

Walkways Open House

Outcomes Report

317 Barandon Walk, 20 August 2019

LANCASTER WEST
NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM



317 Barandon Walk

Open House

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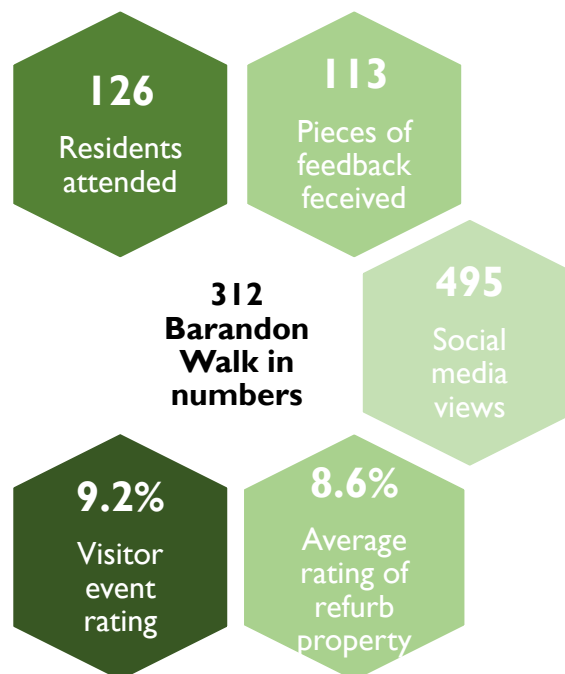


Purpose of the Open House

This event was an opportunity for **residents to view, experience and give feedback** on the quality of refurbishment and repair we are aiming to implement across the Lancaster West Estate

317 Barandon Walk is a two-bedroom flat on the third floor of a building on the west side of the estate, which was built in the 1970s.

This was the second property to be shown as an open house event and it allowed residents to see how a 2-bedroom property on the estate could be improved and upgraded. Similar to the first open house flat, this property was subsequently let to a Lancaster West resident a short time with a under the Local Lettings Plan (LLP).



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Summary of event

We had a steady stream of visitors to the Open House event, with the number of visitors exceeding expectation. More than 126 people viewed the flat, with many residents bringing along friends and relatives.

The event ran from 2-7pm with the first hour seeing the largest number of visitors at any one time. Visitor numbers were managed by having a dedicated member of staff positioned at the base of the stairs to ensure that the numbers of individuals allowed up into property did not exceed that dictated by health and safety guidelines.

Residents expressed surprise at the quality and design of the refurbishment, with many expressing shock at how well it had been done. In particular, visitors said they loved the refurbishment of the kitchen and bathroom, along with the new spotlights and dimmers and the new flooring. The replacement of the old doorway with new double glass doors leading to the living room, alongside the glass door to the kitchen, proved very popular. Residents commented on how light and airy the flat felt and how modern and fresh it looked.

The integrated appliances, induction cooker and extractor fan in the kitchen, delighted many residents, although one or two queried whether they would be able to keep their gas cookers once the refurbishment took place. Similarly, although most people loved the refurbishment of the bathroom, particularly the combined shower/bathtub and the bidet hose, a couple commented that perhaps the refurbishment could include a small unit under the sink and 360 degree hinge on the shower screen.

The new doors to the bedrooms, the new look lighting and the laminate-inspired flooring all garnered compliments; and many visitors were impressed with the modern heating system, which allowed the heating to be controlled through a smart phone.

Many people wanted to know whether they could and would have this done in their own homes and when any kind of refurbishment was likely to take place.

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Of the 107 positive comments received about the refurbishment 47% were specifically related to the refurbishment of the kitchen

Residents feedback can be found in full later in the report.

Promoting the event

The communications and promotion of the open house was deemed effective based on the number of residents at the event and the success of the various methods used.

Invitation letters were sent to all residents of the walkways two weeks before the event. Designed in-house by members of staff, the letters and flyers promoting the event were sent to all residents of the walkways by RBKC on our behalf. In the two weeks leading up to the event, information about the open house was sent to residents via mailchimp and WhatsApp with and the event was promoted on Instagram via four different 360 degree videos aimed at those who spoke Arabic, Somali, Farsi as well as English.

Our email promotion had a 100% delivery rate with a 50.9% open rate. 106 emails were sent and 54 were opened. Whatsapp had a delivery rate of 72.8% with a 27.2% failure rate, with 272 texts sent.

Instagram proved particularly successful with 495 views, including 162 on the day. In the days leading up to the event, the Arabic video had 82 views, the Farsi video had 86 views, the Somali video had 74 views while the English video had 91 views. The 162 views on the day of the event were attributed to the great work of the 2 dedicated comms people on the day Khadra and Kirsty.

Speaking to 51 visitors about how they found out about the event revealed the following:

Posters around the estate: 29

Email: 15

Post (letters and flyers): 13

Word of mouth: 9

Text & Whatsapp Message 5

Wayfinding: 3

Instagram: 1

Residents association: 1

Posters put in noticeboards around the walkways 7 days before the event proved to be the most effective.

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What went well:

Preparation, Comms, Staffing & Data Collection

Appointing a Project Lead

- 1 The decision to appointment a clear project manager meant that the event was managed from the outset by one person who was in control and managed the whole process. This meant that other members of staff only needed to consult the project manager to know where we were in the process, what still needed to be done and how they could help on the day.

Creation of an open house process and plan that could be replicated and tailored for future open house events.

- 2 James Rodrigues created a process for the open house event that could be easily replicated and tailored for future events. This meant that other members of staff were able to follow his plan on the day of the event despite his unavoidable absence

Promotion of the Event

- 3 The Event was well publicised and promoted over a 2-week period. Letters, posters, flyers, email, text and Instagram were all employed. Instagram, in particular, was used to reach residents for whom English is not their first language and also to encourage interest on the day via pictures and live-feed.

Wayfinding

- 4 Posters and A-frames boards were put out on the day to direct visitors to the open house. This also had an unattended but welcome result of capturing some residents who had still be unaware of the event.

Hosting on the day

- 5 Staff involved in the open house we given a rota on the day so everyone could be aware who needed to be situated where and when.
A member if staff was tasked with standing at the door to greet and count visitors to the event. Iman was stationed at the door almost the whole day and did a superb job. Feedback from residents informed us that they had felt the event to be both welcoming and informative. W11 staff did a great job of being friendly, energetic and engaging on the day.
In addition, at least one fire marshal and one first aider was present in the property at all times, complying with health & safety.

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Staff member dedicated to comms

- 6 Dedicated staff were assigned to take pictures and videos of visitors on the day of the event. Khadra and Kirsty did a superb job of making the event look fun and full.

LLP applications displayed

- 7 LLP applications were displayed in the open house to encourage discussion and take up of this plan. Several residents expressed subsequent interest in the LLP and only one application remained on the day.

Feedback

- 8 4 large softboards were distributed throughout the flat to capture feedback on the refurb; one highlighted fixtures & fittings in the kitchen, one of the bathroom and a board was placed in each of the bedrooms highlighting the new features of the flat. In addition, feedback and data were also collected via an electronic feedback form, a paper version of the feedback form and the Happy or Not machine. It was generally felt capturing feedback in this way was successful.

Improvements Needed:

Preparation, comms, staffing & data collection

Project Lead

- 1 The absence of the project lead on the day of the Open House revealed the need for a team of 2 or more people who are aware of everything that has been and/or needs to be done and who can direct matters on the day should the project manager not be available for any reason.

More detailed Open House plan and process

- 2 A need was identified for the open house plan to be made into a detailed step-by-step process to include roles, responsibilities, names and dates; in short - **what**, **who** and **when** to now be made crystal clear in both digital and paper format; including a copy saved on sharepoint.

Promotion of the event

- 3 The posters sent in the initial invite to the event were found to be too flimsy, so a thicker paper should be requested for future posters from RBKC print room. In addition, residents have asked that letters be addressed to them by name rather than a generic "Dear Resident".

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Staff discovered on the day that not all noticeboards in and around Barandon Walk had been utilised. Care needs to be taken to ensure posters/flyers are placed in all relevant noticeboards in a timely manner and dedicated staff should be assigned this task.

Wayfinding

- 4 Members of staff should be assigned, and time allotted, for signage directing visitors to the open house on the day, to be put up in relevant locations. It should be noted that these posters are generic and give directions only, thus they could be laminated so that they are weatherproof and can be re-used.
A need for 1 or 2 more A-frame boards were identified for open house events that can be accessed from several locations Eg, walkways. Also, where necessary, a fire warden should be assigned to collect a frame and man the entryway on the day.

Hosting on the day

- 5 While staff interacted well with visitors, miscommunication meant that 2 softboards were not adequately manned and staff with dedicated knowledge of refurb/maintenance were not always available. This may have been due to the open house rota, which staff felt should be made clearer. One the subject of clarity, one resident felt she had not been given clarity about what would be offered to residents as part of the refurb. Despite an earlier meeting, clarity around refurb and repair is an ongoing issue for staff. This should be rectified for the next open house meeting

Staff member dedicated to comms

- 6 Having members of staff dedicated to comms worked very well; perhaps a few more staff members could do be assigned to this on the day.

Feedback & Data Collection

- 6 Despite several forms of feedback capture, some visitors managed to elude them all by directing their comments to staff in conversation; where visitors do this and are reluctant to fill out a post-it note or form, perhaps staff could make a note so that this feedback is not lost. In addition, the electronic version of the feedback form only asks what visitors liked about the refurb flat, a question should be added to capture dislikes and/or improvements.

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Feedback from residents

Full resident feedback

This section shows the feedback given by residents on the day as outlined in the table below. Feedback was captured through post-it notes on softboards in the kitchen, bathroom and bedrooms and through asking visitors to fill out a feedback form in both electronic and paper versions. While support was mostly in favour of the look and finish of the refurbishment, many visitors also had a number of concerns about the changes made.

Residents liked the overall look of the property. They felt it now looked light and spacious and had a modern feel. Many praised the spotlights, flooring and glass doors into the living room and kitchen, while others loved the integrated kitchen and the new look and fixtures in the bathroom.

Some residents however did mourn the loss of storage space in the living room, which was affected by the introduction of the new double glass doors to that room. They also disliked the size and placement of the water heater, which had been tucked away behind double doors in the living room; and the lowering of the ceiling to accommodate the spotlights.

What residents liked about the refurbishment

“Love it well done”

“Fresh, modern feel”

“Crisp décor and good use of space”

Residents gave the Refurbished Flat an 8.6/10 rating and had great things to say about the fixtures, fittings and finish as seen in the following comments:

Kitchen	Bathroom	Fixtures and fittings	Overall
Like the kitchen x 18	Like the shower sockets	Like the spot lights x 10	Living room
Love the doors x 6	Like the bathroom x 12	Nice flooring x 9	Love it well done
Kitchen Tap x 3	Like the Bidet Hose x 4	Like all doors x 4	The doors allow a lot of light in x 2
Love the lights x 3	Bathroom is perfect	Like Glass Doors x 2	The overall feel

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Flooring x2	Heating system	
I'm really impressed its very beautiful and a big improvement on tiles	Great storage	Nice decoration throughout the flat
The hidden appliances	Sockets	Bright and new
Ventilation (extractor fan)	Spotlights	Hiding the pipes in the bedroom, tank storage
Cooker		Fresh modern feel
Fridge		All of it, but put second bannister on the second floor
Kitchen, much brighter		More modern and clean
Integrated cupboards		Colours, new technology,
Love the kitchen		Love it well done
Really love the colours		Very Modern x 2
Built in fridge, extractor, lights.		Crisp décor, good use of space
Ceiling lights, kitchen sink		Love the Stairs x 2
Built-in features		Everything, taking it back to specs, not cutting corners.
		Fresh and new, high quality
		New tank, storage space,
		Love everything x 3
		Modern, high quality
		Nicely done but not my preference
		Little touches, stylish,
		Boiler x 2
		New material and modern approach
		Simple and stunning
		Modern look, spacious & light
		Clean, bright, new & modern
		How modern it looks

The doors, taps, lights, flooring and both the kitchen and bathroom as a whole were the most popular aspects of the refurbishment

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What residents disliked about the refurbishment

“Make better use of boiler space”

“Paint should be washable”

“Loss of cupboard space in living room”

While the residents had great things to say about the refurbishment they did have some concerns as outlined below:

Kitchen	Bathroom	Fixtures and fittings	Overall
Please allow residents to keep long cupboard next to the kitchen	Windows need improving x2	Please keep the comm boiler	Can see the glue used between the floor and skirting board in several places
Let residents choose if they want electric cooker or gas cooker x2	Sink is too big	Can we have carpet options	
Needs a carousel in the corner cupboards x2	Shower door should extend further out	Lights controlled by apps	Kitchen cupboards could be better, Radiators could be better situated
Corner unit could have better access	Bathroom mirror should have mirror on both sides	Make better use of boiler space x 2	Paint should be washable x 2
Don't like grey cupboards with grey worktops		A small cupboard is needed under the wash basin of the bathroom x 2	Balcony needs repair, also why is it shared?
Needs a 60/40 fridge freezer, not 50/50		Bath seems too high	Walls are too thin
Would prefer gas cooker		Need ventilation vents	Loss of cupboard space in living room
App controlled lights, i.e. Philips house		Walls need sound proofing	Windows x 3
I would love the wall to be taken down and made open plan		Lower bath	Spot lights
		More sockets could never have too many	Number of stairs to property Number of stairs to property

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	I feel like there could be a better place to put the boiler not in the sitting room	Needs new windows
	Walk in shower	2 residents, who were both very tall, said they felt the ceiling was now too low and made the room feel smaller
	Have an extra dimmer in the bedrooms	2 residents were concerned that lowering the ceiling meant some people would have problems with furniture placement when they returned to they refurbished home.
	360c hinges on shower screen	Nothing x 8
	Handles on windows	Love it but the tank is huge
	Radiators x 2	
	Windows x 2	
	Bathroom basin	
	Need to control the heating	
	Boiler is massive x 2	
	Balcony door not secure	

Additional Feedback

As stated, while residents had some concerns about the refurbishment, one resident had more to say and later emailed us the following comments:

- Upper level layout may be made more open, in-line with modern flats design. This requires some architectural creative thinking alongside a pro-active building control person. Whilst a segregation between the floors is required for fire safety, it should be possible to design a smaller lobby upstairs, making better use of the available floor plan. Potentially, a better solution would be to introduce mist system to the kitchen A rough cost estimate would be in region of 2k per unit.

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- Storage cupboard upstairs makes no sense. It is a misuse of the unit's most precious area (living space) that should be omitted. There is plenty of deep storage downstairs as well as allowance for removable storage units.
- The boiler cupboard makes a very inefficient use of space. There is no reason why its footprint could not be reduced by 50%, area that could serve your tenants. At the moment, it looks like a context-less installation made by a service man rather than being design led with a more holistic thinking.
- The choice of un-vented boiler system is a good one. Nevertheless there may be a contractual issue behind this as you will not be able to stop people from using their heating system throughout the year. If your intent is to install energy meters (including hot water) then this is fine, however be aware that our leases are not prepared for such option.
- Kitchen layout could be improved. The standalone fridge is not only ecstasically unpleasing, but also set out in a 'vulnerable' position and should be integrated into a set of high cupboards.
- WC layout does not maximize the space and could be done better by a designer, for example, there's no reason why a hidden cistern with a service hatch should not be installed.
- The setting out of the light switch in the bigger bedroom does not allow for a storage unit to be placed to the right of the door - this is the most expected setting out I think.
- I think that by adding built in joinery (relatively little cost) a much more robust design can be achieved which would be inline with private market properties.
- I believe you have installed a water pump inside the unit in order to achieve better water pressure. Whilst this may be useful for your studio flats and units that operate on a single level, a couple of drawbacks / notes re split level units:
 - Water pumps tend to be costly on the long run with maintenance needed every couple of years + electricity cost. Add your capital cost and you are probably better off with upgrading your infrastructure rather than providing multiple local solutions. This should be looked at by your MEP consultant.
 - In split level flats there is currently no need for a pump if the water tank is located on the upper level and is elevated from the floor. We have done this in our flat using a basic support frame and have excellent water pressure throughout despite being on the top floor (quite simple - the building pressure is enough to get water into the tank, then the tank feeds everything via gravity with high pressure).

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How Residents felt about the event

92% of visitors were happy with their overall experience

When asked for their opinion through the electronic and paper version of the feedback form, residents gave the Open House Event an 8.1/10 rating.

In addition to the feedback forms, visitors were also able to register their view through the “Happy or Not” machine which was stationed at the front door of the flat. 50 residents used the machine to register their visit - of this number 92% were happy with their open house experience.

Visitor comments on the event can be seen below:

Liked	Disliked
The timing was just right so I could attend after work	Extend the time in case I was working later
Seeing what's possible	Some refreshments offered
Got to see the flat but want to know when refurb starts	Manage expectations
Seeing what I'm getting	Feel we should get what's on show
Seeing the flat. Ceiling is now too low	Happy enough
Got to see the property	Doing good job
Getting to see the flat	All good
Interactive friendly staff	Maybe 2 days rather than 1
Very good	Very happy
Politeness of staff	Very good to start with
Everything was explained	Refreshments
Stuart was very helpful, technical knowledge	Everything was spot on
Being able to come in and have a look	Can't think of anything
Inclusive and open, inviting and friendly Felt comfortable and at ease to ask questions	Nothing Doesn't need improvement

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Walk in freely	Everything was good
Everybody is friendly, willing to talk to you	Promote more, letters through post, newsletters
Long hours to come in and people available to answer questions	Everything okay
All the help and information provided	More advertising
That I could speak to staff and they answered all my questions	I like it was from 2-7pm and that we could speak to everyone and get answers
Opportunity to view property	More foam boards
He timing was good summer holiday school Plenty of lent staff to talk to	More then one day more days Time slots, controlling numbers
Everything x 2	Nothing
Everyone knew the answers	
The hospitality, welcoming, informative meeting staff and feeling positive about refurb	Control numbers Weekend event/extended evening
Clean and user friendly	None needed
Clear explanations	Should be a 2 day event

Event giveaways

It was decided that people should have some things to take away with them from the event, simply as little gifts. For this purpose, we offered halal, sugar-free lollies, W11 keyrings and W11 cloth bags. All of which proved very popular.

Lessons Implemented from Verity Close Report:

Having learnt from our first open house in Verity Close the following lessons were implemented for this event:

Lessons Learned

Flat prep

- Flat prep was started 2 days in advance. Boards, easels, forms, shoe-covers, pens, post-it notes, and more was put up in the flat 2 days in advance. More set-up occurred before the day before and on the day, but everything was done with time to spare.

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Promotion and comms

- The multi-lingual promo videos, posted on Instagram, were well received and this time we included one in English, we also posted more pictures in the lead-up to the event as well as posting pictures & videos on the day.
- We had 1 staff member dedicated to comms
- Larger softboards were used to accommodate more noticeboards

Staffing of the event

- It was decided that several members of staff should man the flat throughout the day and that members of staff who could answer questions on refurb and repair should always be present.
- We also had a dedicated member of staff manning the entrance to the property and the flow of visitors to comply with health and safety concerns
- Wayfinding
- Both posters and a-frame boards were used and proved extremely useful to signpost the way for visitors

Health and safety

- It was decided that a fire warden and a first aider should be present in the flat throughout the day.
- In addition, it was decided to limit the number of people allowed in the flat at any one time to comply with health and safety reg; this was done by having a greeter at the entrance to the flat.

Tracking visitors

- For 317 we employed a clicker to keep track of the number of visitors. This worked extremely well.

Local Lettings Plan (LLP)

- Several LLP application packs were placed in the flat and staff has been briefed on criteria and were able to explain this service to those who were interested.

Flat features

- A full kitchen was installed – including an induction cooker and integrated appliances. Residents commented favourably on these. Their inclusion, however, led to further questions about whether all appliances would be included in the refurbishment.

Opportunities missed

Frequently asked questions

- No FAQ were included anywhere for the event. It has been agreed that this will be rectified for events going forward.

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In-Flat briefing

- No in-flat briefing took place, which has since been identified as something that would be beneficial everyone who will staff the event.

Going forward

While on the whole it was agreed that the event went well. There were a few things that we thought we could do better:

Wayfinding

It has been decided that a few more A-frame boards would be acquired for use in the walkways where there are several entrances. Staff will also be assigned to put up directional posters on the morning of the event.

Staffing

Staff rota will be agreed as early as possible. In addition, more clarity will be given to the staff rota, so everyone will know where they need to be and when. Staff will have a pre-event meeting (including one of site) so they are briefed on what they should say and are familiar with the flat and can answer any questions that may arise.

FAQ

Frequently asked questions have been put together to be handed out at the event – these will certainly have relevant use elsewhere – perhaps at the end of the W11 newsletter, put up on the wall in Baseline outside units 3, 7, 22 and 38, and as handouts alongside the other literature outside unit 3.