

Partners for Islington PFI- United House

Refurbishment and Maintenance of Local Authority Dwellings

[Note: Names and addresses have been removed to protect confidentiality of residents]

1.0 Introduction

Consul Chartered Surveyors were appointed by Homes for Islington to independently inspect and report on homes recently refurbished by United House.

Refurbishments typically include one or more of the following works:

- Electrical rewires.
- Replacement of heating systems.
- Replacement of kitchen units, work surfaces, sink units, fittings and vinyl flooring.
- Replacement of sanitary goods and fittings in bathrooms and WCs.
- Fitting/replacement of mechanical extractor fans.
- Repair, maintenance or replacement of roof coverings and installation of loft insulation.
- Repair, maintenance and redecoration of external walls, windows and doors.
- Partial internal redecoration.
- Any other works necessary to meet Government Decent Homes Standards.

The following properties were visited by Mr P M O'Brien MSc MRICS and Mr M Price BSc (hons) of Consul Chartered Surveyors:

Friday 3rd November 2004:

- Property 1, London N1 (Mauve area)
- Property 2, London N1 (Yellow area)
- Property 3, London N1 (Yellow area)
- Property 4, London N1 (Yellow area)
- Property 5, London N1 (Yellow area)

Tuesday 6th December 2004:

- Work in Progress in Pyrland Road and Ferntower Road (Yellow area)
- Property 6, London N1 (Mauve area) - No report
- Property 7, London N1 (Yellow area)
- Property 8, London N1 (Yellow area)
- Property 9, London N1 (Mauve area)
- Property 10, London N1 (Mauve area)

The following properties were visited by Mr M Price BSc (hons) and Mr M Krajewski of Consul Chartered Surveyors:

Friday 7th January 2005:

- Property 11, London N1 (Orange area)
- Property 12, London N1 (Orange area)
- Property 13, London N1 (Blue area)
- Property 14, London N1 (Blue area)
- Property 15, London N1 (Blue area)
- Property 16, London N1 (Blue area)
- Property 17, London N1 (Blue area)

Friday 14th January 2005

- Property 18, London N5 (Blue area)
- Property 19, London N5 (Yellow area)
- Property 20, London N1 (Yellow area)
- Property 21, London N1 (Yellow area)
- Property 22, London N1 (Yellow area)
- Property 23, London N1 (Blue area)
- Property 24, London N1 (Blue area)

Each property was visually inspected internally at each floor level, externally from front and rear and at roof level (where possible).

Each resident was asked to complete a satisfaction questionnaire relating to standard of work, cleanliness, timescales, etc.

2.0 Completed Units

2.1 Property 1

Hallway

- Consumer unit not adequately labelled.
- Central heating pipe-work initially rising in centre of wall and continuing across centre of ceiling into bedroom, re-routed after complaint from tenant and damage to walls and ceiling not made good.

Boiler room

- No ventilation in external wall.
- Cable to switch not chased into wall.

WC

- No earth bonding under sink.
- Pan not adequately fixed to floor.
- Rusting strews inside cistern.

Half landing

- Radiator fixed to timber battens rather than wall, protruding approximately 6 inches from wall.

Kitchen

- Some unit doors loose and not properly aligned.
- Sink unit not adequately secured to base unit.
- Excessive cold water pressure.
- Door not adequately fixed to frame, screw heads on door stops showing, gloss paint-work. Untidy around door and frame.
- Vinyl flooring lifting.

Lounge

- Electrical socket not level, surrounding plaster not properly made good.
- Damage to window shutters.

Outside

- Window frames, sills and external masonry not decorated.
- Extractor fan grills missing.
- Brickwork not re-pointed.
- Minor repairs to concrete and flat roof not undertaken.
- Ventilation grill removed from boiler room and brickwork not made good.

Tenant's comments

- TLO's mobile phone turned off at 6.00 pm.
- Workmen damaged plant in garden and cut hosepipe.
- Food was removed from fridge and not replaced at end of day.
- Not consulted about position of radiators.
- United house have not returned the keys.
- Compensation of £800 is insufficient to make good damage to walls and ceilings as well as redecorating and re-carpeting.
- ID not worn by workers.
- Electricity was used by workers.
- Very poor communication, poor standard of finish, workers were very untidy and disrespectful to property.

Duration of works

- Approximately 4 months.

Tenant's overall rating

- 1/10.

2.2 **Property 4** (re-wire and replacement boiler only)

Lounge

- Ceiling light not working.

WC

- Two shades of tiles used.

Kitchen

- No earth bonding on boiler.

Dining room

- Damage to coving caused by electrician not made good.

Front bedroom

- Water damage to ceiling.

Loft space

- Partially insulated.

Rear

- Party wall not decorated.

Tenant's comments

- Workers dropped paint on front steps and refused to clean away – attempted to paint asphalt with black gloss.
- Workers ruined carpet.
- Worker drilled through waste pipe.
- Lounge radiator leaks – laminate floor replaced with carpet
- Pointing was done after external paintwork – damaging paint finish
- Problems with boiler initially.
- Roof leaking through bedroom ceiling
- Communication, security, cleanliness and standard of finish extremely poor.
- No id worn and electricity used by workers.

Duration of works

- 3 months.

Tenant's overall rating

- 0/10.

2.3 Property 5 (re-wire and replacement boiler only)

Kitchen

- Granite work surfaces and splash-back smashed during re-wire.
- Boiler flue leaks.

Lounge

- Damage to ceiling and coving caused during re-wire.

Bedroom

- Ceiling light not working.

Tenant's Comments

- Windows were smashed during re-pointing works.
- Supervisor damaged banister.
- Tenant's carpets and furniture not protected when chasing walls during re-wire causing damage to television, settees and carpets.
- TV cabinet and bookshelf damaged by workers.
- Was not aware of rest flat during works.
- Consumer unit very sensitive, trips out an average of twice per week.
- Cleanliness, security and standard of finish very poor.
- Electricity used regularly by workers.
- Sky aerial cut through and left disconnected.
- No fan over run.

Duration of Project

- 4 months.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 4/10.

2.4 Property 2

Kitchen

- Fitted dishwasher protruding approximately 3 inches from base units.
- No cooker chain fitted.
- Gaps of approximately ½ inch between cooker hood and wall units.

Bathroom

- First row of tiles above bath loose.

Bedroom

- Ceiling light not working.

Rear

- Gloss paint flaking.

Tenant's Comments

- Stereo system damaged during re-wire.
- Received no warning of level of mess and disruption.
- Did not get choice of kitchen units.
- Dust sheets were not usually used.
- Communication, time-keeping, security, cleanliness and the complaints procedure were very poor.
- Workers did not wear ID and used electricity regularly.

Duration of Works

- 4 months.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 3/10.

2.5 Property 3

Kitchen

- Sockets not at standard height above work surface.
- Sink unit not securely fixed to base unit, water ponds on drainer and drips onto washing machine below.
- Evidence of damp penetration under window.

Bathroom

- Condensation and mould growth due to ineffective extractor fan – no over run
- WC pan not securely fixed to floor.
- Hole in bath.

WC

- Pull cord for extractor fan at ceiling height out of reach.

Roof

- Inadequate minor patch repairs undertaken although roof covering at end of life.
- Scaffold couplings left on roof.

Rear

- Gloss paint flaking away from timber window and door frames.
- Boiler flue outlet removed and void filled with mortar rather than facing brickwork.
- Scaffold eye bolt left in brickwork

Tenant's Comments

- Workers damaged exercise bike.
- The boiler was fitted twice because originally too high – still cannot reach controls (no separate boiler controls)
- Communication, cleanliness, security, finish and complaints procedure very poor.
- Workers did not use dust sheets or wear ID and used electricity regularly.
- Damage inside loft not made good

Duration of Work

- 3½ months.

Tenant's Overall Rating.

- 0/10.

2.6 Property 7

Kitchen

- Sink unit not securely fixed to base unit.

Hallway

- Water damage to ceiling from leaking waste pipe in bathroom.
- Entrance door and architrave not properly fitted or painted.
- Damp to walls not properly remedied.
- Settlement crack in wall not properly filled.

Bedroom

- Cracked window not replaced.

Rear

- Boiler flue dripping onto external wall.

Front

- Asphalt blown on steps, not repaired or replaced.

Tenant's Comments

- Problem initially with washing machine waste returning into sink.

Duration of Works

- 3 months.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 8/10.

2.7 Property 8

Kitchen

- Electrical sockets not at standard height.
- Boxing around boiler pipe-work not securely fixed.
- Unit doors not level.
- Gloss paint covering too thin.

Landing

- Radiator rusting, leaking and paint splattered
- Window sashes loose.
- Carpet ripped during re-wire.
- Floor board nails protruding.
- Ceiling sagging.

Bathroom

- Untidy waste pipe-work from sink.
- Sink taps loose.
- Replacement obscure glazing panel in window not matching existing.

Bedroom (front)

- Workers painted around bedroom furniture rather than moving it.

Bedroom (rear)

- Floor boards and carpet loose.
- Ventilation grill in chimney missing.
- Ceiling sagging.

Lounge

- Pipe-work boxing very untidy.
- Dimmer switch not replaced.
- Pendant light not properly fixed, wires exposed.

Tenant's Comments

- Workers damaged vacuum and computer desk.
- Allegedly stole dado rail and spirit level.
- Faulty socket on landing trips out consumer board if used.
- Very unhappy about standard of work, communication and cleanliness.
- Dust sheets and ID were not used.
- Workers regularly used electricity, vacuum and tea towels.
- External works not yet commenced due to delayed leaseholder consultation.

Duration of Works

- 4 months.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 0/10.

2.8 Property 9

Bedrooms

- Damage to ceiling during re-wire not properly made good.

Tenant's Comments

- Contractor initially refused to replace doors on existing inset wall unit in kitchen.
- Kitchen wall units initially installed far too high and out of tenant's reach.
- Electricians very rude to tenant, aggressive language etc.
- Property was without heating or hot water for 3 weeks.
- Friends of workers were regularly in property.
- Workers sleeping on the settee.
- Workers broke burglar alarm.
- Workers used tenant's electricity for other jobs, decorator used tenant's flat to paste wallpaper for another job.
- Generally very unhappy about standard of work and professionalism of workers and management.
- Communication, time-keeping and security were all very poor.

Duration of Works

- 3 months.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 0/10.

2.9 Property 10

Kitchen

- Damp penetration as a result of not making good external brickwork when removing boiler flue.

Bathroom

- Bath and sink unit not at standard height. Loose taps.

Tenant's Comments

- Kitchen doors damaged twice during installation.
- Leaking radiator in bedroom damaged carpet.
- Bathroom window installed after tiling causing damage to bath and tiles.
- Carpet cut and damaged during installation of pipe-work.
- Not happy with position of boiler and electrical sockets.
- Video recorder damaged.
- Refused to pay compensation until property signed off by tenant.
- Property signed off without tenant's authority.
- Workers repeatedly failed to keep appointments.
- Without electricity for 4 days.
- Workers caused leak and did not inform tenant.
- Workers smashed two mugs and hid them from the tenant.
- Was not informed about rest flat.
- Tenant's electricity was regularly used.
- Dust sheets were not used.
- Storage boxes were not provided until tenant requested.

Duration of Works

- 11 weeks.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 3/10.

2.10 Property 11

- Slight damage to vinyl floor tiles in hallway.
- No wash hand basin provided in WC.
- Roof covering past life-span

Tenant's Comments

- Stereo speakers damaged by workers
- Very happy with standard of workmanship, time-keeping, courtesy etc.

Duration of Works

- Approximately 6 weeks.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 9/10

2.11 Property 12

- No visible earth bonding under kitchen sink.
- Roof structure requires attention, (sagging visible)

Tenant's Comments

- Very happy with standard of workmanship, time-keeping, courtesy etc.

Duration of Works

- Approximately 5 weeks.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 10/10

2.12 Property 13

Internally

- Patch plaster-work around electrical fittings generally untidy.
- Earth bonding not visible in bathroom.
- Radiator in bathroom leaking.
- Kitchen unit doors not properly aligned.
- Untidy central heating pipe-work throughout.

Tenant's Comments

- Decanted during works- no complaints.

Duration of Works

- Approximately 6 weeks.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 9/10

2.13 Property 14

Internally

- Poor electrical installation, fittings loose and not level.
- No visible earth bonding in kitchen.
- Kitchen installation very poor, doors not aligned, untidy mastic, tiling etc.
- Sash windows need easing, over-painting on glazing.
- Very poor internal decoration, over-painting on skirting and fittings.

Externally

- Re-pointing untidy and inadequate.
- Over-painting on brickwork around windows and doors.
- Render very untidy from patch repairs etc, blowing in places.

Tenant's Comments

- Workers damaged bathroom cabinet, table and desk.
- Without power for 4 days during works.

Duration of Works

- Approximately 16 weeks.

Tenant's overall Rating

- 5/10

2.14 Property 15

Internally

- Front door varnished when shut and does not open fully.
- Bathroom radiator positioned too close to toilet.
- Extractor fan not working and pull cord fitted out of reach.
- Electric sockets fitted directly above central heating pipes; risk of cables overheating.
- Electric fire not replaced.
- Damp penetration near ceiling in storage cupboard from leaking roof.
- Wiring for boiler loosely plastered into wall.

Externally

- Replacement section of soil pipe not matching existing.
- Roof covering at end of life, lead flashings require attention, roof repairs inadequate.
- Render and exterior paint in poor condition, patch repairs and damage visible.

Tenant's Comments

- Debris on roof and gutters not removed.
- Insufficient choice of colours etc.
- Language barrier with workers.
- Dust sheets and ID were not used.
- Workers used electricity.
- Mains services were not reconnected every day.
- Workers damaged front of cooker.

Duration of Works

- 4 months.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 2/10.

2.15 Property 16

- Vinyl flooring not replaced in entrance hall
- Skirting board near fridge missing
- Kitchen unit doors loose and misaligned
- Sash windows very stiff and not properly decorated
- No visible earth bonding in kitchen
- Panels not fitted to back of all kitchen units
- Damage from re-wire in communal hallway not made good since July 04; awaiting Leaseholder consultation
- Chandeliers smashed during works

Tenant's Comments

- Wrong colour vinyl flooring installed
- Contractors have used tenants electricity without permission
- Used property as a 'canteen'
- Property not snagged or officially handed over
- Management rated very poor
- Dust sheets and ID not used
- Property not always secure.

Duration of Works

- Approximately 12 weeks.

Tenant's overall rating

- 7/10

2.16 Property 17

Internally

- Substantial damage to walls, ceilings, floors and skirting boards from re-wire not properly made good.
- Cords for sash windows need replacing.
- Wiring around boiler not properly fixed.
- Shower unit not fitted securely to wall.
- Shower head clip not fitted.
- Lower courses of wall tiles not level.
- Extractor fan cord in bathroom out of reach.
- Cold water pipe leaking under kitchen sink, no access to drain-down outlet.
- Bathroom radiator valve leaking.

Tenant's Comments

- Very poor communication, time-keeping and standard of finish, workers were very untidy and disrespectful to property.
- Blinds and bed broken by workers.
- Not made aware of compensation to re-decorate.
- Generally very upset and angry.

Duration of Works

- Approximately 3 months to date, not yet complete.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 0/10.

2.17 Property 18

Internally

- Penetrating damp near window sill and ceiling in bedroom.
- Damage to walls, floor boards and skirting boards not made good.
- Poor installation of electrical fittings.
- Leaking radiator in bathroom.
- Vinyl flooring lifting, untidy mastic and threshold strips.
- No earth bonding in kitchen.
- Boiler wiring not chased into wall.
- No child safety lock on low-level bathroom window.
- Cooker not wired into spur.
- Architrave missing from entrance door.
- Misaligned kitchen doors.
- Un-even kitchen floor.

Communal Areas

- Damage to cupboard from re-wire and removal of water tank, pipes not removed.

Tenant's Comments

- On-going problems with boiler; leaks, low pressure, timer re-setting.

Duration of Works

- 6 Weeks

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 1/10

2.18 Property 19

Internally

- Bath panel not sealed.
- Pendant light screw fittings broken.
- Several electrical sockets and heating thermostat loose.
- Earth bonding in kitchen not fastened to pipes or labelled.
- Kitchen sink drainer dented.
- Threshold strip loose.
- Windows generally require easing.

Externally

- Gas pipe not labelled or properly fastened to wall.
- Untidy gloss paint-work.

Tenant's Comments

- Workers damaged flooring and fridge.
- Not given an option to decant although asthmatic.
- No warning of scaffolding.

Duration of Works

- 1 Month

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 5/10

2.19 Property 20

Internally

- Very poor installation of central heating system; pipes not boxed, leaking connections etc.
- Electrical installation untidy; some wiring not chased etc.
- Kitchen sink not properly fixed, silicone missing around units.
- Threshold strip in kitchen not fitted properly.
- Skirting board repair very untidy, section missing in lounge.
- Leaking WC cistern.
- Bath panel not fixed.
- Replacement glazing panel in bathroom not matching existing.

Tenant's Comments

- Very unhappy with standard of workmanship, particularly replacement of central heating system.

Duration of Works

- 3 Months

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 5/10

2.20 Property 21

Internally

- Damage to skirting boards and floor boards not made good.
- Threshold strip missing in bathroom.
- Extractor fan pull cord out of reach.
- Replacement row of tiles in bathroom not matching existing.

Tenant's Comments

- Unhappy with standard of finish and damage to flooring etc.
- Washing machine damaged during works.

Duration of Works

- 6 Months

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 5/10

2.21 Property 22

Internally

- Radiator in bathroom damaged and corroding.
- Pipe-work and boxing generally untidy, exposed pipes rising in centre of wall
- Electrical sockets not properly aligned.
- Replacement floor board incorrect width and thickness, not properly fixed.
- Cable to boiler not chased.
- Existing electrical socket not removed.
- Evidence of damp in lounge.

Externally

- Builders' debris dumped in garden.
- Brick-work not made good from removal of balanced flue.

Tenant's Comments

- Unhappy that decorators only painted one side of bathroom and WC doors.
- Back of kitchen units damaged during installation.
- Pleased with kitchen layout and tiling.

Duration of Works

- 4 Months

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 7/10

2.22 Property 23

Internally

- Untidy plaster around light fittings.
- Washing machine not plumbed correctly, waste returning into machine.

Externally

- No extractor fan grill on first floor.
- Ventilation bricks blocked and painted.
- Gloss over-painted around windows.

Tenant's Comments

- Happy with finished project but unhappy with cleanliness and time-scales.

Duration of Works

- 3 Months

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 7/10

2.23 Property 24

Internally

- Floor board nails protruding through vinyl flooring in kitchen.
- Property re-plastered after damp work, very untidy: trowel marks, cracking at level of existing plaster.
- Untidy electrical sockets and switches.
- Thermostatic radiator valves not fitted.
- Sash windows require easing and adjusting.
- Tiling and mastic untidy in bathroom.
- Threshold strips missing.
- WC pan not properly fixed to floor.
- Ceiling leaking near back door.

Externally

- Brick-work not made good from removal of balanced flue.

Tenant's Comments

- Cooker and fridge damaged during work.
- Builders' debris dumped in garden.
- Furniture damaged by plaster, dust and paint.

Duration of Works

- 4 Months.

Tenant's Overall Rating

- 5/10.

3.0 Works in Progress Inspections

Work in progress was inspected between 9.30 am and 12.00 pm on Tuesday 7th December 2004; several units undergoing internal and external refurbishment/maintenance in Pyrland Road and Ferntower Road were inspected.

There were several concerns highlighted during this visit:

3.1 Programme of Works

Standing scaffold was erected to isolated properties along the streets but without evidence of any body working to external elevations (painters were carrying out internal redecoration works).

There did not appear to be any structured co-ordination of trades - the units visited were decorated externally (gloss paint to windows, doors etc.) before any re-pointing works to brickwork (which was partly finished) allowing mortar droppings to fall on finished work.

3.2 Protection of Tenant's Property

Although dust sheets were seen to be used, they were not laid continuously in all areas and did not appear to provide adequate protection for carpets, furniture etc.

Badly laid dust sheets also raised obvious Health and Safety concerns.

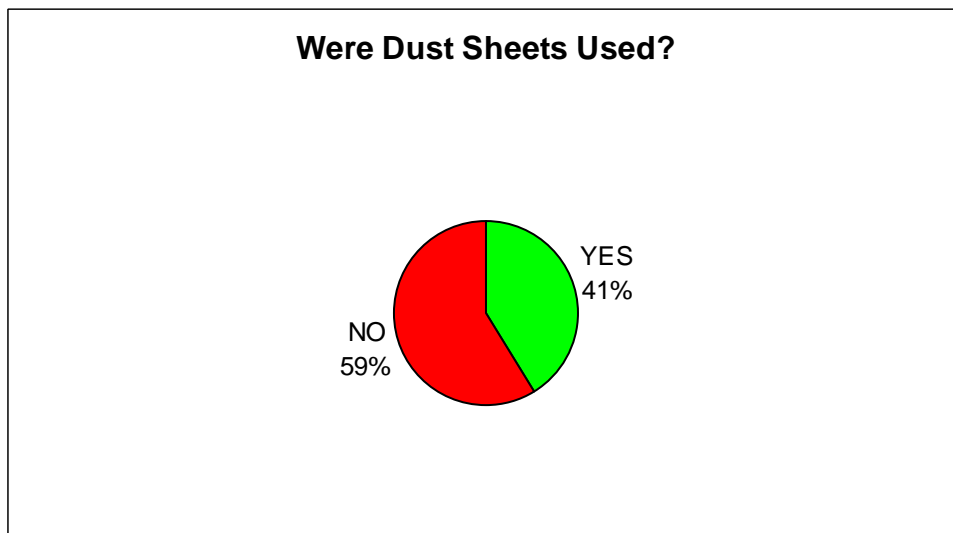
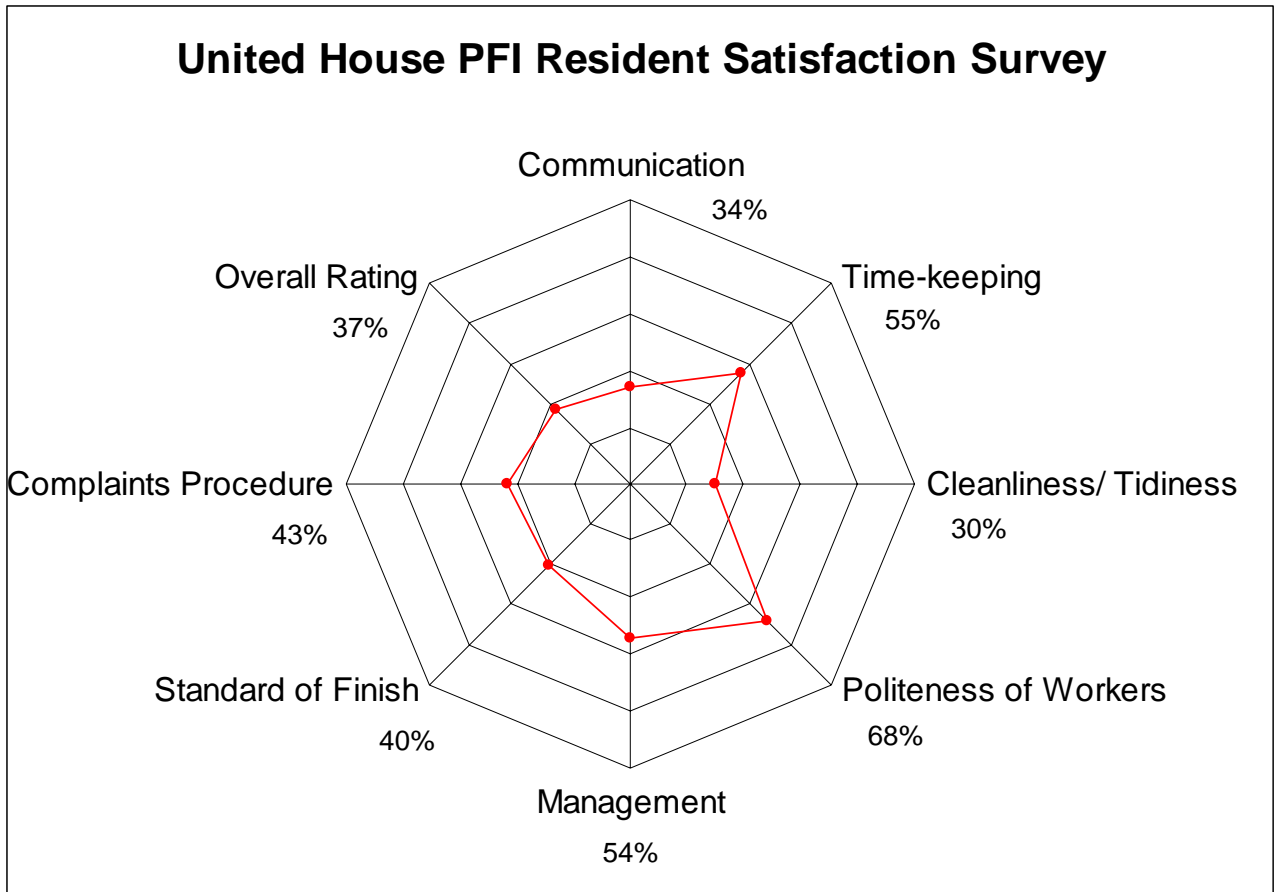
3.3 External Maintenance and Repairs

It was clear that, in many cases, inadequate 'patch repairs' were undertaken rather than long-term solutions. A particular concern on properties of this age.

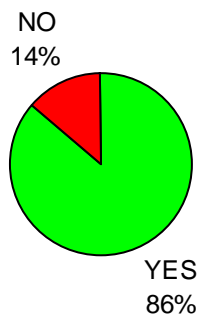
Having spoken to the foreman it was noted that original slate roof coverings (over 100 years of age and beyond their life-span are not due to be replaced).

Pointing was seen to be undertaken in patches rather than the entire building, old mortar not properly raked out before re-pointing. (Measured depth 10mm)

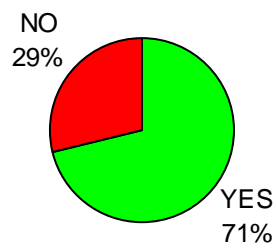
3.0 Graphs



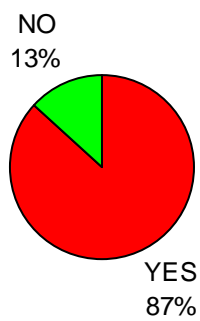
Were Storage Boxes Provided?



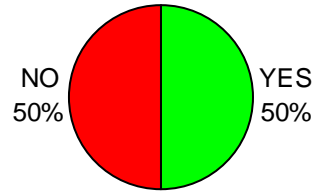
Were Mains Services Reconnected Daily?



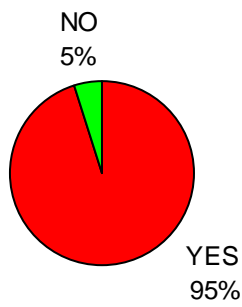
Did United House Workers Cause any Damage?



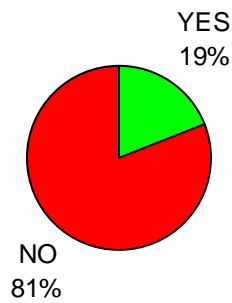
Was Property Always Secure?



Did United House Workers Use Your Electricity?



Did United House Workers Wear ID?



5.0 Conclusions

We made a number of requests to United House for a list of property addresses to allow us to carry out site visits; unfortunately it took nearly 2 weeks before the addresses were supplied and so meanwhile we asked for a set of addresses from Homes for Islington to allow us to commence surveys.

On each visit we carried out the site inspection first and then the resident was asked to complete our questionnaire.

Details of all properties visited can be seen earlier in the report but our findings can be briefly summarised as follows:

5.1 Communication

Residents were all unclear as to the full scope of works envisaged to be carried out, its duration, the volume of dust generated by the works and the level of protection which would be provided and finally what to expect in terms of quality of the finished product.

Although a residents information pack was issued, all residents stated that this bore no resemblance to the approach the contractor took when actually carrying out the works on site.

It was not easy to communicate with construction workers on site due to the foreign languages of the workers and when contact was required with the contractor's Tenant Liaison Officers, their phones were often switched off.

Residents remain uncertain as to how long the work should take, what sequence of operations they should expect and what they should do in the event of problems on site.

As a last resort, residents have written letters to the local newspapers complaining about the quality of the works and the performance of the contractor. All stated to us that if they had realised what they would have to go through during the course of work inside their homes, they would never have allowed the contractor to commence work.

5.2 Scope of Works

It is our understanding that all properties in the agreement will be brought up to decent homes standards, that there is an interim standard (covering internal works) and a full standard (covering external works) for completion of work to each property. Once these fitness standards have been achieved the contractor will then maintain these properties undertaking regular cyclical maintenance to maintain this fitness standard throughout the duration of the PFI agreement.

In addition to the overall requirement to meet 'decent homes standard' we would also like from the client your interpretation of what age you would reasonably expect to replace life expired components. We do not envisage this project being undertaken as responsive repairs programme, where only the minimum of work is undertaken to cure immediate and obvious defects and when other defects become apparent to the tenant, a repairs contractor is contacted to return to site and carry out a minor localised repair. It is our impression that once scaffold is erected and access is available to all parts of the building, all life expired components are replaced on a 'like for like' basis so as to avoid the situation where there is an ongoing series of day to day repairs on an element which sensibly should have been replaced when the scaffold was first erected.

Naturally it was a surprise to us to find examples of original slate roofs (in excess of 100 years old) and be told by the site foreman that they have been approved by the contractor's management and the roofing subcontractor as being in good condition, only requiring minor repairs when they are clearly beyond their usable life.

Elsewhere we saw fibre cement slates which have become bleached and brittle with age and are showing evidence of cracking and have been left in place. Hip tiles have been over pointed along the bed joint (no lifting and re-bedding) with existing butt joints between tiles untouched. Splits are evident in flat roof coverings and patch repairs to render are shrinking back from existing cut edges of render. Some flash band repairs remain in place and the over coating of zinc roof coverings with bitumastic paint has virtually worn away with age.

Re-pointing of brickwork to parapets is not continuous (usually restricted to the immediate proximity of eaves) and is patchwork to brick elevations.

5.3 Method of Working

The Tenants Information Pack includes a model programme of works for refurbishment of a typical property internally. It indicates a practical division between trades to avoid overlapping of activities, allowing sufficient time to complete all works to a good standard, whilst minimising disruption to the resident and maintaining continuity of services.

In reality the programme is only a model which is not revised to reflect the actual scope of works on site following the survey by the contractor. In our visits no residents had been given a programme based on the actual works to their home and when we questioned the site foreman he only had a list of expected start and finish dates without the dates for appearance of different trades within the properties.

This approach to the work manifests itself with different trades arriving for work when they are available rather than working to the logical sequence of an agreed programme. As a consequence there is damage to finished work which has been undertaken earlier than would be programmed. There is also no continuity of working within each property as each trade activity appears to be undertaken in isolation from foregoing or following on activities. Consequently there is constant uncertainty among residents as to whether the works are complete and when or whether the contractor will return.

The programme allowance within the contract is 30 days per property. This time period is of sufficient longevity to easily accommodate the scope of works envisaged by the contract. It builds in sufficient float time to cater for any unexpected delays by subcontractors and also alleviates the risk of false expectations by residents as to how quickly the works can be completed. It is likely that tighter control of programming and subcontractors could reduce the programme duration within the properties. In the event, all properties which we visited took considerably longer than the tenant pack programmed allowance or the time period which the resident was given.

Attempts to minimise dust damage where minimal, in the properties currently on site there were dust sheets laid up stairs, they were not taped down and were not continuous and considerable damage was reported to us due to lack of care on site.

Damage was being done because trades were not commencing works in the correct sequence. Typically for this type of work plumbers will enter before electricians to allow them to roll back carpets and lift floor boards so as to insert central heating

pipe-work. In a number of properties which we visited the electricians had arrived first and cut holes across the ceilings to avoid lifting carpets above – this was then explained to the residents that by cutting holes in the ceiling below they would prevent damage to her carpets above. They were then followed by the plumbers who rolled back the carpets (damaging them in the process) and lifting floor boards. If the contractor had carried out the works in the correct sequence the extent of damage and dust caused would have been reduced.

In conversion properties where leaseholders are present only internal works to tenanted flats have been undertaken (although in some cases where rotten windows are present to tenanted flats, they have been replaced but not decorated externally).

We assume that notices have not been served on leaseholders thus requiring the contractor to return to site and carry out redecoration to common parts and external elevations. We cannot understand the logic of carrying out the works in one visit and not commencing any works on properties where leaseholders are present until the required notices have been served and noticed period expired.

5.4 Quality of Finished Product

Typically with the kitchen installation drawer fronts and doors were misaligned, sink tops were cut into worktops without sealing cut edges and retaining clips on sinks were often loose or missing allowing the sink top to be pushed up from below. The silicon pointing was often poor and plug fronts were at differing heights.

There were many instances of electrical fittings such as thermostat controls and sockets being very loose.

We could find no consistency of quality design in the kitchen layouts and in places isolated wall units had been fitted above seating areas or positioned randomly along different wall areas of the kitchen.

Some residents complained that their colour choices were not being met.

In the bathrooms we found plated ferrous screws (in lieu of brass) used to fix sanitary ware. This was rusting or had not been screwed down correctly and in some locations

WC pans were loose. In one bathroom the bath was packed up far higher than manufacturer's recommendations.

Silicon pointing was not tooled to recommended manufacturers dimensions and in one isolated WC we found the room had been tiled full height in white tiles of two dissimilar tones.

Consistently extract fans had no overrun when switched on and pull-cords located out of reach, raising concerns about future condensation problems

There seemed to be no consistency between heights of boilers and whether separate boiler controls should be fitted and often faced brickwork is either not made good where boiler flues are removed or holes are rendered over and brick joints cut into the wet render with a pointing trowel.

In many cases electrical cables connected to boilers were not chased into plaster-work and were in contact with hot pipes, giving rise to obvious safety concerns. In addition to this, pipe-work was often not adequately fixed in place and there was no effort to conceal pipes.

A large proportion of tenants complained that workers caused excessive damage to floor boards, walls, ceilings, skirting boards etc. as well as personal items and furniture, much of the redecoration compensation was used to make good this damage. We found that much of the 'making good' by contractors was not adequate.

External paint work was seen to be flaking in places and where rooms have been decorated (outside bathroom and kitchen areas) only emulsion paintwork has been undertaken.

5.5 Consul's Second Phase of Inspections

Since meeting in December, it was decided that we should continue to inspect occupied homes to ensure the report is fully representative of all zones and periods of works.

As detailed in the report, we have now visited a total 23 occupied properties in addition to several units where work was in progress.

We were pleased to see that the two homes inspected in the Orange area (near New North Road) were finished to a very high standard and both tenants were extremely pleased with all aspects of the project. Unfortunately we were unable to arrange further inspections in this area but both tenants suggested that most people in these roads were pleased with the works.

We were also pleased to see that the combined results of the questionnaires reflects a slightly better opinion overall than our initial report suggested.

This said, with only the exception of the Orange area, our findings in the second phase of inspections re-enforce our initial conclusions and recommendations.

6.0 Recommendations

In all cases our findings were frankly disappointing, given the size, experience and reputation of the contractor and although the survey was small we are concerned

should it be representative of the project as a whole. We therefore believe it is necessary for us to undertake further site visits to check if there is any improvement in quality and methods of working so as to be able reassure our client and the residents.

If further survey results are consistent with our current findings you may wish to adopt some or all of the following:

- Obtain an updated programme from the contractor covering works to all remaining properties in the programme indicating surveys and weekly handovers.
- List those properties where works have been undertaken but where there is still a return to site to undertake leaseholder work.
- Confirm if there are any activities or services which should have been undertaken or provided by the contractor and have not yet been undertaken and obtain from the contractor their proposals as to how this activity or service should be provided in accordance with the PFI agreement and the revised programme above.
- Calculate the financial implications of consistent delays in completions on site.
- Review with the contractor, what is expected in terms of scope of works on these properties and compare this to works provided.
- Implement third party involvement (on an agreed proportion) of surveys and handovers.
- Start gathering key performance indicator data (at a minimum) on programme, quality of works and residents feedback to check for improvement in performance of the contractor.
- Assess the value of compensation due to residents as a consequence of delays and site damage.
- Ensure that you have the original copies of all gas, electrical and fire alarm commissioning certificates together with any asbestos reports.
- Review the foregoing matters and the extent of any outstanding defects or incomplete works and consider halting further opening up of properties until all works are completed on current properties and all defects made good.