

UPDATE ON RUTHERFORD BUILDING INQUIRY

I am pleased to report that the inquiry is progressing satisfactorily.

From the excellent historical research that has been carried out by Neil Todd, combined with a review of archived University records, I believe that our knowledge of the nature and levels of contamination that occurred in the Rutherford Building is now close to the best that can usefully be achieved. Inevitably there are gaps, but I am hopeful that despite the resultant uncertainties, it will be possible to draw worthwhile conclusions. I am very grateful to Neil for his input, to John Churcher, who among other things, has put in a lot of time trawling through old records, to the University management team who have searched for and provided relevant documents, and to the many current and ex-members of staff and their families, who have contributed information to assist the inquiry.

The HPA team have now completed the bulk of the work for Tasks 2 and 3 of their schedule of activities, and I have discussed with them their draft interim report, which sets out their preliminary findings (Task 4). They are now preparing a draft final report, which they aim to share with me by August.

The work of the HSL is also proceeding to schedule. In particular, they have now completed the additional monitoring for mercury that they considered was necessary. Again, they aim to send a draft final report to me by August.

I plan to work on my own final report during August, informed by the HPA and HSL drafts.

Presentation of findings

The next step will be a first presentation of the findings at a meeting in the University on Wednesday 30 September. Like the meeting that we held in March, this will be open to all stakeholders with a legitimate interest. It will be an opportunity for people to hear what we have concluded and how we arrived at our conclusions, and to ask us questions and request clarifications.

Detailed arrangements for the meeting will emerge in due course, but in the mean time, please make a note of the date.

Subsequent activities

Following the meeting, we may make some clarifications to our draft reports in the light of discussion at the meeting. We will then circulate them to key individuals for comment, after which we will finalise them for publication towards the end of the year.

David Coggon
2 July 2009