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Property Specifics

Instructions

The property had been the subject of a dispute about what works are required to rectify a leak below and responsibility to address the issue. I have been called in to give a honest opinion (With Prejudice) of both the cause and works required to rectify the problem.

Background

There was seen to be damage to the ceiling below the patio and it was clearly seen that there was a slow ingress of water dripping through the concrete slab. I was called in to give my professional advice.

Limitations

There is one major limitation placed upon us being that it is not possible to hack out the ceiling completely of taking up the original concrete base on the patio in order to trace source as with wall cladding and joinery.

Restrictions

We are restricted to over floor dampness and defects only and can in no way see through or under the floor/ceiling so this needs to be taken in to account when the observations and recommendations are written.

Visit date

Saturday 15-07-2007

Weather Conditions

Light rain with sunshine visible.

Type of Property

Purpose built concrete and brick highrise tower block

Observations and recommendations

On inspection to the property it was instantly noted that there was dampness to the internal bedroom ceiling of No61 which was clearly seen dripping. Unfortunately it was clear that this had been a long term issue as it had been patch repaired in the past. The previous vendor of this property had led the current owner to believe this had been fixed which to my knowledge my client at 65 had no dealings with them and was not aware of the damage.

This was seen to be caused by a slow ingress of rain water that has gradually seeped in to the concrete slab that divides the dwellings which was evident by the salts present in the plaster.

It is however almost impossible for the water to pass through such a thick concrete slab as well as the decorative concrete slab base so that only really leaves the perimeter of the balcony for the moisture to be penetrating. This was also evident by the fact although it was raining; once the temporary plastic grass covering was removed it was seen to be completely dry so it is actually thought that this is actually acting as protection against water penetration which again reinforces the theory.

With this in mind I took up numerous squares of the plastic and under each area it was seen to be relatively dry considering the weather but looking at all the external joinery on the patio it was very clear this was in urgent need of replacement. I suspect that the rain is actually penetrating the structure via the non-existent window sills, running down behind the cladding and forming a build up of water between the decorative concrete slabs and the main structural slab that was formed during construction of the property.

I can actually confirm that upon inspection to the property there was no sign of absolutely any surface water on the patio. Although I will be recommending a water-proof coating to at least eliminate this as a cause the joinery is the items I think should be dealt with at the earliest convenience.

The full list of items I am going to recommend in relation to the main ingress of moisture is as follows:

All joinery to the patio area should be removed/replaced at the earliest convenience to prevent the main weather protection concrete slabs being breached.

Once dry weather arrives I would recommend a specialist epoxy water-proof covering to the patio base.

It would then once these works are completed be wise to instruct a specialist drying out company to place both a fan and dehumidifier in to no 61.

After a drying out certificate is received I would then recommend that the entire bonding plaster is removed from the ceiling and replaced with a render as bonding plaster should never be used on a external surface.

There was also numerous other areas throughout no 61 that I can also confirm was caused by a ingress of rain water. It was clear that this was caused by the poor condition of the external walls which was poorly pointed, although I also suspect that gaps around the newly fitted windows may also be to blame as a result of defective seals.

Another item which I have a duty of care to mention is that there was evidence of some internal cracking to one corner of the bedroom wall so I would recommend a external inspection by a structural surveyor to make sure this crack is not visible externally as this may cause further future problems.

It was also noted at the time of the inspection that there was seen to areas of brickwork which stuck out from the main structure and could well lead to a ingress from the top edge as there is no flashings along the top which I would recommend is investigated at the time of a external inspection.

Previous questions emailed to East End Homes include one question about if there were any hidden pipes within the structure and between the dwellings for which they responded with a definite NO. Unfortunately this information was seen to be incorrect at the time of the survey as there is a drainage pipe running up from the balcony at 61 which passes up through in to the dividing slab which does not then reappear passing through to the roof of 65. Because of this it's not clear where the actual pipe runs to but it is suspected it may carry drainage from the roof and because of this we cannot discount this as a possible cause.

Unfortunately with all these type of jobs we can in no way 100% guarantee either that the works would definitely rectify the problems or that all items are correct although with my huge amount of knowledge on such matters they are often resolved without future problems.

Although this report was carried out as per instructions of the owner of No65 it is a totally honest opinion designed to help all parties and hopefully avoid future litigations.

Mr Paul Camies
Specialist surveyor.