

**REPORT FOLLOWING INSPECTION OF THE
EXTERIOR AND THE INTERNAL COMMON PARTS
OF
BUTLERS WHARF WEST
40 SHAD THAMES
LONDON
SE1 2YA**

DATE : FRIDAY 14TH APRIL 2000

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1 INSTRUCTIONS

We are instructed to inspect the exterior and the internal common parts of the building in order to advise Butlers Wharf West Limited of items to be included in the proposed specification for repair and redecoration.

We are requested to have regard to a list of specific issues dated 2nd December 1999.

2 CLIENT

Butlers Wharf West Limited

3 DATE OF INSPECTION

Friday 14th April 2000.

4 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph Nos [P1] - [P19] illustrate various matters referred to in this report.

A schedule of photographs is appended. [Appendix 1](#)

Hypertext links in the web based version of the report should link to the photographs referred to.

5 BRIEF HISTORY

The former warehouse building was converted into flats in the mid 1980s and completed in about 1987.

The first external repair and redecoration contract was carried out in 1990, when the works were specified and supervised by this firm. The contractor was Colordecor.

External repair and redecoration is normally expected to last a maximum of four to five years in such an exposed location.

Internal redecoration was last carried out in 1995 and would be expected to last for five to seven years. The contractor was Bulger Wicks.

Since the building was last decorated we have been aware of damp penetration problems affecting the interior of some of the flats below the principal cornice - Flats 15, 16, 17 have been investigated. The defects are believed to be due to defective mastic seals. Temporary remedial works have been carried out. Longer term repairs have had to await the full scaffolding of the building.

6 INSPECTION

The building was inspected by Richard Birchall and by Mark Allen (quantity surveyor) on Friday 14th April when access was gained to the majority of the flats. We were therefore able to inspect the more complicated and vulnerable details of the top floor penthouses, as well as taking a close view of repetitive defects in numerous other flats.

A summary of our findings is as follows:

6.1 Exterior

6.1.1 Decorations

The decorations are in surprisingly good condition after ten years, especially in such an exposed location by the river. There is very little flaking paint, however, hairline cracks in the stucco will now be allowing water penetration which will allow frost action to damage the stucco. [P4] Immediate redecoration is essential in order to protect against further deterioration.

6.1.2 Scaffolding

Redecoration of the building will require scaffolding to be erected to all elevations. A licence will be required for erection of the scaffolding on the Shad Thames road side. A licence will also be required from the Port of London Authority for erection of the scaffolding on the river side, as the walkway overhangs the river.

It is recommended that the scaffolding should be fitted with infra-red intruder alarm detectors and provided with limited illumination to the lower levels.

It is not proposed to enclose the scaffolding in either brick netting or plastic Monarflex sheeting because very little debris should arise from the works and in 1990 there were many complaints from tenants about the loss of view. At that time, the sheeting was required due to more extensive repairs as well as washing down of both elevations.

6.1.3 Mastic

The building, from the principal cornice upwards, is more or less held together with mastic seals. The glass reinforced concrete cornice and the structures of the penthouses all rely heavily on mastic seals for weatherproofing.

There are mastic joints in between the sections of the grc cornice, to numerous horizontal and vertical sections around the penthouse windows and cladding, around the doors to the balconies of the individual flats and other window / brickwork reveals.

Mastic seals have an expected life of approximately fifteen years, after which time they fail due to drying out of the oils from which they are formed, and also due to ultra violet degradation. Approximately 80% of the mastic seals have now failed. They have shrunk away from the surfaces leaving open joints which will permit water penetration. Other joints have hardened, are now brittle and about to fail. [P6] [P10] [P11] [P13] [P14] [P16] [P18]

From previous inspections of the building, particularly from the 1995 inspection using a hydraulic platform, we expected significant mastic joint replacements, however this inspection confirmed that all joints should be replaced.

On account of the extent of such mastic repairs required, we sought the specialist advice of the technical department of Dow Corning Limited and met with their Mr John Cook at the property in order to ensure that the correct specification of mastic is used when the joints are renewed.

Renewal of mastic seals is a specialist process. We are therefore seeking prices from two specialist nominated sub-contractors - County Mastics who have advised us previously and another competitive firm recommended by Dow Corning.

6.1.4

Balconies

The design of the balconies has long been a cause for concern. The balconies are of reinforced concrete slabs cantilevered out from the building and have bolt on balconies comprising of U-shaped channels to the base bolted onto the edge of the slabs and with tubular steel railings above. The balconies have falls to 2 No rainwater outlets, one in each outer corner where water is drained through the slab by via small bore steel pipes. [P19]

The system is not working because the outlets become blocked easily. [P17] Rainwater is being trapped against the edge of the steel channel which stands slightly proud and water is then finding its way behind the back edge of the steel channel into the concrete of construction and will be rusting the reinforcing steelwork which then expands and causes structural damage to the concrete. In the case of one balcony, there are two areas of damaged concrete to the soffit which will fall off if they are not repaired. [P2] [P3] Generally there is now significant rusting to the steel channel sections, but the rusting is superficial and should not yet have affected the strength of the steelwork.

We propose drilling out the existing weep hole pipes and replacing them with new larger bore pipes in stainless steel. All paintwork will need to be removed from the steel channels back to bare metal using a nail gun and the steels then treated against rust prior to preparation and redecoration. Steels to the tubular balcony railings can be prepared and redecorated in a normal manner. Where concrete has been damaged, small areas will need to be hacked out, the reinforcement treated and the concrete repaired.

6.1.5 Penthouse Balconies

The penthouse roof terraces / balconies are constructed with concrete paving slabs set on spacers (rather like plant pot feet) resting on the asphalt roofs. Rainwater should flow below the paving slabs and drain to the large rainwater outlets. Drainage does, however, rely on the space below the paving slabs being kept clear. Experience has shown that the gaps are frequently blocked due to soil from the planters and other debris. These paving slabs therefore require to be lifted and the roof surfaces cleaned at least annually. If they are not, then water can back up and overflow the roofs, as has happened in the past, causing significant damage to the flats below.

We understand that there is now a management procedure in place to organise the routine lifting of these paving slabs, cleaning of the balconies and re-setting of the slabs. Our specification will, nevertheless, allow for this work to ensure that it has been carried out satisfactorily.

6.1.6 Graffiti

There is a small amount of graffiti on the brickwork of the north-west corner adjacent to the walkway. The specification will allow for its removal.

6.1.7 Stone Repairs

Natural stonework, particularly to the stone window sills, shows some exfoliation, particularly where patch repairs have previously been carried out to a poor standard. [P9] [P12]

During our inspection, we counted the number of window sills requiring repair by refacing. The specification will allow for removal of defective stonework and refacing using an epoxy stone repair to be carried out by a specialist stonework restoration contractor.

6.1.8 Brickwork

The brickwork pointing generally is in satisfactory condition, missed areas having been attended to in 1990. The specification allows for

very small areas of patch pointing.

6.1.9 Stonework / Brickwork Cleaning

The stonework and brickwork were washed down and cleaned in 1990. At that time, years of deeply ingrained pollution were removed.

Washing down of the stonework and brickwork in year 2000 is desirable but not essential. It could easily be postponed until the next programmed repair / redecoration exercise in 2005, or even 2010.

6.1.10 Damp Penetration

The purpose of requesting access to the interiors of the flats was so as to have access onto the balconies on the Shad Thames and river sides and so as to give the lessees the opportunity to point out any other defects causing concern, whether damp penetration or cracking. We therefore did not carry out a comprehensive inspection of flats. We did however pay particular attention to flats known to have suffered from damp penetration in the past or known to be continuing to be suffering.

Flat 16. (Ogden). This flat has suffered significantly in the past. Temporary remedial repairs to the cornice, including taping of the joints and drilling holes to drain the hollow cornice blocks appears to have been successful. Slight blistering of the paint noted during the inspection is believed to be due to continuing drying out of a very thick wall which had become saturated and therefore acted as a reservoir of water. Comprehensive renewal of the mastic seals should prevent further water penetration for as long as those mastic seals are effective.

Flat 14 (Comninos). No further damp penetration problems have been noted since drilling of the soffit of the cornice to release trapped moisture and repairs following removal of an embedded pipe acting as a duct for water penetration.

Flats 15 and 17. (Berry). Both flats are situated immediately below the principal cornice. On the west side, adjacent to Maggie Blakes Cause, the fairfaced brickwork of the internal walls shows white salt staining (efflorescence) at high level, within both Flats 15 and 17. The staining is not present to the central area of Flat 17 where Butler's Wharf West is linked to the adjacent building. Although there is some slight efflorescence in the corner of Flat 15 (at the junction between Shad Thames and Maggie Blakes Cause) [P8] there has been no recurrence of the problem in the kitchen of Flat 17 since the holes were drilled in the soffit of the cornice and the joints of the cornice temporarily sealed.

Salt staining has continued in Flat 17 on the river side to the rear of Maggie Blake's Cause. [P7] It was not possible to gain access to that area using the hydraulic platform in order to drill weep holes or to seal the joints in the cornice. It is therefore not surprising that the defect continues. The extent of the defect is not known for certain because in order to keep tenants content the owners frequently arrange for the efflorescence to be brushed off. We have requested of Mrs Berry that no further removal of the efflorescence should take place so that we can arrange for further tests to be carried out by Hutton & Rostron and to monitor the effectiveness of the proposed works.

Detailed inspection of the area above (Flat 19) showed cracks in the stucco which will be allowing water penetration. Mastic seals have failed in the construction joints as well as in the cornice. We did not note any defects in the roof terrace structure of Flat 19 which is immediately the area of the flat which is not showing problems with salts staining. However, a closer inspection should be carried out when the paving slabs have been lifted prior to cleaning and checking of the asphalt below.

6.1.11 Stucco at high level.

There are minor open hairline cracks in the stucco as to be expected from normal weathering. [P1] [P3] As part of the routine preparation for decoration, these cracks will be cut out and filled.

6.1.12 Timber

We were pleased and surprised to note the absence of wet rot in window and door frames generally. The absence of rot is due to these having been constructed in hardwood. They have a woodstain finish.

We propose to renew the protective stain treatment using a Sadolin or similar stain to reproduce the existing colour.

6.1.13 Metal Windows

The metal windows and doors have factory applied finishes which are grimy but in good condition. We propose for them to be cleaned down.

To the commercial units on the river frontage and to areas on Shad Thames, the metal finish will need to be resprayed. As the location can be windy and thereby prevent spray painting, we will draw upon our experience of problems in the last contract and instruct the contractor to erect temporary booths for the purpose of spraying, thereby seeking to avoid delays, as well as spray paint being wind blown onto adjacent surfaces.

- 6.1.14 **Generally**
The survey generally highlights the repetition of generic defects ie. small items of disrepair multiplied by the number of similar elements.
- 6.1.15 **Balcony Floors and Soffits**
The majority of balcony floors and soffits are painted. We propose to specify the redecoration of all previously painted surfaces.
- 6.1.16 **Main Roof**
We did not gain access onto the main roof which is of a fragile sheet material. The specification will make provision for access by the surveyor using crawling boards and will allow a provisional sum for any minor remedial works found to be necessary, such as the replacement of washers to fixing screws or caps to fixing screws and general re-sealing of skylights.
- Our attention was drawn to one leaking roof light in Flat 18 (Mrs Gay). Our specification will make allowance for replacement of that skylight.
- 6.1.17 **Cladding Panels**
There are a few vertical timber cladding panels to the penthouses, situated inbetween penthouse windows. Those panels appear to be of thin plywood and have warped. [P10] We propose to replace them with a more stable thin cladding material.
- 6.1.18 **Miscellaneous**
We noted a number of covers to be missing from the extract vents. These could not easily be replaced by the lessees without scaffolding and we propose that the specification include for their renewal.
- The neoprene window seals of some of the windows have become detached. [P5] We have assumed that the windows are the repairing responsibility of the individual lessees and have not allowed for replacing such seals. If they are to be included in the specification they will need to be the subject of a separate inspection by the manufacturers of the original windows or a specialist window repair company. Access would again be needed to all flats both for the purpose of an initial inspection and during the course of the contract.

6.2 INTERIOR

The internal common parts were redecorated in 1995.

- 6.2.1 Staircase
The staircase generally suffers from a lack of routine domestic cleaning, especially the handrail and wall light fittings.

We recommend a thorough clean.

A refresher coat of paint on the walls is now desirable but not essential. Two coats of paint would be required. We would not propose to redecorate the joinery.

- 6.2.2 Landings
There are some vertical cracks at constructions joints. These were filled in 1995 and have re-opened. It would be possible to cut the plaster away on either side of the joint, to construct plaster beads and then to make good between the joints using a flexible sealer. Consequential redecoration of the entire landing lobby would be necessary.

Generally, apart from attention to the cracks referred to, redecoration is desirable but not essential. It could be postponed for a maximum of two years.

- 6.2.3 Main Entrance Lobby
The main entrance lobby suffers from heavier use than the individual floor landings. It is now considered to need redecoration.

The carpet in the main lobby also suffers from heavy use and is considered to need recarpeting. Our specification will allow for recarpeting using the same carpet provided it can be obtained.

7 SERVICES

Items 3 and 8 in the list of specific issues dated 2nd December 1999 refer to problems with the vent covers of the sewage pipes, a sluggish flow in the soil vent system on the west side of the building and states that *'all of the common plumbing needs to be checked for any problems'*.

No such problems were brought to our attention during our own inspection.

As stated in paragraph No 8 on page 5 of our letter to Butlers Wharf West Limited, dated 21st February 2000, *'as these are common services their inspection is beyond the scope of the services of a normal survey of the building. If there is a problem with the services, then a building services consultant will need to provide a report and recommendations. We recommend that Butlers Wharf West Limited*

instruct the firm of Roger Cuthbert Associates', Broadoak Lodge, Horsham Road, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8DJ. Tel : 01483 27794. Fax : 01483 272148.

In order to minimise the cost of such an inspection, we suggest that we send a pro-forma letter to all the occupants requesting them to notify us of any defects and problems they are experiencing with the plumbing. We would then summarise those problems and pass them to Roger Cuthbert and Associates who would make their own inspections. Any works required could then be made subject to a provisional sum in the specification.

8

LIMITATIONS

This survey is the product of a limited inspection for the purpose of preparing a specification for the routine repair and redecoration of the exterior and the internal common parts. It is not to be regarded as a building survey of the entire property and should not be relied upon by any purchaser or for loan purposes.

In accordance with normal practice we must state that we have not inspected the woodwork, cavities, foundations or other parts of the property which were covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

Although almost unknown in such a property we must state that we have not arranged for any investigation to be carried out to determine whether or not high alumina cement or calcium chloride additive or any other deleterious material has been used in the construction of the property and we are therefore unable to report that the property is free from risk in this respect.

Finally, this report is confidential to yourselves for the specific purpose to which it refers. It may be disclosed to other professional advisers assisting yourselves in respect of that purpose, but we cannot accept liability to any third party who may act upon it.



Richard Birchall BTech (Hons) FRICS ICIQB

25 April 2000

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9 Appendix 1 : Schedule of Photographs

- P1 Buddleia in stucco
- P2 Corrosion to balcony frame and concrete reinforcement
- P3 Cracking due to rusting of steel reinforcement
- P4 Cracking in stucco
- P5 Defective window seals
- P6 Typical dried up and failed mastic joint
- P7 Efflorescence below defective cornice
- P8 Efflorescence of salts on brickwork to interior
- P9 Exfoliating stonework to window cill
- P10 Failed mastic at cladding to asphalt junction
- P11 Failed mastic to mitre of coping
- P12 Frost damage to poor repair
- P13 Open joints to penthouse cladding
- P14 Open mastic joint in cornice
- P15 River elevation
- P16 Taped joints to cornice
- P17 Typical blocked rainwater outlet
- P18 Dried out mastic joint
- P19 Water trap to balcony edge