

RAAC highlights the fact that our politicians do not de...

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The [Sky News](#) web site includes this observation:

During the post-war building boom of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, reinforced aerated autoclaved concrete (RAAC) was something of a wonder material.

Filled with bubbles of air, the material is about a quarter of the weight of normal reinforced concrete.

RAAC was seen as ideal for shaping into lighter, pre-formed concrete components used in the modern lego-like construction of many public buildings of the time.

As we now know, RAAC does not last.

As far as I know, no one ever claimed it would. Like all building materials, it was known to have a limited life. But such things are always ignored in the UK, where we assume, for reasons that are exceptionally hard to justify, that buildings will have an infinite life.

Except that they don't.

So now we have an RAAC crisis.

That is not the fault of RAAC.

Nor is it the fault of those who specified the use of it, because it appears to have safely delivered on the promise made.

Those who are are fault are the current politicians who decided to ignore the issues RAAC gave rise to, like the fact that schools and hospitals built with RAAC were always intended to have a limited life after which they would inevitably need replacement.

The replacement date for many RAAC buildings is now in the past. But replacement has not happened.

That is the fault of this government, which has at the heart of its thinking the idea that life is brutal and short, which thinking is entirely consistent with leaving RAAC in use until now.

What will happen as a result of this crisis? I predict three things.

First, the Tories will try to blame it on Labour.

Second, they will defer matters by announcing a wholly unnecessary enquiry.

Third, the buildings will stay in place.

This is the standard mechanism for Tory denial.

What actually needs to be done? We need a rapid programme of RAAC replacement, of course. But Labour will also claim there is no money for that.

Meanwhile, broken Britain will look just that bit more broken, and all because of our broken political system that does not require that either major political party face up to economic reality.