



Condition Survey Report  
for  
Russell House, Cambridge Street, London SW1V

on behalf of  
Westminster City Council



	NAME	DATE
REPORT PRODUCED BY	Damien Apparicio	31 Jul 2021
REPORT CHECKED BY		



## Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1	Brief.....	3
1.2	Background and Description.....	3
1.3	Methodology and Limitations .....	4
2	GENERAL CONDITION REPORT.....	5
2.1	Windows.....	5
2.2	Opening Style.....	5
2.3	Frames.....	5
2.4	Opener / Sash .....	6
2.5	Glazing.....	6
2.6	Hardware / Ironmongery.....	7
2.7	Window Boards .....	7
2.8	Decorations .....	7
3	RECOMMENDATIONS .....	8
3.1	Overview and Summary .....	8
3.2	Option A: Targeted Repairs Programme.....	8
3.3	Option B: Replacement in D/G Timber .....	9
3.4	Option C: Replacement in D/G Aluminium.....	9
3.5	Statutory Requirements.....	9
3.6	Further Considerations .....	10
4	COST REPORT .....	11
4.1	Assumptions.....	11
4.2	Cost Estimates .....	12
4.3	Market Considerations.....	13
5	CONCLUSION .....	18

## Appendices

Appendix A: Cost Forecast Summary

Appendix B: Option Breakdowns

Appendix C: Photos and Works Schedules (Issued Separately)



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Brief

With reference to the brief dated 17th May 2021, copy attached, Faithorn Farrell Timms LLP (FFT) have been instructed by Westminster City Council (WCC) to undertake condition surveys at the subject property, in response to issues being reported in respect to the existing windows, with a view to providing recommendations to inform upcoming major works programmes.

It is noted that this instruction relates solely to windows and excludes external doors to private and communal areas. With regards the windows, the consultant is expected to access all internal communal areas of the building to survey the communal windows and at least 50% sample of flats within the block, subject to availability, to allow comment on the overall condition of the windows.

With reference to the Consultant's Brief, WCC requires full condition survey information to be provided for the subject block, noting that the output report should include Net Present Value calculations (NPV) carried out and have comparisons for window repairs and replacement in timber and aluminium. It is further noted that NPV calculations should be across a 30-year cycle with a 12-year external cyclical programme as set by WCC.

Recommendations to be provided, along with budget estimates.

### 1.2 Background and Description

The subject property, Russell House, is located within the Churchill Gardens Estate, and is a nine-storey purpose-built residential building constructed in 1950, with a total of 74no. self-contained dwellings, comprising 47no. Leaseholders, and 27no. General Needs residents. The block is located within a Conservation Area, however, is not listed.

The building is predominantly of solid brick construction, with recessed balconies in some sections of the building.

Existing windows are predominantly single-glazed, double-hung, timber box sashes, however there are instances of bottom hung casements, to the same specification, and similarly, instances where windows have been replaced in with UPVC double-glazed units.

With reference to the Consultant's Brief, it is noted that the windows are due to be refurbished as part of a cyclical planned maintenance programme; the intention being to maintain the fabric and weathertightness of the building to ensure homes are in a good state of repair, safe and free of building and service-related defects.



In preparing this report, FFT have undertaken inspections of several dwellings throughout the block, having been instructed to focus solely on the windows.

A photo schedule is contained within Appendix C.

### 1.3 Methodology and Limitations

Following the issuing of notification letters by WCC, residents were invited to contact FFT to arrange inspections, to suit availability, between Monday 05th July and Thursday 08th July 2021.

Of the 74 flats, it is advised that 24no. were accessed, equating to approximately 32%, as detailed below. Associated photo schedules are contained within Appendix C.

- Flat 2;
- Flat 6;
- Flat 10;
- Flat 14
- Flat 20;
- Flat 22;
- Flat 28;
- Flat 32;
- Flat 34;
- Flat 37;
- Flat 39;
- Flat 40;
- Flat 41;
- Flat 42;
- Flat 46;
- Flat 47;
- Flat 50;
- Flat 51;
- Flat 52;
- Flat 54;
- Flat 58;
- Flat 62;
- Flat 64;
- Flat 72;

All flats inspected were occupied, and in several instances detailed inspections were obstructed by furniture and fittings.

It is advised that all inspections were carried out using appropriate PPE, e.g., Facemasks, in accordance with current guidelines in respect to the spread of Covid-19.

Where possible we have attempted to observe windows in operation, however where these were inaccessible, or where security could have been compromised through operation, our inspections were limited to visual inspections only.

It is advised that our external inspections were limited to views from ground level, and of visible areas from adjacent locations, e.g., communal walkways.

We have undertaken no intrusive or destructive testing, nor undertaken any specialist investigations associated with the existing windows.

References to the front, rear, left and right of the property are given as viewed from the respective elevations.

It is noted that drawings have not been provided to FFT.

Where costs are indicated, these are budgetary and have been acquired using BCIS Pricing information, supplemented with cost information from NHF v.7 (Planned Maintenance Schedule of Rates). Additionally, we have referenced cost information from similar contracts, and used our knowledge of the market to inform provisional sums.



## 2 GENERAL CONDITION REPORT

### 2.1 Windows

Window condition varies greatly, with evidence of some units having been replaced historically, however the majority require attention, and exhibit localised timber decay and damage, cracked panes, deteriorating putty, snapped sash chords, poorly balanced sashes, and wear and tear.

Where historic repairs have been carried out, these were found to have now failed, noting the condition of timber splice repairs, the use of mastic sealant over linseed oil putty, and pre-painting preparation.

Whilst not included within those properties surveyed, we did observe instances where windows appear to have been replaced in uPVC. It is anticipated that planning permission would have been a requirement for such replacement, and as such confirmation should be sought in this regard.

It is evident that exposure plays a significant part in condition, noting increased timber decay to those windows on uppermost floors, particularly to the rear (south-west) elevation.

Externally, brick and pointing surround the windows was found to be in fair condition, however defects, and the need for remedial works, is likely to become apparent when inspecting at close quarters from scaffold, or the like.

Internally, we observed instances of mildew, to varying degrees. Whilst this is typically associated with high levels of condensation, inadequate ventilation and heating, and poor thermal efficiency, it is advised that other factors may be contributing to this, such as resident lifestyle.

### 2.2 Opening Style

Openings are predominantly double hung sash to dwellings, although bottom hung casements are present to bathrooms, WCs, and side screens associated with the private front entrance doors.

Whilst there is evidence to suggest that at some point in time windows within the communal stairwells were openable, these are all now fixed shut.

### 2.3 Frames

Painted softwood timber frames, generally exhibit timber decay to varying degrees. This is particularly prevalent to timber sub-sills externally, and to windows located on higher stories



on the south-west elevation, where exposure to the elements is greater, compared to those on the north-west elevation, where sheltered by the communal walkways.

Windows have been subject to numerous layers of paint, and as such extensive stripping, rubbing down and preparation will be required as part of any redecoration programme. As noted below, external paintwork was seen to be flaking, attributable to pre-painting preparation, and high exposure.

Internally, open joints were noted within the frames, along with open joints and separation cracking to the perimeter of many of the windows, indicative of shrinkage and general settlement.

From our discussions with residents, it was advised that a previous programme of window repairs had been undertaken and that many of these repairs had now failed. Whilst we did note isolated instances where splice repairs had failed, this did not appear to be widespread.

It is evident that additional weather-stripping has been fitted to the sashes, however these are now considered ineffective, with many now having become detached, missing, and/or broken, and general impairing operation of the windows.

External mastic to the perimeter of windows was generally found to be in fair condition, however localised renewal should be anticipated to openings on the rear elevations, which were inaccessible during our inspections, following inspections at close quarters.

## 2.4 Opener / Sash

For the most part, windows were found to operate without issue, although we noted localised instances ill-fitting sashes, resulting in rattling and binding against frames.

Where sashes were seen to be ill-fitting, water ingress has occurred unchecked, giving rise to damage and rot associated with water penetration.

Whilst we were not able to observe sash weights in operation, it is evident that many windows require rebalancing.

Sash chords were generally found to be in fair condition, notwithstanding the presence of paint transfer from historic redecoration, although there were several instances where chords have snapped or are fraying.

## 2.5 Glazing

Glazing itself is in fair condition, although inevitably there were instances of cracked panes, which should be replaced as part of routine maintenance to guard against injury.



Glazing is held in place with linseed oil putty, which was generally found to be missing and deteriorating.

## 2.6 Hardware / Ironmongery

Sash windows are secured with metal sash locks/stays, "Acoms". These largely exhibit paint transfer arising from historic decorations, resulting in seized fittings, however for the most part these were found to be operational. There were however isolated instances where locks were found to be missing, and there was also evidence to suggest that historically some were replaced, noting mismatched fittings.

We note that many of the sash windows associated with the dwellings fail to incorporate an appropriate restrictor to limit openings, albeit there is evidence in many units to suggest that these at some point in time were present. It is recommended that in the interest of Health and Safety, appropriate restrictors be fitted to all openings, particularly those above the ground floor.

Casement windows associated with bathrooms and WCs incorporate release catches at the head of the opening, coupled with restrictors to the to the sides. Generally, these windows hard to access, however received no specific reports regarding operation.

## 2.7 Window Boards

Painted softwood timber to dwellings, and painted tiles set on concrete within communal areas.

Timber window boards were generally found to be in fair condition, although there were localised incidents where window boards have warped and become damaged due to water ingress, coupled with localised damage associated with wear and tear.

## 2.8 Decorations

Whilst many of the windows were found to be in a good decorative state internally, condition does vary considerably, and it is evident that the next programme of cyclical works is due, if not overdue.

Externally, paintwork is flaking, attributable to poor preparation, noting paint having been applied to rotten timber, and high exposure to the elements, and redecoration is recommended to ensure a prolonged life.

As noted above, several window boards were found to be water damaged and stained, and should be rubbed down, prepared, and redecorated.





### 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.1 Overview and Summary

Whilst it is confirmed that the existing windows require urgent attention, it is our opinion that the issues reported could easily be addressed through overhauling, and a targeted program of repairs, reglazing, and redecoration, at a cost less than that to replace. Properly maintained, original timber windows can enjoy extremely long lives, due to the high quality and durability of the timber that was used at the time. In this instance, whilst the windows serving the subject property are generally in a fair/poor condition, once overhauled and thermally upgraded, it is our opinion that they will continue to serve the property for at least a further ten years, with regular maintenance, however it is advised that repairs after this are unlikely to be cost-effective, and replacement at this point replacement is recommended.

It is worth noting that the existing windows offer little in the way of security and thermal efficiency by modern standards, noting the use of single glazing. Owing to the external access associated with remedial work, the client may wish to consider full replacement with a modern double glazed timber alternative in lieu of a repairs program. In this regard, not only would the performance of the windows be greatly improved, but on-going regular maintenance requirements and ad hoc repairs would be greatly reduced, and additional new windows would benefit from associated manufacturer warranties and guarantees. The decision whether to repair or renew should be consider in conjunction with the costs set out in Section 4, and Appendix B.

Owing to the location of the block in a Conservation Area, it is highly unlikely that approval will be obtained to replace the existing windows in any material other than timber, however we have included cost estimates for replacement in aluminium units, as requested.

Below, we have set out Options available, and included estimated budget costs where appropriate. It is advised that costs provided are for budgetary purposes, based solely on those properties inspected, and in the absence of full elevation drawings assumptions have been made in respect to quantities:

#### 3.2 Option A: Targeted Repairs Programme

Overhaul all existing windows, including but not limited to: Freeing any jammed casements or sashes and removing accumulated paint; Replacing broken or ineffective sash cords; Lubricating pulleys and hinges; Re-balancing sash weights; Replacing broken glass and renewing defective putty; Resin and timber splice repairs to rotten sections, using an approved timber repair system, such as Repair Care; Cleaning and repair or ironmongery and replacement of missing items; Preparation and redecoration of previously painted services.

To address and improve issues relating to the thermal insulation of the windows, existing provisions should be removed, and new insulated staff and parting beads fitted. Alternatively, and subject to site conditions, install new modern secondary glazing.





### 3.3 Option B: Replacement in D/G Timber

Total replacement of all existing windows with sealed double-glazed units, to match the existing fenestration.

### 3.4 Option C: Replacement in D/G Aluminium

Total replacement of all existing windows with aluminium double-glazed units, to match the existing fenestration.

Owing to the property's location within a Conservation Area, it is anticipated that approval would not be granted for any material other than timber, therefore for the purposes of this report we have simply indicated approximate uplifts on timber in respect to aluminium units.

### 3.5 Statutory Requirements

The scope of works proposed above, under Option A – "Repair", are considered matters of repair, and as such approval by the local authority is not required, notwithstanding any requirements for replacement where windows are beyond repair. It is however advised that any proposals, and the need for statutory approval, be confirmed in the first instance.

With regards Options B and C – "Replacement", the property is understood to be located within the Churchill Gardens Conservation Area and as such planning approval will be required by way of Conservation Area consent to replace the existing windows.

As advised above, it is unlikely that approval for window replacement in a material other than timber would be granted by the local authority.

It is advised that the statutory consultation period for approval is between eight to ten weeks, and as such this should be factored into any proposed programme of works relating to replacement, allowing a suitable timeframe within which to prepare and submit the associated planning application.

Additionally, noting the presence of leaseholders, works would be subject to S20 Leaseholder consultation. Timeframes in this regard are prescriptive, requiring a statutory period of thirty days for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the consultation, and similarly this should be factored into any program of works, be it repair or replacement.

Similarly, compliance with Building Regulations will be a requirement in respect to window replacement, albeit it is anticipated that this would be achieved under a self-certification scheme, such as FENSA (Fenestration Self-Assessment Scheme).



### 3.6 Further Considerations

To undertake the proposed works, be it repair or replacement, scaffold access will be required. Given the associated cost, it would be prudent to take full advantage of the access afforded by the scaffold and undertake additional works to the roof and external fabric, e.g., Brick repairs, repointing, external decorations, etc. It is however advised that we have made no assessment as to the condition of the roof or external fabric at this time.

Should the intention be to replace the existing roof covering, the opportunity should be taken to upgrade the existing insulation at the same time. Such works would be subject to Building Regulations approval by way of an application to the Local Authority Building Control team, or via an appointed Approved Building Inspector.

Our appointment, and scope of instructions received, is solely in respect to the existing windows, and as such the external and communal area doors are excluded from this report. Suffice to say, replacement of the existing Crittal balcony doors should also be a consideration.

Similarly, further investigation is advised, by way of a Fire Risk Assessment ("FRA"), in respect to the internal communal areas and private front entrance doors, to fully determine any requirements in respect to fire stopping and protection.

The property is of an age, where asbestos or other asbestos-containing materials ("ACM") may be present in the construction. Specific reference in this regard is made to the sash windows, where it is not uncommon for sash chords to contain asbestos. In the absence of an up-to-date asbestos register, it is advised that a detailed Refurbishment and Demolition ("R&D") asbestos be undertaken prior to commencement.



## 4 COST REPORT

### 4.1 Assumptions

It is advised that drawings have not been provided, and as such quantities indicated below are estimated, based on those flats inspected. It is therefore recommended that full elevational drawings be made available to allow window archetypes to be identified, and quantities to be confirmed.

For the purposes of reporting, the following assumptions are made:

a) **Building Perimeter**

Calculated at approximately 260m, using measuring tools available within Google Maps.

b) **Building Height**

Calculated at approximately 30m, based on nine storeys.

c) **Building Footprint**

Calculated at approximately 950m<sup>2</sup>, using measuring tools available within Google Maps.

d) **Total no. of windows, irrespective of archetype**

Based on those properties inspected, we estimate eleven window archetypes across the block, three of which pertain to the communal areas.

Where possible we have attempted to determine the associated archetype used within each elevation, based on views from ground level and adjacent areas.

Owing to limited external views of the north-west elevation, assumptions have been made based on the information available.



## 4.2 Cost Estimates

We have summarised below the recommendations detailed above and have provided budgetary estimates for the associated works. It is advised that the costs shown below are based on estimated quantities and should be confirmed before proceeding.

It is recommended that the following be read in conjunction with item 4.3 – “Market Considerations”.

Where costs are indicated, these are budgetary and have been acquired using BCIS Pricing information and are supplemented with cost information from NHF v.7 (Planned Maintenance Schedule of Rates), cost information from works previously completed, and our knowledge of the market to inform any provisional sums. It is advised that budget estimates are unable to account for the effect of competitive tendering, which may see a considerable difference in respect to scaffold and material costs. In this regard it is recommended that a variance of 20-25% be applied to all costs.

All costs are exclusive of professional fees.

With reference to the BCIS Cost information, particular reference is made to the following items:

*Minor repair to window: ease and adjust including overhaul of ironmongery, renew beads with putty and sprigs as necessary, adjust stops and beads as necessary for window to close properly and securely without any excessive gaps around the frame, and leave in good working order*

*6.220.1 Casement or sash window*

*Major repair to casement and sash window: piece-in damaged area of frame or casement with new timber spliced, glued and screwed. Take off and renew casement or sash, renew broken glass as necessary with putty and sprigs, beads to existing glazed panes, renew butts or sash cords, adjust stops and beads as necessary for window to close properly and securely without any excessive gaps around the frame. Overhaul or provide new ironmongery as necessary and leave in good working order*

*6.220.3 Sliding sash window*

As a minimum standard, we have allowed for item 6.220.1 to all windows. We consider this to be a basic overhaul and have therefore supplemented this with further work clauses to reflect a more realistic estimated cost. Where windows are recorded as being in a particularly poor condition, or requiring several items of repair, we have recorded these windows under item 6.220.3.

Scaffold costs are calculated on vertical access being required to every elevation however it is acknowledged that reduced access is required to the front elevation, owing to the communal walkways.



### 4.3 Market Considerations

In the wake of the Covid pandemic, there has been a steady increase in material costs as current supplies are exhausted, giving rise to increased demand. The most notable effects of this are shortages in timber, steel, roof tiles, cement, masonry, plaster and plasterboard, and paints, leading to increased lead times.

Whilst there have been improvements in respect to availability, following the lifting of measures, it is anticipated the effect of these shortages will continue to be felt until at least the end of 2021.

The above is further compounded by Brexit, which has seen reports of labour shortages, extended lead in times, and delays in deliveries.

As advised above, it is recommended that a variance of 20-25% be applied to all costs to account for the effect of competitive tendering.



Table 1: Year 1 Cost Estimate Breakdown

<b>Year 1</b>	
Option A: Repair	
Erect scaffold and carry out detailed, targeted program of repairs to focus on overhauling existing units to ensure a further 8–10-year life, allowing for resin and splice repairs, re-glazing, ironmongery, and all associated works and redecoration, leaving all in good working order.	£1,536,049.68
Option B: Replacement in D/G Timber	
Erect scaffold and replace all existing windows in double-glazed timber to match existing fenestration. Windows to be provided with appropriate warranties.	£1,631,712.62
Option C: Replacement in D/G Aluminium	
Erect scaffold and replace all existing windows in double-glazed aluminium to match existing fenestration. Windows to be provided with appropriate warranties.	£1,629,287.27



**Table 2: Year 12 Cost Estimate Summary**

<b>Year 12</b>	
Option A: Repair	
Erect scaffold as required and carry out works in respect to external cyclical redecoration, allowing for further program of detailed, targeted repairs in respect to overhauling existing units to ensure a further 8–10-year life. Allow for resin and splice repairs, re-glazing, ironmongery, and all associated works and redecoration, leaving all in good working order.	£2,190,039.56
Option B: Replacement in D/G Timber	
Erect scaffold as required and carry out works in respect to external cyclical redecoration and maintenance. Anticipate minor overhauls to all units, and localised repairs in respect to ironmongery and glazing.  <b>Note:</b> Repair costs are estimated, allowing for minor overhaul to all units, redecoration, and 10% contingency.	£1,752,090.03
Option C: Replacement in D/G Aluminium	
Erect scaffold as required and carry out works in respect to cyclical maintenance. Anticipate minor overhauls to all units, and localised repairs in respect to ironmongery and glazing.  <b>Note:</b> Repair costs are estimated, allowing for minor overhaul to all units, and 10% contingency.	£1,737,117.42





**Table 3: Year 24 Cost Estimate Summary**

<b>Year 24</b>	
Option A: Repair	
Erect scaffold as required and carry out works in respect to external cyclical redecoration, allowing for further program of detailed, targeted repairs in respect to overhauling existing units to ensure a further 8–10-year life. Allow for resin and splice repairs, re-glazing, ironmongery, and all associated works and redecoration, leaving all in good working order.	
Undertake cost appraisal in respect to repair versus replacement.	£3,122,472.75
Option B: Replacement in D/G Timber	
Erect scaffold as required and carry out works in respect to external cyclical redecoration and maintenance. Anticipate minor overhauls to all units, and localised repairs in respect to ironmongery and glazing.	
<b>Note:</b> Repair costs are estimated, allowing for minor overhaul to all units, redecoration, and 10% contingency.	£2,498,061.44
Option C: Replacement in D/G Aluminium	
Erect scaffold as required and carry out works in respect to cyclical maintenance. Anticipate minor overhauls to all units, and localised repairs in respect to ironmongery and glazing.	
<b>Note:</b> Repair costs are estimated, allowing for minor overhaul to all units, and 10% contingency.	£2,476,714.07



Table 4: Year 36 Cost Estimate Summary

<b>Year 36</b>	
Option A: Repair	
Erect scaffold as required and carry out works in respect to external cyclical redecoration, allowing for further program of detailed, targeted repairs in respect to overhauling existing units to ensure a further 8–10-year life. Allow for resin and splice repairs, re-glazing, ironmongery, and all associated works and redecoration, leaving all in good working order.	
Consider renewal at this stage given age of windows.	£4,451,899.51
Option B: Replacement in D/G Timber	
Erect scaffold as required and carry out works in respect to external cyclical redecoration and maintenance. Anticipate minor overhauls to all units, and localised repairs in respect to ironmongery and glazing.	
<b>Note:</b> Repair costs are estimated, allowing for minor overhaul to all units, redecoration, and 10% contingency.	£3,561,638.30
Option C: Replacement in D/G Aluminium	
Erect scaffold as required and carry out works in respect to cyclical maintenance. Anticipate minor overhauls to all units, and localised repairs in respect to ironmongery and glazing.	
<b>Note:</b> Repair costs are estimated, allowing for minor overhaul to all units, and 10% contingency.	£3,531,202.06



## 5 CONCLUSION

Window condition varies greatly, with evidence of some units having been replaced historically, however the majority require attention, and exhibit localised timber decay and damage, cracked panes, deteriorating putty, snapped sash chords, poorly balanced sashes, and general neglect.

It is evident that exposure plays a significant part in condition, noting increased timber decay to those windows on uppermost floors, particularly to the rear (south-west) elevation.

Where historic repairs have been carried out, these were found to be failing, noting previous timber splice repairs, the use of mastic sealant over linseed oil putty, and inadequate pre-painting preparation, as evidenced by the layers of paintwork.

Externally, brick and pointing surround the windows was found to be in fair condition, however defects, and the need for remedial works, is likely to become apparent when inspecting at close quarters from scaffold, or the like.

Internally, we observed instances of mildew, to varying degrees. Whilst this is typically associated with high levels of condensation, inadequate ventilation and heating, and poor thermal efficiency, it is advised that other factors may be contributing to this, such as resident lifestyle.

Based on our findings, it is our opinion that the issues reported could easily be addressed through overhauling, and a targeted program of repairs, re-glazing, and redecoration, at a cost significantly less than replacement, which we anticipate extending the life of the windows by at least another 8-10 years. Properly maintained, original timber windows can enjoy extremely long lives once overhauled and thermally upgraded, although on-going regular maintenance and ad hoc repairs will be required, and should be anticipated, as should costs associated with vertical access requirements.

It is worth noting that the existing windows are considered to offer little in the way of security and thermal efficiency by modern standards and owing to the external access associated with remedial work, the client may wish to consider full replacement with a modern double glazed timber alternative. In this scenario, on-going maintenance costs are heavily reduced.



City of Westminster



Owing to the location of the block in a Conservation Area, it is highly unlikely that approval will be obtained to replace the existing windows in any material other than timber, suffice to say we did observe instances where windows appear to have been replaced in uPVC. It is anticipated that planning permission would have been a requirement for such replacement, and as such confirmation should be sought in this regard.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Damien Apparicio**  
**Associate**

For and on behalf of  
Faithorn Farrell Timms LLP

## **Appendix A**

### **Cost Forecast Summary**

## **Appendix B**

### **Option Breakdowns**

## **Appendix C**

### **Photos and Work Schedules**

**(Issued Separately)**