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Date: 08 March 2024

By email only: [amber@crowncrownpropertymanagement.co.uk](mailto:amber@crowncrownpropertymanagement.co.uk)

Dear Amber

### **FLAT 23 GREAT CLIFF, MARINE PARADE, DAWLISH, DEVON EX7 9EX**

Further to your recent instructions, we inspected the main bedroom of Flat 23 Great Cliff on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 in order to provide advice on the potential causes of mould growth, which is appearing on the internal face of the rear elevation wall.

We also returned to the flat on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 in order to review the areas using a thermal imaging camera.

On both days of the inspection, the weather externally was dry but overcast.

The lessee of the flat was present during our inspection who pointed out the area of concern.

Flat 23 is located on the top floor of Great Cliff, which is a purpose-built block of self-contained flats located adjacent to the sea.

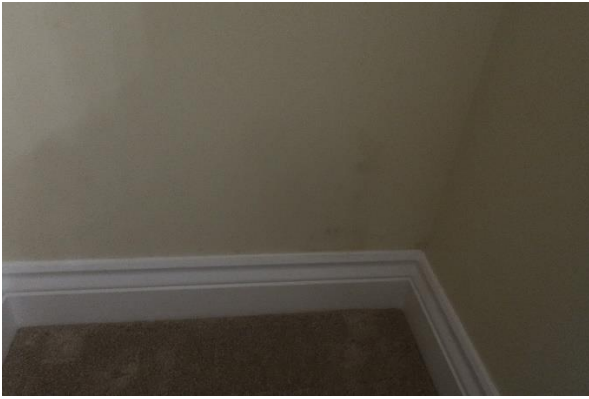
The bedroom in which the problem exists is positioned on the rear elevation of the property, being on a north-west facing elevation.

It is believed that the building is of a traditional construction, with masonry cavity external walls, although the internal face of the external walls within the bedroom of Flat 23 have been dry lined with a plasterboard wall covering.

The problem relates to an alcove on the rear elevation wall, and also to the lower wall levels within a fitted wardrobe, which is positioned adjacent.

In these areas, black spot mould is starting to appear at the lower levels of the wall.

We did test the areas of mould using an electronic damp meter during our inspection, and no high damp meter readings were noted.



*Rear wall alcove*



*Rear wall of fitted wardrobe*

During the period between our initial and our subsequent inspection of the wall, the lessee had cleaned down and painted the wall with what we understand to be a mould-shield paint, and at the time of our reinspection in March, the mould had not reappeared. Mould-shield paint products do however typically only hold back the reoccurrence of mould growth for a certain period.

On inspecting areas of the property around the affected areas, the parts of the wall that were affected meet the back wall of a services cupboard from the communal area, which is an unconditioned area, having a concrete block wall between. There does appear to be a void behind the back wall of the services cupboard, as the wall thickness from calculation is over 500mm.



*Back of services cupboard*

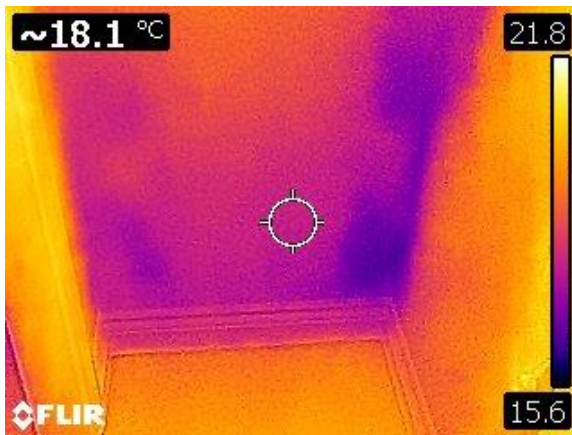


*Box gutter adjacent flank wall*

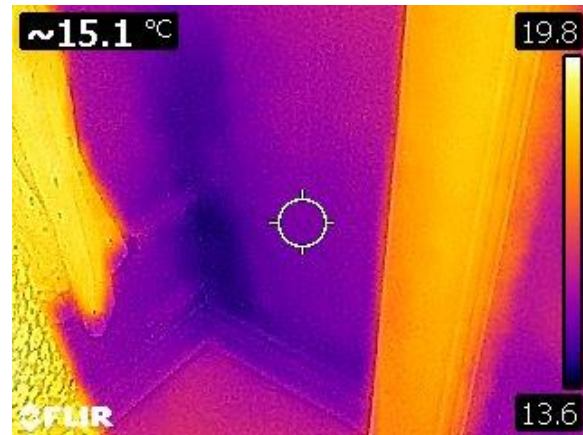
The main rear wall of the bedroom is formed by the rear slope of the mansard roof, and this is provided with a box gutter forming the drainage channel of the roof. The box gutter does terminate on the side return wall, where the rear wall meets the flank wall of the stairwell, and we understand that this box gutter does block with leaves and debris and requires clearing regularly. It is essential that box gutters of this nature are regularly cleaned, as they will overflow down the wall if left to block, although it is not believed that this box gutter is attributable to the mould growth appearing in the fitted wardrobe, or the back wall.

When inspecting using the thermal imaging camera, it does show darker areas on the wall where the mould is appearing. These dark areas would indicate colder spots on the wall finish, and by carrying out a simple tap test, it appears that the cold areas are located in areas where a dot and dab adhesive

has been applied. These types of adhesives are typically applied quite heavily around the corners of wall areas to make a rigid finish to the wall.



*Thermal image of rear alcove*



*Thermal image of wardrobe*

The installation of a dot and dab adhesive therefore breaches any gap between the plasterboard and the wall behind, and that wall behind will be a cold element as it meets the staircase.

Where the heated internal flat meeting the colder elements, cold bridging will occur, and this seems to be occurring on the areas where the dot and dab adhesive is positioned to secure the plasterboard. The cold bridging is likely therefore causing the mould to grow as a result of condensation.

The lack of air changes within a fitted wardrobe and in an alcove behind furniture, will also have an impact on the level of condensation occurring.

In terms of remedial works, to eliminate condensation, better use of ventilation, heating and insulation are typically the three key elements.

Within this room, it is only two small sections of wall which are affected, and therefore a cost effective method of reducing the risk of a dew point temperature occurring would be to upgrade the insulation provision to these sections of the wall.

This could be achieved by replacing the current dry lining with an insulation-backed plasterboard, with the insulation being of a thickness so that interstitial condensation does not occur. The actual thickness would need to be determined by the technical team who manufactures the insulation product.

Installing the insulation would require some adaptation to the wardrobe area, and the removal and replacement of the skirtings and the like.

We trust that this brief letter report provides the information and advice you require. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We mention that our report has been prepared for you as our client, and we cannot accept responsibility for it to any third party who may become acquainted with its contents without our prior knowledge and consent in writing.

Yours sincerely

**TONY GERMAN BSc Hons MRICS  
FOR AND ON BEHALF OF CROFT SURVEYORS**