

# Gateway Housing Association – Victoria Court External Repairs & Redecorations

## CLIENT

Gateway Housing Association

## LOCATION

London

## PROJECT DATES

December 2017 to November 2022

## CONTRACT VALUE

£339,488.99

## SECTOR

Housing



Victoria Court

## Solution-Finding Approach Secures Safe & Compliant Homes for Sheltered Housing Residents

FFT were appointed in multiple roles by long term client Gateway Housing Association to manage extensive repair and redecoration works to a tenanted residential block within their sheltered housing scheme.

## THE CLIENT

Long term FFT client Gateway Housing Association is a housing provider whose roots date back to in 1926. The largest provider of sheltered housing in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, and the first registered provider of older persons’ shared ownership, Gateway has 3,000+ properties located within the East London borough.

## SERVICES PROVIDED

- Building Surveying
- Design & Architecture
- Contract Administration
- Principal Designer

## THE PROJECT

We were appointed to manage a comprehensive programme of repair and redecoration works involving tenanted flats within a sheltered housing scheme. The works comprised the replacement of windows, flat roof coverings, communal flooring and internal fire doors, as well as internal decoration.

## OUR ROLE

We undertook multiple roles throughout the works. As Building Surveyor and Contract Administrator, we oversaw the project from start to finish, commencing with a condition survey to agree the scope of works ready for the client to issue their Notice of Intention to the leaseholders. We then went on to produce a and set of contract documentation, working in close conjunction with the client to ensure both their requirements and those of the residents were satisfied.

In addition, we managed the tender process in line with the client's tendering and financial regulations, with the aim of appointing the most cost-effective and appropriate contractor. This included a detailed analysis of the returned tenders, and expert advice on the most economically advantageous tenderer to appoint.

On the building surveying aspects, our CAD team undertook a measured survey and produced the technical drawings necessary to support the required planning applications.

As Principal Designers, we produced a Pre-Construction Information Pack, which the contractor developed into a Construction Phase Plan, which we reviewed. We also compiled the project Health and Safety File, ensuring every aspect of the project met the requirements of the CDM Regulations 2015.

With part of the project brief specifying a need for fire door replacement, we also had the responsibility of ensuring the new doors provided adequate protection for residents in line with the Approved Document and in particular Part B of the Building Regulations.

## THE CHALLENGES

One of the greatest challenges that arose during the works concerned the discovery of an undetected water leak.



When the existing roof covering was removed, it was found that the internal waste pipes had been leaking from a converted penthouse flat, which explained an historic damp problem in parts of the building. The leak had penetrated beneath the roof level and down the walls of some of the lower level flats.

The leaking pipe was situated behind a tiled bathroom wall in one of the flats, which made it challenging to identify the problem, as well as resolve it in a timely manner so further damage could be avoided.

A further challenge met was that of effectively managing resident queries, as well as finding a way to minimise disruption during the works. The residents raised various concerns and, with the works set to be quite disruptive, it was important to devise a solution that would get them done swiftly, without interfering too much with the everyday lives of the residents.

## THE OUTCOME

We needed a least-disruption solution to fixing the leaking pipe. So, instead of knocking through the walls in the affected flats to access it, we decided it would be better to redirect the pipe upwards, so that the defective part sat above roof level. This approach would prevent the leak from saturating the walls in the lower level flats.

We instructed the contractor, Axis Europe, to box in the raised pipes, not just to improve the aesthetic, but also to provide straightforward access should the pipes present further problems in the future. The approach was a success, with the leak being stemmed and the walls of the affected flats beginning to dry out. This was closely monitored over time to ensure the problem had been resolved.



Clear communication with the client ensured they were able to keep residents informed of the finer detail of the works and effectively address their queries. We also ensured any queries relayed to us were addressed in a timely manner.

In terms of keeping disruption to residents to a minimum, we employed an open approach to communicating the nature of the works to them. We also took steps to make sure the contractor adopted a mindful and understanding working manner, also ensuring they were aware of restrictions on working hours and noise.



## ADDED VALUE

On discovering the leak, we decided it would be appropriate to inspect multiple flats to check the extent of the damage. This was not within the original scope of works, but it was something we felt important to accommodate.

We also undertook additional survey reports, as well as managing the client's in-house roofing contractor to ensure the works ran smoothly and safely.

The works were completed on time and within budget, providing the residents with peace of mind that their homes were safe and secure, and the client with the reassurance that their property was compliant with current regulatory standards. The property is now a lot more visually appealing, which is a positive for the local community.