

SPECIFIC DEFECTS REPORT

Relating to Windows, Condensation and Black Mould

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXX

London

XXXXXXXXXXXX



FOR

Mrs X

Prepared by:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTION

We have been instructed by Mrs X to prepare an independent report on the windows and condensation/dampness problems that have been experienced since replacing the metal windows in xxxxxxxxx for new xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx range windows.

We have carried out a visual inspection (non evasive) of the property on xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx and we have had various correspondence and phone calls with Mrs X since that date.

The weather was a cold winter's day at the time of the inspection.

We are Independent Chartered Building Surveyors and professional members of:-

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS),

The Independent Surveyors and Valuers Association (ISVA),

And

Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE)

The work has been carried out as per our standard Terms and Conditions of Contract which have been emailed to you as part of the confirmation of our instructions. If you would like further clarification please do not hesitate to contact us.

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SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

We were advised that the property was originally built in the xxxxxxxxx. The building we believe is a concrete frame construction with solid brickwork and painted render at ground floor level. It is likely to have a flat roof (not seen). No details have been seen in relation to the construction of the property.

There is parking to the front of the property and a service road to the side adjacent to this apartment.

The front of the apartment is south facing, with the side being west facing and sits on the ground floor to the front and left hand side of the building. There is a basement area with water tanks underneath part of it and an apartment underneath the remainder to the south. The boilers are also located in the basement area not too far away.

The property has undergone external and internal refurbishment over a two year period ending recently.

SYNOPSIS

We were advised that since the xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx range windows were installed in xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx that there have been problems with condensation. The windows are thin double glazed xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx metal windows with a pre-finished polyester powder coating. The windows replaced older style xxxxxxxxx single glazed windows.

As we understand it, the tenants have lived in the property for the past three years with the older style windows, without any condensation or black mould issues.

The windows were part of a major refurbishment, which took approximately two years and included external and internal refurbishments ranging from updating the building, such as re-wiring and removal of asbestos in community areas, to improvements such as the new water tanks/booster tanks

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that have been situated in the basement underneath this property to give a better water pressure to the top floor flats.

The tenants have advised Mrs X that they have had problems continually with condensation/black mould since xxxx. The tenants have used dehumidifiers/air purifiers to help reduce problems with little benefit and Mrs X has carried out investigations and discussions with xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx and the management company (see Appendices for further details).

Mrs X advises she has known the building for xx years (late xxxx) and has managed/rented this apartment since xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

1.0) Overview

There are many factors that need to be considered when carrying out building work to an existing building.

1. The building envelope/construction
2. Heating
3. Ventilation
4. Appliances
5. Occupational patterns/lifestyles
6. Local climate
7. Landscape

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2.0) Whole Building Solutions

We believe where work such as this has been carried out the whole building solution needs to be considered by the design team / management company.

3.0) Building Performance

With regard to the building performance, generally when you are carrying out work to an older building you look to be more energy efficient, which we feel needs to be taken into consideration in this case by the design team / management company. We would expect things such as:

1. Insulation levels
2. Controlled ventilation
3. Effective heating
4. Environment

We expect these to be considered during this work.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summaries are not ideal as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. Here we give a summary of the problem and our various suggestions on how to solve it and all costs it relates to. As with many buildings it is a combination of issues that we explain in further detail within the main body of the report.

1.0) Windows

We believe by changing the windows the property has moved from older style single glazed metal xxxxxxxxxxxx, which in our experience tend to warp and deteriorate over the years and as such could be called leaky windows (we did not see these windows).



Condensation/water staining on the window sill

These have been replaced with xxxxxxxxxxxx range windows without trickle vents which are much more airtight and as such, perform very differently in the building.

The effect of how these new windows would affect the property as a whole, we believe should have been discussed and explained.

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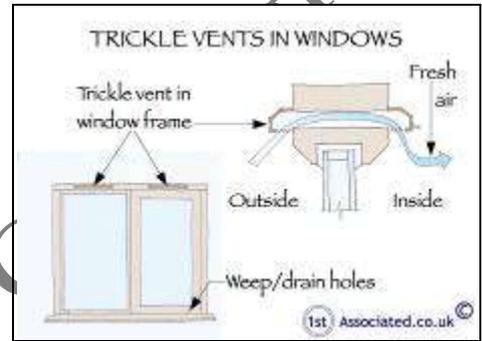


ACTION REQUIRED:

1. Confirmation whether xxxxxxxxxxxxxx considered the windows to be installed.
2. Confirmation whether xxxxxxxxxxxxxx recommended trickle vents or not in this situation.

Trickle Vents Defined

Trickle vents allow a trickle of air through, therefore stopping/reducing the likelihood of condensation occurring within the property.



Trickle vents

3. Advise whether implications of installing these windows were fully explained by the design team / management company.

We feel that the management company / designers / installers should have given guidance with regard to the replacement of windows, explaining the advantages and disadvantages that could be caused by the installation of airtight double glazed and relatively highly insulated windows compared with the previous windows.

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2.0) Wider Implications

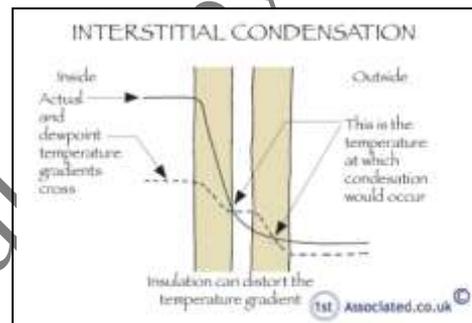
We would also recommend that the management company / designers / installers of the refurbishment as a whole advise how they have considered how their alterations of the property would perform.

For example:

You may now have a situation where interstitial condensation is occurring within the walls.

Interstitial condensation defined

This is where moisture is present within the structure of a building. The more moisture it contains, the bigger the vapour pressure and the smaller amount of moisture, the less vapour pressure.



Interstitial condensation

3.0) The risk with condensation and black mould

From what we understand, after the installation of the windows your tenants have had considerable condensation and black mould. Condensation and black mould can lead towards health problems for those living in the property and as such, action needs to be taken to eliminate the problems as soon as possible. We would initially recommend with regard to your apartment the following work:

3.1) Proposed work within your property

Installation of humidity controlled extract fans within the kitchen and the bathroom and any humidity generating areas such as areas where clothes are being dried.

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Your apartment has west facing areas which may have heat loss from shadows being cast on this building and also the direction they are positioned and lack of air movement, i.e. to the side of your property.

Again further investigations needs to be carried out, specifically relating to your property.

3.3.3) Limited investigations

We are aware that we have carried initial investigations, however we can see from what we have carried out that further investigations are required and a better understanding of the property as a whole is needed, unless the management company/designers already have the above information. If they do could they kindly forward a copy of any property survey they have to us for further comment.

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

The Summary Upon Reflection is a second summary so to speak, which is carried out when we are doing the second or third draft a few days after the initial survey, when we have had time to reflect upon our thoughts on the property. We would add the following in this instance:

We feel the following needs to be looked at and considered by the managing agent/management company/designers of the project:

1. What xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx consider to be best practice for this property and has it been carried out?

ACTION REQUIRED: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx to provide an independent report.

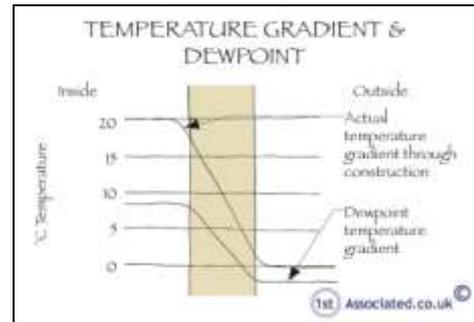
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2. A whole building approach to the environment considering such things as:

2.1) Interstitial condensation and surface condensation / dew point and cold bridging and humidity creating elements such as water tanks and heat creating elements such as boilers which are outside the control of the occupiers of the building.



Temperature gradient and dew point

2.2) Controlled ventilation (both within the apartment and throughout the building).

2.3) Efficiency, effectiveness and controllability of the heating system, both within the apartments and throughout the building and how can this be improved?

ACTION REQUIRED: Management company/designers to provide evidence and information with regard to how they have considered the environment and performance of the building as a whole and offer proposals with regard to how condensation and the environment can be improved within the individual apartments.

3. Independent working party

We would recommend that the owners/occupiers form an independent working party to give feedback on the problems and help work with the management/designers to an acceptable solution.

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If you would like any further advice on any of the issues discussed or indeed any that have not been discussed! Please do not hesitate to contact us on 0800 298 5424.

For and on behalf of
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxx

This Report is dated: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

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2.3 Roofs

The Surveyor has not inspected the roof.

2.4 Boundaries, Grounds and Outbuildings

The Surveyor has not inspected boundaries including the grounds and outbuildings unless specifically stated (none stated).

2.5 Services

No services inspected.

2.6 Areas not inspected

The Surveyor will have only inspected those areas identified within the report. His report will be based upon possible or probable defects based upon what he has seen together with his knowledge of that type of structure. If you feel that any further areas need inspection then please advise us immediately.

2.7 Specific Defects Report

As this is a report upon a Specific Defect we do not offer any comment or guidance upon reactive maintenance and/or planned or routine maintenance items.

2.8 Whilst we have used reasonable skill and care in preparing this report, it should be appreciated that the Chartered Surveyors cannot offer any guarantee that the property will be free from future defects or that existing defects will not suffer from further deterioration;

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3. Deleterious and Hazardous materials

Unless otherwise expressly stated in the Report, the Surveyor will assume that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used in the construction of the property. However the Surveyor will advise in the report if in his view there is a likelihood that high alumina cement (HAC) concrete has been used in the construction and that in such cases specific enquiries should be made or tests carried out by a specialist.

4. Contamination

The Surveyor will not comment upon the existence of contamination as this can only be established by appropriate specialists. Where, from his local knowledge or the inspection he considers that contamination might be a problem, he should advise as to the importance of obtaining a report from an appropriate specialist.

5. Consents, Approvals and Searches

5.1 The Surveyor will assume that the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions or covenants which apply to the structure or affect the reasonable enjoyment of the property.

5.2 The Surveyor will assume that all bye-laws, Building Regulations and other consents required have been obtained. In the case of new buildings and alterations and extensions, which require statutory consents or approval the Surveyor will not verify whether

5.3 such consents have been obtained. Any enquiries should be made by the Client or his legal advisers.

5.3 Drawings and specifications will not be inspected by the Surveyor. It is the Clients responsibility to forward any drawings and specifications that he has or knows the whereabouts of to us to include information in our report. If these are not forthcoming we will make our best assumptions based upon the information available.

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5.4 The Surveyor will assume that the property is unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a Local Search and replies to the usual enquiries or by a Statutory Notice and that neither the property nor its condition its use or intended use is or will be unlawful.

6. Fees and Expenses

The Client will pay the Surveyor the agreed fee for the Report and any expressly agreed disbursements in addition.

7. Restrictions on Disclosures

7.1 This report is for the sole use of the Client in connection with the property and is limited to the current brief. No responsibility is accepted by the Chartered Surveyors if used outside these terms.

7.2 Should any disputes arise they will be dealt with and settled under English law;

7.3 This report does not fall under the Third Parties Rights Act.

8. Safe Working Practices

The Surveyor will follow the guidance given in Surveying Safely issued by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

9. Disclaimer

This is not a structural survey or building survey. This report looks at one specific defect. We may mention other defects in passing but the focus of the report is on the specific defect.

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