

Meeting with Crossrail on 21 January 2015

Bill Tucker, Steve Kay and Mike Black presented to Barbican residents on 21 January. The TBMs (tunnel boring machines), Elizabeth and Victoria, are currently under Spitalfields, approaching Liverpool Street at about 25m per day. The machines will probably start tunnelling under the Barbican Estate in late February and March. You can follow the machines' progress under Willoughby House, Brandon Mews, Gilbert House and Defoe House at www.crossrail.co.uk/route/near-you.

Crossrail are confident the tunnelling will not cause any structural damage. The tunnels will lie some 30m below ground and at least 11m below the deepest piles of any Barbican building. Crossrail monitor noise and vibration continuously: to date, ground settlement has typically been half Crossrail's estimate, and has nowhere exceeded their expectations. Crossrail will continue to monitor settlement until less than 2mm per year.

The Barbican lies on the final stretch of tunnelling: the boring machines should reach Farringdon about a month after they start under the Barbican, following which the Crossrail tunnels will be complete. The shaft for Moorgate station is finished, and is the deepest point on Crossrail. Earth will be removed through the tunnels; much will then be taken by barge to build an RSPB nature reserve on Wallasea Island.

Crossrail are liable to make good any damage, including cosmetic damage, such as sticking doors or cracks in paint or window frames. Crossrail expect any damage would appear within a few days of tunnelling, but residents can claim any time up to two years after tunnelling. Residents' first point of contact, to make a claim or for any other query, is the 24-hour Crossrail helpdesk, at helpdesk@crossrail.co.uk or 0345 602 3813. Crossrail may then arrange for a loss adjuster to visit the flat. Crossrail will pay all costs, whether or not a claim is approved.

Crossrail plan to fit out the line and stations by the end of 2017. The TBMs will be removed almost entirely through the tunnels they have dug. Crossrail have promised to return to present further details: they do not expect residents to hear the work as they will use a bespoke drilling rig to drill some half a million holes in the tunnels under the Barbican. Crossrail do not expect the running of the line to disturb residents. The line is much deeper than the Underground, and, to minimize noise and vibration under the Barbican, the rails and sleepers will rest on the elastic pads of a Floating Track Slab, for the temporary construction railway as well as the eventual running lines. We can look forward to boarding a Crossrail train in 2018.

Garth Leder