



John Gorton Building Façade Repairs

Project Fact Sheet – February 2015

The Department of Finance (Finance) is the building owner and property manager of the John Gorton Building.

Essential work is required at the John Gorton Building to repair the existing stone facade.

Who is responsible for managing the John Gorton Building?

Finance is the agency responsible for managing the John Gorton Building. The National Capital Authority (NCA) is responsible for maintaining the grounds.

Does the John Gorton Building need repairs?

Yes. The exterior facade of the John Gorton Building is in need of urgent repairs. The sandstone panels are deteriorating and stone is falling off the panels causing a safety risk. Temporary hoardings have been put in place in the short-term, to mitigate this risk.

What repair works are required?

The repair works include the replacement of all jointing material on the building between the stone panels as it contains asbestos, replacement and/or repairs to damaged sandstone panels, repairs to downpipes, and the replacement of lead weatherings and flashings.

When will the required repairs be undertaken?

Funding was provided in the 2013-14 Budget to fund the repairs to the North-West facing facade, which was the most

deteriorated. Work on this facade was completed in late 2014.

Additional funding to repair the remaining three facades was provided in 2013-14 MYEFO. Works will be progressively completed through to late 2017, with work to the South-West facing facade commencing in January 2015.

Why is there scaffolding and protection hoarding on the John Gorton Building?

The scaffold will provide access for the contractors to undertake the repair works. Until the sandstone panels are replaced, there is a safety risk from falling stone. The site safety fence and hoardings are in place to mitigate the safety risk until repair works can be completed.

How long will the scaffolding and hoarding be in place?

Works will be progressively completed through to late 2017. The scaffolding will be in place where the works are underway and will be progressively removed as the works are completed. The Hoarding will be in place around the building until the repair works have been completed.

The repair and conservation works are required to be undertaken utilising mostly hand tools, so as not to damage the thin joint between the existing sandstone panels. This is a slow process and needs to be undertaken by specialist contractors.

What will be the impact on building tenants and the general public during the repair works?

Most of the repair and conservation works are required to be undertaken using hand tools, which will minimise the noise impact of the works. There will be some minimal noise associated with erection of scaffolding and some of the repairs. Efforts will be made to complete the noisier works outside standard office hours, such as before 9am, after 5pm, and around mid-day.

The building entry and exit points, fire escapes and loading docks will remain in operation during the repair works. For safety reasons, the entries will be protected with secure scaffolding to maintain the safety of building occupants. There may be brief periods however, where a temporary closure is in place to facilitate the safe erection or dismantling of safety hoardings. In that case, alternate arrangements will be put in place and communicated to staff.

There may also be a need to temporarily amend pedestrian and vehicular access and egress from the basement to facilitate the repair works. Again, these alternate arrangements will be communicated to staff.

The asbestos will need to be removed prior to the stone repair works to provide a safe working environment for the stone repair contractors.

Asbestos removal will be undertaken by licensed contractors, and in accordance with the relevant codes and standards so as to ensure the safety of the contractors undertaking the works and also that of the building occupants and visitors.

Large sections of the South-West facing facade will be completely scaffolded as the repair works are progressively undertaken, commencing from the Southern-most point. The scaffolding will also be for a time, encapsulated as part of the asbestos removal protection measures.

An external window protection will be applied to the windows so that they are not

damaged during the asbestos removal works.

Once the asbestos removal works have been completed, the encapsulation and window protection will be removed, and stone repairs will commence.

Does the asbestos in the jointing material pose a safety risk to tenants and the public?

All jointing material will be removed as part of the repair works by licensed asbestos removal contractors, and in accordance with the relevant codes and standards so as to ensure the safety of the contractors undertaking the works and also that of the building occupants and visitors.

The asbestos will need to be removed prior to the stone repair works to provide a safe working environment for the stone repair contractors.

Air monitoring will be in place within the building, in areas adjacent to where jointing containing asbestos is being removed during the course of the works. This was in place during the North-West facade works, and no asbestos was detected during that stage.

What are the proposed measures the Department will undertake to reduce the risk involved with asbestos removal during the repairs?

All jointing material will be removed by licensed asbestos removal contractors, in accordance with the relevant codes and standards.

The asbestos being removed is contained within a jointing mastic, and is non-friable (bonded), however the removal process will assume it is friable and fibres may be released. As such, while asbestos removal works are being undertaken, the facade will be fully encapsulated and subject to negative air pressure, so asbestos cannot enter the building. The windows will also be sealed externally.

Finance has engaged an independent asbestos consultant to review the

contractor's work to ensure that it is being completed in accordance with the relevant codes and standards.

Comcare has been informed of the asbestos removal works and will conduct inspections as required.

Air monitoring will be in place within the building and externally, during asbestos removal works.

Will the heritage values of the building be protected?

The John Gorton Building is listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List and its significant values will be protected when the required repair works are completed. The scaffolding will be erected in a manner that will not damage the building or increase the rate of sandstone deterioration.

What other approval or consultation processes have been undertaken?

The project is consulting with the National Capital Authority, ACT Environmental Authority, Comcare, and Department of the Environment.