

# Living with noise and pollution from work on Grade II-listed building is 'brutal' say residents

## 'Torture' of Space House neighbours

by GUY TAYLOR

NOISE and pollution from the demolition of the listed Space House building feels like "torture" to residents in a nearby estate.

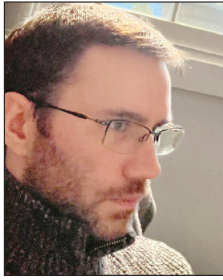
Raymond O'Sullivan, 34, who has lived in the Peabody-run Wild Street estate, Covent Garden, for more than three years is directly opposite the construction site.

Developer Seaforth Land is adding two new floors of the main office block in Kemble Street, Covent Garden, as part of the refurbishment and making changes to another Kingsway block.

"It's brutal," Mr O'Sullivan said. "I'm more or less housebound as I've got spine injuries and there's nothing worse than if you can't get away from that noise, it is torture."

"The demolition works, they were so bad that they even caused damage like cracking the plaster on the walls... the back of my wardrobe actually came off because we had tremors. People who have been working from home trying to do meetings over Zoom have had to stop, because it's too loud to have a meeting in your room. If they were working now, you wouldn't be able to hear me on the phone," he said.

The 16-storey Grade II-listed Space House is in Wild Street, just off Kingsway, and was built between 1964 and 1968 as part of the commercial



property boom. It was first let to the Civil Aviation Authority in 1975. Demolition work has now finished but construction on the site is set to continue until spring 2023.

Due to the dust some residents have been unable to open their windows for long periods over the past year. "My upstairs neighbour has asthma, and he couldn't open the windows and was struggling," said Mr O'Sullivan.

He and other residents have repeatedly complained to Erith, the group in charge of the initial demolition works, and Seaforth. "Every time we complained to Erith or Seaforth they were just like yeah well when we're gone it'll be OK," he said. "I'd rather be ignored than fobbed off."

On top of this, he has rung both Westminster and Camden councils, because the block lies on the border of the two boroughs. Neither had taken overall responsibility, he said: "They're both passing the buck about who's responsi-



ble for dealing with the complaints."

A statement from Seaforth Land said: "We appreciate residents' concerns and from the start of construction at Space House installed noise, air and vibration monitoring equipment across the site. These provide real-time responses so the team can act quickly to resolve issues. We are pleased to report that readings have shown all operations conducted at Space House to date have been within the agreed guidelines and limits. We have pledged to return to monthly meetings with neighbours and representatives of the construction working group."

Camden Council added: "Specific examples of intervention include getting the developer to limit noisy works to two hours on and off and ensuring the building is fully enclosed by a sheeting system to help contain dust and debris. We have also not renewed a permit for non-noisy weekend works in response to complaints."

Raymond O'Sullivan, left, lives directly opposite the construction site; far right, the Space House



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## Year of the Tiger celebrations cut

by JACOB PHILLIPS, LDRS

THE Chinese New Year parade has been cancelled to cut the risk of further spreading the Covid virus.

The celebration of the Year of the Tiger was expected to be on February 1. It is usually the biggest celebration of its kind outside Asia and one of the first major tourist events in the West End. But the spectacular costumed parades and stage performances will be replaced with a small-scale lion dance and night market in Chinatown's Newport Place with video screens showing pre-recorded performances.

The London's Chinatown Community Association confirmed it was not practical to organise a big celebration, especially since government guidelines advise people to work



Chinese New Year performances in 2020

from home until January 26 at the earliest.

The parade usually starts in Charing Cross Road before dancing its way up Shaftesbury Avenue ending in a grand finale in Trafalgar Square.

A spokesperson for the Mayor of London said: "As the Omicron variant continues to spread across the capital, the organisers

have had to take the difficult decision to scale back the planned Lunar New Year celebrations. It is disappointing we are not now going to be able to gather to celebrate in Trafalgar Square in our usual numbers, however we will still be marking the occasion and details will be announced in due course."