

Detailed information notice regarding current removal of the basement slab

Dear Neighbour,

Due to the number of complaints and enquiries lodged with our communications team and also with Westminster City Council (WCC) following commencement of the basement slab breakout in the Whiteleys carpark, we felt it necessary to explain in a little more detail exactly what is currently occurring on site, measures being taken to mitigate and expected timescales.

Background

On receipt of permission from Westminster City Council (WCC) to commence breakout of the basement slab, notification to immediate neighbours and those registered with the redevelopment to receive information by email were informed that this would begin from 28th May.

Previous works had been carried out using a high reach machine, which was a relatively quiet method of demolishing structures. Unfortunately, it is not possible to use the same method on the basement slab, which sits directly on the clay below.

Whilst the sound is elevated in comparison to the quieter method, it is still within the allowable maximum levels that have been set by WCC, in line with guidance issued by the Greater London Authority (GLA).

Real time monitors are in place and are constantly recording the levels of vibration, noise and dust around the edge of the site boundary. To date there have been no exceedances.

Investigation Launched

Following contact by residents and businesses who reported hearing, what most described as an irritating dull tapping / thumping sound, a full investigation was launched by Erith in conjunction with WCC who also received reports.

It was soon confirmed that the sound was originating from the Whiteleys site during the 'noisy' breaking hours periods.

Environmental Officers from WCC immediately visited the site officially in addition to conducting unnotified checks following complaints. During their visits, methods being used were reviewed to ensure best practical means were being followed and that set limits were not being exceeded, including the restricted 'noisy' hours, and were satisfied this was the case.

Hours of breaking

Site hours are 08.00 to 1800 Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturdays. 'Noisy' works which consists mainly of percussive breaking, is restricted to week days only and are 2 hours on then 2 hours off. This is designed to give a measure of relief to residents. The 'noisy' hours daily are 8-10am, 12-2pm and 4-6pm, although this site usually stops breaking at around 5.30pm. There are no permitted 'noisy' works at weekends. These hours are being strictly enforced and adhered to.

Between these times, normal site works do continue. Whilst normal works are less discernible, construction site sounds will still be heard.

Current breaking of the basement slab

Break out of the slab commenced in the car park area at the north end of the site, near to the corner in Redan Place. The expected depth of concrete slab should have been between 800mm and 1200mm across the site, however a section soon revealed itself to be around 3000mm deep. It is believed to possibly be an old crane base, left in position by the redevelopment works which took place in the 1980's but unrecorded on historical records and more

recent investigations. Therefore, removal of this section is more challenging than expected and could possibly account for the sound being carried below ground affecting unexpected areas well beyond the immediate vicinity.

It is hoped that once this section is removed and there is a return to the thinner slab removal, the sound currently being carried will reduce greatly.

Mitigation measures

Although there has been no breach of permitted works, in order to try to mitigate the impact being felt by residents, alternate attachments will be used on the machines. To this end 3 different sized breakers have been ordered and will be delivered this weekend. Following delivery, each will be trialled to see if it makes a difference and we have asked several residents to help us by letting us know if the sound is reduced.

As this will be a trial to attempt to mitigate the noise, there is no guarantee we will achieve a reduction of impact. We will, however, continue to review methods and keep neighbours informed.

Break out of the basement slab will gradually move southwards, this too may change the surrounding areas currently being impacted by sound.

Timescale

Demolition of the whole site; barring the façade being retained, will be complete by the last week in November 2019 and works are currently on schedule to achieve this. Breaking of the basement slab will continue throughout this period, however, will not be continuous as there will be periods needed to clear and process the arisings and install the propping system.

Enquiries and visits

Our communications team, including the Project Manager, have visited many properties in the area following contact by residents, to experience first-hand individual disturbances and enable accurate assessment of the impact. We do not feel it necessary to continue visiting property's as we have found all are experiencing the same low level sound. However, if individuals feel they need a visit or would like to speak to someone face to face we are happy to do so.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information in this notice, please do not hesitate to contact any of the communications team listed below.

Kind regards
Erith Contractors Ltd.

Communications team contact details

Communications Team Contact details:

For any immediate enquiries or concerns with regards to the pending or ongoing works please contact the following:

- **Colette O'Beirne** (Erith Community Liaison Officer) Mobile: 07584 310588 – colette.obeirne@erith.com
- **Cherrie O'Kane** (Erith Community Liaison/Conduct Manager) Mobile - 07894 259321 Email - cherrie.okane@erith.com
- **Paul Millar** (Erith Project Manager) Mobile – 07584 233922 Email - paul.millar@erith.com