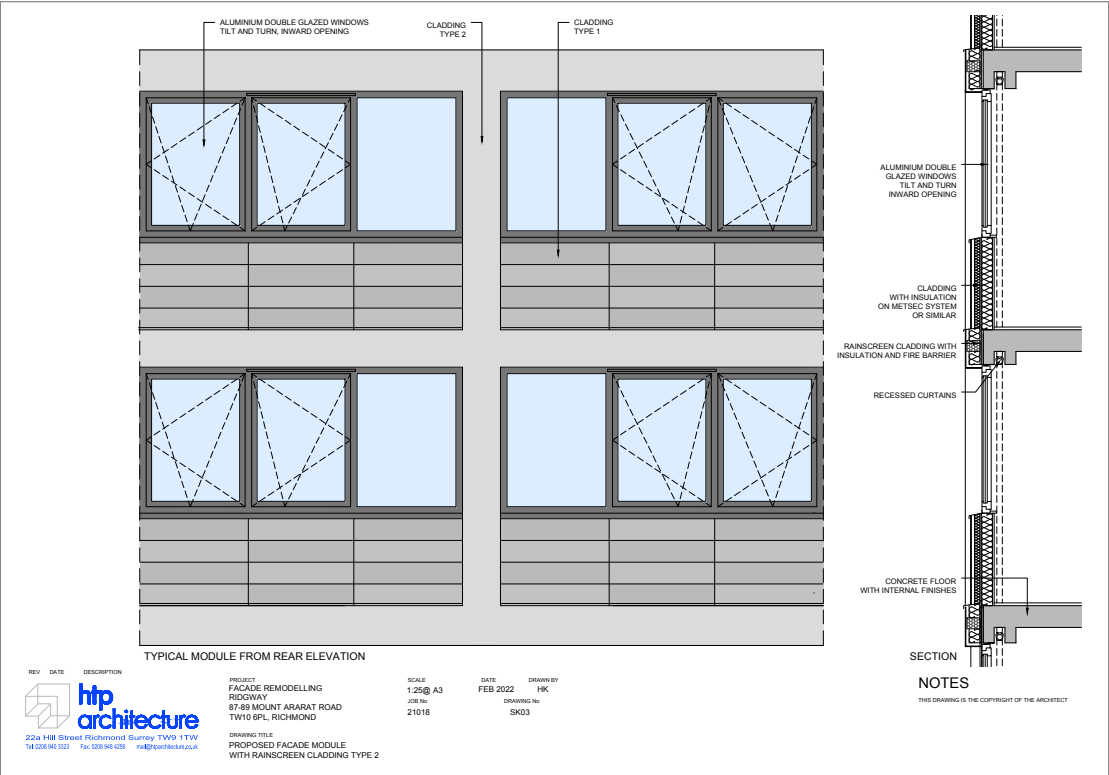
4 Ridgway - Alternative 3D Image



5. Ridgway - early drawing of options 2 and 3 above



6. Ridgway - Early drawing showing possible detail of rear elevation



6/ Ridgway - Original Windows showing the original style and glazing pattern

