

Subject:	Brunswick Town Painting Scheme		
Date of Meeting:	23 January 2014		
Report of:	Executive Director Environment Development and Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Lesley Johnston	Tel: 292104
	Email:	lesley.johnston@brighton-hove .gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	Brunswick and Adelaide		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The five-yearly redecoration of the original Brunswick Estate, which is required by the Hove Borough Council Act 1976, last took place in 2010. Following this, concerns were raised by some owners, agents and contractors over early failure of the paint, and the advice of independent paint specialists has been sought and is now being provided for consideration by the committee following their analysis of the paint and its performance.
- 1.2 In line with the expert advice provided, the committee is being asked to agree to continue to specify the current paint and not to change the five year redecoration period.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee agrees that the council continues to specify Crown Sandtex Classic Stone Gloss for use in the original Brunswick Estate under the Hove Borough Council Act 1976 for the next repainting in 2015.
- 2.2 That the interval for redecoration under the Hove Borough Council Act 1976 be kept at 5 years.
- 2.3 That the specification provided for guidance purposes be amended in accordance with the advice given by Hirst Conservation in their report dated August 2013.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Historic background

The 1976 Hove Borough Council Act (the Act) is the successor to the original legislation of 1830, which was introduced following the completion of the

development to preserve the uniformity of appearance throughout the estate. The Act applies to 1-58 Brunswick Square, 1-42 Brunswick Terrace and 1-8 Brunswick Place and revised and updated the original legislation. The primary objective of preserving uniformity remains.

- 3.2 The painting of the fronts of buildings, iron railings, balconies etc is required under the Act every fifth year starting in 1980, with a paint of type and colour specified by the council. Before 1990 a lead based paint was used, however this was changed to a lead free, oil based paint until its second cycle in 1995. Following specialist advice the required paint for the 2000 redecoration was changed to the current product, Crown Sandtex Classic Stone Gloss which was used again in 2005 and 2010.
- 3.3 A consequence of the enforced redecoration is that each building is fully scaffolded (a major cost of each redecoration project) at 5 yearly intervals, allowing the close inspection of the historic fabric and enabling necessary repairs to be coordinated with the redecoration. It is considered that this has significantly aided the proper conservation of these buildings which are subjected to an extreme coastal environment, and visually they compare well with the fabric of other newer and better constructed seafront properties.
- 3.4 Current paint requirements
The legislation does not allow the council to require the removal of old paints or specify the preparation works prior to painting, and therefore any paint specified must be simple to apply with the minimum council intervention or supervision. The current paint has the merits of being suitable for application over other paints and does not require abrasion of the substrate prior to application, merely washing down. It also has better environmental credentials than previous products, being water-based.
- 3.5 The performance of this paint was considered so successful by its second application in 2005 that residents requested that the length of the repainting cycle be extended in order to reduce their financial burden. As a result the council appointed a consultant to review the condition of the finishes throughout the estate in 2008 and consider whether an extended cycle of seven or eight years would continue to deliver a satisfactory result.
- 3.6 The recommendation of the consultant was that although overall the paint was performing well at the time, certain areas of masonry and timber decoration had deteriorated to the extent that in the most exposed parts of the estate (Brunswick Terrace) extension of the painting period could not be recommended. In addition there were significant problems with rust staining from corroded iron railings after just three years and the consultant advised that either the specification for the painting of the ironwork be improved, or the painting period reduced.
- 3.7 The council therefore decided at the Environment Cabinet Member Meeting on 27th January 2009 to continue with a five year cycle and require redecoration in 2010, but that a further review of the paint condition should be undertaken in 2013 to consider whether the next repainting could be deferred until 2017.
- 3.8 Crown Paints subsequently revised their advice on the preparation of ironwork and specified a different primer in 2010.

3.9 Recent problems

Concern began to be expressed over the early failure of the 2010 paint in January 2011, by owners, agents and decorating firms on six properties, and a technical advisor from Crown Paints came to advise on the causes of the failures. His analysis was that the problems were to do with either inadequate washing down prior to painting, the use of fillers that were incompatible with the paint, or redecoration in temperatures below that recommended by Crown.

3.10 There was dissatisfaction from owners and agents with this outcome, and the involvement of an independent specialist was therefore considered necessary in order to guide the decision on whether to change to another paint for the next redecoration and whether the extension of the paint cycle beyond 2015 would meet the aims of the Act and should be considered.

3.11 Consultants findings

Hirst Conservation, specialists in paint technology, were selected from a shortlist of firms suggested by English Heritage and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. Their report is summarised in Appendix 1 and is available in full on the council website.

3.12 Through visual survey, analysis of geographical and climactic factors, and scientific paint flake analysis, the consultants identified a number of different types of paint defects throughout the estate. The causes of these defects vary and are set out in Appendix 1 and fully explained in the report, however none of them can be attributed to the paint product itself.

3.13 The consultants researched alternative paints currently available and advise that they consider that none of them are likely to perform better than the current product, and until paint technology advances further they advise against changing to an alternative.

3.14 The current 5 year painting interval is considered by the consultants to be appropriate for this product in this exposed marine environment and they do not recommend extending it.

3.15 The consultants have identified some changes to the advisory specification that could be made to improve the performance of the paint and avoid some of the areas of failure.

3.16 The outcome of this review has also highlighted the need for further interaction with owners, agents and contractors to reinforce the need for careful observance of the specification for successful outcomes, and the Friends of Brunswick Square and Terrace have expressed a willingness to be involved with this.

3.17 Other means of monitoring the use of the correct product to best effect have been suggested, and the paint supplier (Brewers) has indicated that there may be support it can give with this.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The commissioning of the report from Hirst Conservation was a direct response to requests from the community for an independent review of the paint. Owners, residents and agents were all notified about the survey work and many took the opportunity to engage directly with the consultants.
- 4.2 The consultant's report was presented to representatives of the Friends of Brunswick Square and Terrace, (a community group representing 127 households within the square and terrace) and the ward councillors, at a meeting on 6th November.
- 4.3 The Friends of Brunswick Square and Terrace have agreed to collaborate with the council by sharing advice on good practice with all owners and agents affected, in order to increase the potential for good results in future paint schemes.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The cost of implementing the recommendations will be met from existing Planning Strategy and Projects revenue budget. The cost of commissioning the consultant's report has already been met from the revenue budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: Steven Bedford Date: 03/12/13

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Hove Borough Council Act 1976 provides that the exterior of the front of the building shall be painted every 5 years. A longer period may be determined by the Council, having consulted with the Royal Institute of British Architects. As the report recommends retaining the five year interval, the need for such consultation would not arise.

Lawyer Consulted: Alison Gatherer Date: 10/12/13

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the Planning Strategy and Projects Group was undertaken in 2010 and covers work of the Conservation Service.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The proposals in this report have no substantial impact upon the ten One Planet Principles of sustainability, with the potential to nurture a 'sense of place which builds on local cultural heritage' under the 'Culture and Community' Principle.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 None identified

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 Failure to act on the consultant's advice could result in adverse publicity for the council if problems with the paint were to follow the next redecoration.

Public Health Implications:

5.7 A well maintained built environment can improve the well-being and sense of place of existing and/or future inhabitants of the city.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.8 The Brunswick Estate is one of the city's finest architectural set pieces, and one that contributes immensely to the quality of the city as a place to live and visit. The works will have a beneficial effect on the appearance of the Brunswick Town Conservation Area, which is of national significance.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 Changing the specification to the product used by the Crown and Grosvenor Estates has been considered. The consultants have advised that this product is likely to perform to a similar standard as the existing paint and no significant advantage is identified. In addition, compatibility issues may result from a change in product and it is therefore considered that this option would not be justified.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The recommendations are based on the advice of well respected independent paint specialists and are considered to be the most effective means of ensuring that the aims of the Act are met.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Synopsis of Hirst Conservation Report

Documents in Members' Rooms

Background Documents

1. Hove Borough Council Act 1976
2. Link to Hirst report on council website