

# Wandsworth House

## CLIENT

Metropolitan Thames Valley

## LOCATION

London

## PROJECT DATES

June 2021 to March 2022

## CONTRACT VALUE

£1.2 million

## SECTOR

Housing



Wandsworth House

## Effective Communication and a Considerate Approach Leads to Successful Redecoration Works Project

FFT were appointed by long term client Metropolitan Thames Valley (MTV) to manage cyclical redecoration works to 48 properties under their sheltered housing scheme for residents with special needs.

## THE CLIENT

Metropolitan Thames Valley (MTV) is a long term client of FFT. They provide affordable housing across London, the South East, East Midlands and the East of England, managing in the region of 38,000 homes.

In addition, the organisation provides a range of care and support services, specialising in older people, mental health, and transitional services for vulnerable people. A member of the National Housing Federation and Chair of the G15, MTV influences policy for the benefits of its residents and the wider sector.

## SERVICES PROVIDED

- Contract Administration
- Principal Designer
- Building Surveying

## THE PROJECT

We were appointed to oversee a full cyclical redecoration project involving 48 properties within a sheltered scheme for residents with special needs. The works were to cover the redecoration of the communal areas and the external elevations of the property, and the installation of replacement windows and doors.

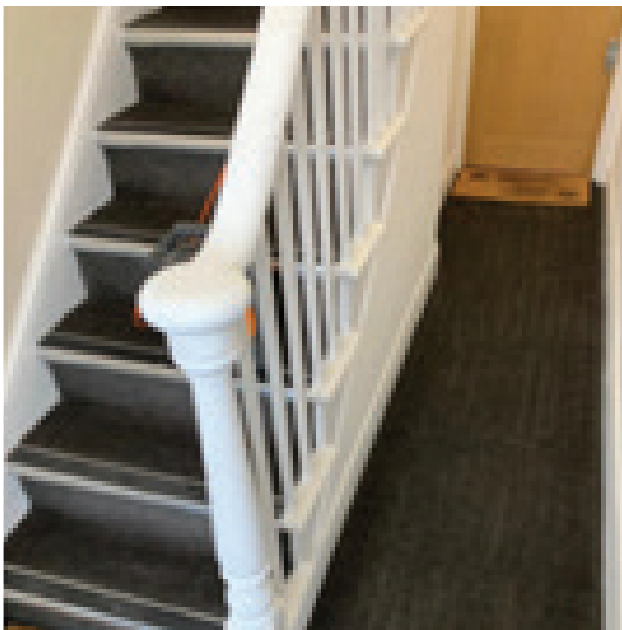
## OUR ROLE

Our role was multifaceted. As Contract Administrator, we oversaw the project, acting as a bridge between the client, the contractor and the residents. Arranging access to the properties, managing costs and dealing with issues as they arose were all part of our responsibilities, ensuring an efficient and streamlined workflow so that the works were completed in a timely manner and with least disruption to residents.

As Principal Designer, it was down to us to ensure the site was safe for all throughout the works, and compliant with current health and safety regulations.

## THE CHALLENGES

One of the main challenges of this project was gaining access to the rear of the mid-terrace properties for the erection of the necessary scaffolding and installation of the windows, for which we had to book multiple individual



appointments with the residents. This was a time consuming exercise, with numerous calls required and a number of inspection dates having to be rearranged at the last minute.

We also met a further challenge with the scaffolding having to be erected on the public highway, which would inevitably lead to pedestrian disruption.

Another complication arose in respect of the planning consent for the new windows. The client had arranged this prior to our involvement, and the design had been changed during the application from a casement to a tilt and turn style. We identified safety issues with this design, as there was no restriction in place to prevent residents from opening the windows wide enough to fall out.

## THE OUTCOME

We successfully obtained the relevant scaffolding licences, and made a point of contacting neighbouring properties to discuss the forthcoming works and negotiate access, helping to appease any potential frustrations.

We maintained a presence onsite to deal with any access issues, and came up with on the spot solutions where required, such as internally protecting properties whilst scaffolding was transported through, or arranging for it to be taken up and over the property.

We worked closely with the contractor, Axis Europe, to ensure a considerate approach was extended to the residents of the properties being worked on, remaining mindful of their special needs. Additional support and communication was provided to each individual to ensure the works were carried out at a date and time that was convenient to them.

## CASE STUDY: Contract Administration

We made follow-up phone calls and sent letters to the residents to confirm appointments. A good degree of understanding and flexibility was required, as appointments were often missed or changed at the last minute. In certain instances, it was necessary to liaise with representatives or carers of some of the vulnerable residents to make the necessary arrangements, and to ensure they would be present at the time of the works to provide support.

In terms of the window design, our aim was to find a solution that would be suitable for the aesthetic of the building, whilst protecting the safety of the residents and visitors. We liaised with the window manufacturer to assess a range of potential window restrictors, which we then relayed to the client for final agreement. Whilst this led to a minimal delay, we felt the safety of the residents warranted it.

### ADDED VALUE

We always look for ways during projects to make things easier for everyone involved, and this is especially important to us when there are vulnerable residents involved.

One thing we did was arrange for the contractor to use an unoccupied flat within the building as a welfare facility. This allowed us to maintain the external communal areas for residents' use, which would otherwise have had to be assigned for contractor welfare.

In exchange for the use of the flat, we arranged for the contractor to redecorate it once the works were completed, resulting in a mutually beneficial agreement.

Whilst on site, we also identified an historic surface water drainage issue that had been left unresolved. We worked with the contractor to investigate the issue, instructing the necessary works to resolve it during the main works in order to avoid further disruption.

In terms of social and environmental value, the works, which are carried out periodically to ensure the sustainability, longevity and safety of the properties, gave the residents peace of mind that their homes were safe and secure, which also provided reassurance for the client.