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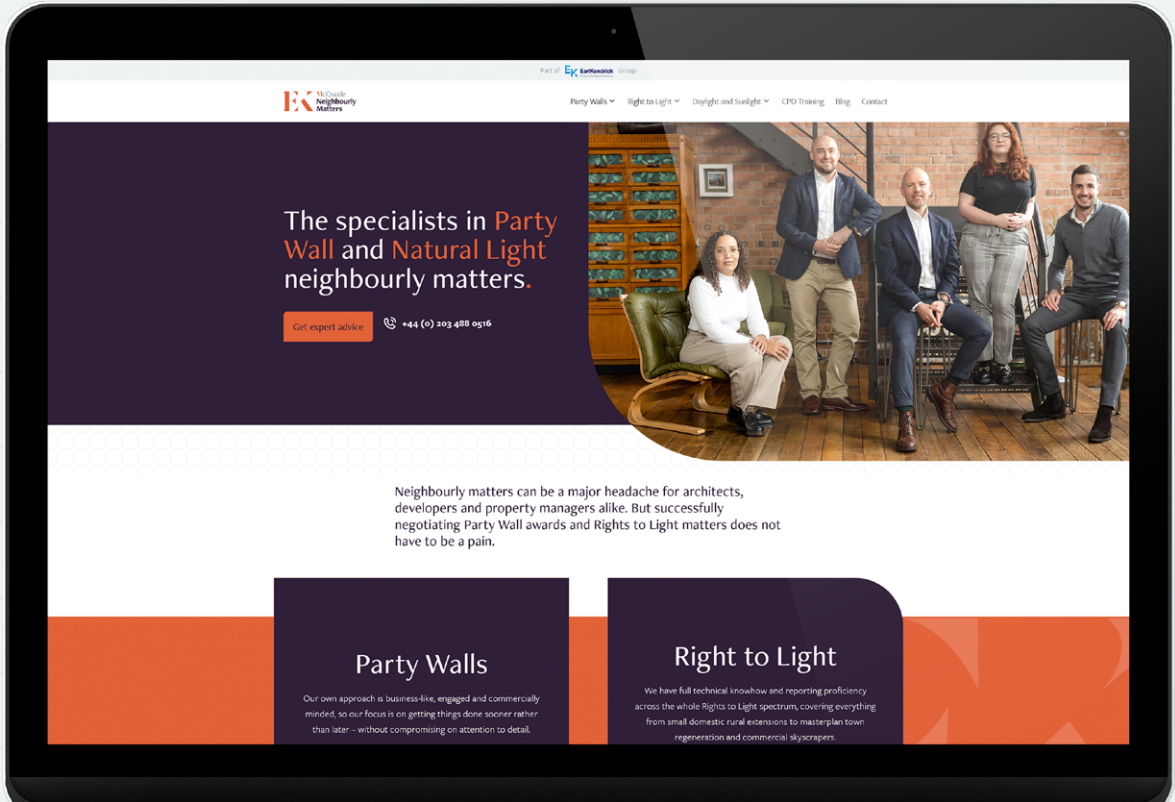


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# EK Newsletter

## Let there be light

### EK McQuade launches new Rights to Light service





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## Spring Forward

Welcome to our latest newsletter, published as we leave GMT behind us at the end of a long winter. The annual jokes about shuffling the Avebury stone circle to adjust for British Summer Time always raises a smile.

It's worth a visit to Avebury, in Wiltshire, whose henge and stone circle date back to around 2,500 BC. The importance of the sun, its light and the annual cycle was immortalised during this Neolithic Age close by at Stonehenge, whose own stone circle helped track the passage of time — a Neolithic calendar no less.

Today, natural light is as vital to us all as it has ever been. We need light to thrive in the buildings in which we live and work, in sync with our bodies' internal clock (our circadian rhythm). Common law and planning regulations require light to be taken into account whenever new buildings or other developments might affect neighbouring properties, and where it is neglected, rights to light disputes can arise.

As natural light matters are often referred to by building surveyors as the 'Dark Art', we welcomed Dan Wade to EK McQuade whose 25 years' experience qualifies him well to head up our new Rights to Light team.

Shedding some light on other service lines, we welcome Mike Burkinshaw as Associate Director based in Bristol, with a remit to grow our insurance claim reinstatement offering nationwide, and James Walker too, senior building surveyor, bringing additional commercial property acumen. Our central London team was last year bolstered by Sam James, who now has his feet firmly under the desk and impressing a wide range of clients.

Our retrofit offering goes from strength to strength (see page 13), as pressure mounts on landlords, just two years away from requiring their sublet properties to be EPC rated 'C' or better, and blocks of flats generally,

some of which are literally leaking heat through their walls, as EK Digital's thermography surveys colourfully illustrate (page 11). Can we collectively meet the government's target of net zero by 2050?

On the compliance front, we continue to prepare for the requirements of three ground-breaking pieces of health and safety legislation, offering practical solutions for cladding remediation, fire door inspections and safety case reports.

As we enter the spring — major works season — I am as proud as ever with the talent we have assembled, whether that's for neighbourly matters, roof and façade assessments, demise alterations, reinstatement cost assessments or traditional, heritage building surveying. The value offered to our clients has never been more extensive and dare I say it, impressive.

A new HQ awaits us in early April within The Building Centre in Bloomsbury, a workplace, venue and exhibition centre promoting innovation in the built environment — the perfect home, where will host events and provide valuable CPD.

Enjoy our newsletter and we look forward to hearing from you soon ■



**Our retrofit offering goes from strength to strength, as pressure mounts on landlords, just two years away from requiring their sublet properties to be EPC rated 'C' or better**

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## Conquering Cannes

**Well, that was special trip — a networking whirlwind in France mingling with the great and the good of the property sector.**

I posted on LinkedIn that MIPIM 2023 was an incredible experience where I enjoyed the company of property people from all corners of the sector, mostly UK based, which begs the question why a few thousand people flew 900 miles to the south east corner France to socialise with people who they could see grab a coffee with at home. I guess the weather has something to do with that... and I was reassured that some claimed to have offset their carbon!

Talking of carbon, energy saving initiatives and retrofit were a common topic of conversation with other surveyors, architects and property managers. There are clear challenges ahead for the sector in that respect — see our Phillipa Burgin's retrofit page in this newsletter.

Other hot topics discussed over good food and wine included the three most recent, seismic changes to health and safety legislation including upcoming requirements under the Building Safety Act, and how the sector needs to come together to deliver practical solutions to property managers and their clients.

A major challenge shared with most Cannes visitors was recruitment, no matter the sector. Solicitors, building consultancy firms, property management companies — all are struggling to find talented people. That's why many are in recruitment mode most of the time — we certainly are, as we need skilful, dynamic surveyors to serve a growing and varied workload.

My first Cannes property experience was intense. I ensured my diary was packed with meetings arranged in advance, testing my organisational skills to the limit! We co-hosted with Ergro Group a very enjoyable lunch for around 35 colleagues and peers and spent quality time on our EK chartered boat.

I have returned with around 70 business cards, having received as many as I dished out. What came across loud and clear was that this sector is not short of passion and ambition, and everyone I spoke to was keen to make new connections to drive their companies and careers forward.

It was a brilliant networking experience and I would recommend it to any property professional. My advice — with the benefit of hindsight — is to build in some downtime, as a non-stop schedule of meetings, lunches and dinners can leave you quite exhausted albeit grateful of the experience! ■



**A major challenge shared with most Cannes visitors was recruitment, no matter the sector. Solicitors, building consultancy firms, property management companies — all are struggling to find talented people**



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● The inaugural Doyenne conference and awards at the Oval cricket ground



CASE STUDY

## International Women's Day

**Kelly Sale and I spent International Women's Day on 8 March in the company of some brilliant property people at the inaugural Doyenne conference and awards at the Oval cricket ground in south London.**

The French speakers amongst you may know that doyenne means 'the most respected or most experienced woman member of a group or profession' which was a very good reflection of the female talent celebrating our collective successes on the day. Doyenne, set up as an organisation for woman in leasehold, was founded in 2016 and all being well, will hold these conferences annually.

Presentations throughout the day were engaging and sometimes eye-opening, whether they were exploring soft skills, career development, major changes in the industry or drilling down into some technical matters. Congratulations again to all the award winners!

I presented a summary of the two latest pieces of health and safety legislation affecting property managers — the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022. It was good to present on H&S matters from a surveyor's perspective, and now at least everyone knows how to measure the height of a residential building!

Fast forward exactly two weeks, and I was attending the Building Safety Regulator conference on 22 March, again an inaugural

event, this time in Westminster's Central Hall. A packed day with first-class speakers, but so important for all involved.

And one day later on 23 March, I was delighted to present on planning for major works at the Bristol Leasehold Management Professionals (LMP) event which was brilliant as ever. I was ably supported on the day by colleagues Mike Burkinshaw and Jake West. In addition to presentations by fellow industry experts on the golden thread, wellbeing and lease variations, my session focussed on pre tender inspections of building, using thermography to provide crucial information about the energy efficiency of a building, especially when it comes to the exterior wall insulation, draft exclusion and settling debates on repairs vs replacement of windows. I delivered some insight into some of the techniques we use regularly as building surveyors, such as mortar testing, render patch repairs and core testing to calculate U-values.

I included some 'future proofing' slides, explaining how we assess buildings for potential renewable energy technologies. I used an example of a roof re-covering project where the client was interested in planning for PV in the future. We're working with their appointed engineers to determine a plan for the potential strengthening of the roof in readiness.

I hope to see you at an industry event soon! ■

## Case Study

**Location:** Royal Tunbridge Wells  
**Type of works:** External repairs and redecorations

We're looking forward to this ex decs project starting this summer. We're in discussions with the client ahead of appointing a contractor, who will repair and redecorate this property that has previously painted brickwork and timber windows.



**I was delighted to present on planning for major works at the Bristol Leasehold Management Professionals (LMP) event which was brilliant as ever**



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## CASE STUDY



## CASE STUDY



## Planned Maintenance Programmes

We recently wrote an article for NOTB where we discussed how to get the most out of the service charge, which included maintaining a healthy reserve fund, the importance of planning major works early, and how commissioning a 5–10 year planned maintenance programme can assist with forward planning and cost effectiveness.

In the past month we have carried out a PMP inspection for Vale Royal Abbey, a Grade II\* Listed building in Cheshire. The roof arrangement was complex consisting of inverted roofs, pitched and valley roofs, dormers, lead flat roofs, and a clock tower. Due to this complexity and the limited visibility from ground level, we recommended that a drone survey is carried out by our house team, EK Digital.

Without these aerial drone images, or indeed expensive access equipment, we would have needed to make reasonable assumptions on typical defects based on the construction type, the age of the property, and when external maintenance was last undertaken.

From our thorough review of the drone imagery we were able to identify a number of defects which would not have been identified from ground level. Such defects included a fallen finial which had caused damage to slates, missing lead, and cracked/missing mortar joints. These observations benefited our client as we were able to recommend immediate solutions to rectify the defects identified ■

## City Mills

Another example of where a drone survey has proven invaluable was for City Mills, a Grade II Listed building in Bradford. We were contacted by the client for assistance following ongoing leaks into a top floor apartment. By using a drone, we were able to undertake a close and detailed inspection of the roof, which would have ordinarily required the use of scaffolding or other access equipment.

Following our detailed schedule of condition report we are delighted to have been appointed as contract administrator for the roof works. With the information collected during the detailed drone survey we have produced a comprehensive schedule of work which will be put out to tender to a number of suitable contractors.

Call us today on **0161 706 0676** or email [enquiries@earlkendrick.com](mailto:enquiries@earlkendrick.com) to discuss Planned Maintenance Programmes.



With the information collected during the detailed drone survey we have produced a comprehensive schedule of work which will be put out to tender



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At Earl Kendrick (West) we are seeing an increased interest from owners, property managers and occupants of historic buildings to understand their energy use and how it can be improved.

Whilst improving the energy performance of historic buildings can be undertaken, and is likely to be necessary in the future, it is not always as easy to implement any improvements when compared to more modern structures.

The first hurdle when looking at historic buildings is to determine whether the structure is listed, or in a conservation area. This can be done through Historic England and checking their database of listed buildings and Local Authority maps for conservation areas. Other limitations might include lease agreements, land covenants, estate schemes or similar.

## Understanding & improving the energy use of historic buildings



Listed buildings are separated into the following (in increasing importance):

- **Grade II** (buildings of special interest and most common),
- **Grade II\*** (particularly important buildings of more than special interest and less common) and
- **Grade I** (buildings of exceptional interest and these are the least common of the grades).

There is, generally, less room for manoeuvre with regard to alterations the more important a building is deemed to be, however this does not preclude it from being improved. It is likely that any alterations proposed to a listed property with the aim of improving its energy efficiency would trigger the need to apply for Listed Building Consent.

Conservation areas are designated by each local authority and can restrict alterations occurring to properties within them, particularly if those alterations would be visible externally. As with listed buildings it is likely that any external changes to a property within a conservation area would trigger the need to (also) apply for Conservation Area Consent.

Once it has been determined if any limitations may affect the building, we can then investigate where the building may be lacking and what can be done to improve any areas of poor energy efficiency. It is important to note that some modern solutions may not be suitable for more historic methods of

construction and that professional advice be sought to ensure that the fabric of the building is not compromised or at risk of damage from any new additions.

When a suitable method for improving the building has been established, we can then develop a works specification along with the necessary documentation required for any planning consent matters. Subject to the necessary approvals being granted, we can then undertake the contract admin/project management role to ensure that the approved works are undertaken with the necessary care and attention to detail required when working with these inherently special structures.

Needless to say, we are able to advise and assist with any heritage building queries. We have assisted several clients with their heritage assets, planning applications and major works schemes and have dealt with all kinds of historic properties including residential (from small huts through to grand stately homes), industrial and agricultural buildings, fortifications and more. ■



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INTERVIEWED BY:  
**Jonathan Channing**  
Group Operations Director

better: History of the leaks, sight of drawings, and arrangements for access to the roofs and affected flats. Then while on site, compare the drawings to what's there, access to water for the testing, and access to all the necessary areas, including kitchen cupboards!"

**Jonathan:** "Naturally, you need to stay safe working at height."

**Jason:** "Safety is my number 1 priority – we were all harnessed up."

**Jonathan:** "I know the building is home to some very high profile people. Do you find it stressful working in people's homes when the artwork on the walls alone could be priceless?"

**Jason:** "Absolutely. But it's more stressful for the residents. They just want the leaks to stop, which is why I get so much satisfaction from sourcing leaks that others have failed to find." ■



## Case Study

**Location:** Fulham, SW London

Sometimes water testing dye is needed but if we can, we will use UV dye which is invisible to the naked eye, so under the cover of darkness, we can follow the water with a UV torch. At this development in Fulham, the UV dye showed us that the water was ingressing around the window frame, entering the cavity, running along the slab and then soaking up the wall. Lessee delighted! Now for the window repair...

## Don't be wet behind the ears!

To some, tracing the source of water ingress is akin to finding a needle in a haystack. Not to Jason Clohessy though, who had just finished a long day on the ropes to answer some questions about a recent leak detection job in west London.

**Jonathan:** "So this iconic, listed apartment building in west London — why has it suffered from so many leaks?"

**Jason:** "It's not uncommon with new builds, and in this case, the causes were multiple. We were the third firm to be brought in to trace the leaks to half a dozen apartments."

**Jonathan:** "What were these multiple causes?"

**Jason:** "For one leak, it was simply a faulty soil pipe gasket, but experience told us where to look. Another one was down to the detail over a door... a cladding installation error meaning the door was effectively ajar. Another was a smoke vent not closing properly. I also found a lightning conductor that hadn't been installed properly and rainwater was dripping down it and eventually into a kitchen cupboard!"

**Jonathan:** "The EK building surveyors

tell me about faulty windows that let in water. Is that a problem at this building?"

**Jason:** "Yes, a Juliet balcony's door seal was defective and was allowing in a small amount of rainwater, but it built up and caused damage to the living room. It was very easy to fix yet no-one spotted the cause... knowledge, plus half a bottle of water."

**Jonathan:** "When you're doing the testing, do you use dye in the water so you can see how it's travelling?"

**Jason:** "I try not to, as the dye can leave stains in people's flats. At this building, I was assisted by Kelly [Sale] who was my eyes and ears within the flats when I was doing the water testing. We were in constant contact on the phone, so I could communicate to Kelly when the water was on the way. Kelly would then listen and watch for the water appearing inside the flat."

**Jonathan:** "I can tell that you enjoy the challenge, especially where others have failed to find the source of the water ingress. What do you need from managing agents or on site staff as you're preparing for a visit?"

**Jason:** "OK, the more information the



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## EK Cost Management Ltd appointed to provide QS services to the Prestigious Spurgeon's College expansion.



EK Cost Management has been appointed to provide QS services in support of Spurgeon's College, the prestigious Baptist University located in South Norwood Hill, London. Spurgeon's College offers world class theology and counselling teaching and continues on an upwards trajectory of growth and recognition thereby requiring additional space and facilities.

The project comprises the demolition of an existing part of the college and the new build construction of one new four storey block, an extension of the existing main building, and the construction of a striking central architectural semi-basement quad. This will provide additional teaching facilities, comprising lecture rooms, meeting rooms, offices, common areas and the like ■



## Insurance Claims Cost Advice

My team has been appointed to multiple projects working with brokers and loss adjusters to assess the appropriate order of cost of the scope of works generated by 'specified peril' events, particularly fire and flood. We have provided reinstatement cost estimates and passed opinion upon costs submitted for independent review by the insurance specialists.



## Professional Part 35 Expert Witness reports

We have been appointed to provide Expert Witness reports. Where disputes arise, they often centre on scope and cost issues.

We have found in several cases the scope was not clearly defined, or else if it was the cost, it was not agreed up front. EK Cost Management is tasked with professionally assessing what would constitute reasonable costs in the current marketplace and providing opinion under the court required formal Part 35 Expert Witness reports.

Please get in touch if you have a dispute which requires an Expert Witness Quantity Surveyor.

## Example EK QS Services

- Cost Estimating
- Tender Management
- Contract Management
- Post-Contract Reporting & Valuations
- Final Account
- Third Party Cost Reviews





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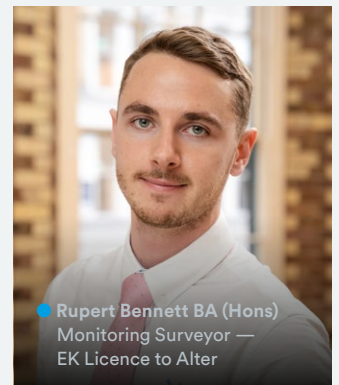


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## Do Minor Works Ever Require Licences?

“Having spent a year acting as a monitoring surveyor for the Licence to Alter team, working closely with landlords, leaseholders, property managers, solicitors and engineers, I have enjoyed superb exposure to a plethora of projects, property types and diverse LTA scenarios.

These have all in the main been major projects which necessitate the involvement of several fellow professionals. Sometimes, however, I have been asked to oversee a project where the alterations or scope of works are minimal, but despite this the lease states that the leaseholder still requires an LTA. These works can involve, for example, installing new hard floors, installation of air conditioning systems, replacement of windows and installation of cables into the common parts.



Rupert Bennett BA (Hons)  
Monitoring Surveyor —  
EK Licence to Alter



Under most residential leases, a tenant (leaseholder) is required to obtain consent from the landlord or the RMC before making alterations to their property. The majority of projects we are involved in and which require a licence to alter involve the following:

1. Altering the structure or layout and demolition of walls.
2. Installing additional sanitary facilities in new wet areas.
3. Installing new heating or alternative service installations.
4. Loft extensions
5. Rear extensions
6. New penetrations through external walls.
7. Basement excavations.



I recently carried out a final inspection at a multi-million pound property based in Queens Gate Place, a prestigious street in South Kensington. The works involved the replacement of the kitchen units and an extension of the existing kitchen island. It also included a full renovation including redecoration throughout and an update to the internal security system. The leaseholder, at least initially, did not understand why a licence to alter was necessary for these works. We explained that due to the lease covenants, landlord's consent was indeed required. We were able to guide the leaseholder through the process and although the leaseholder was frustrated that they

would have to obtain a licence for such minor works, we were able to deal with the licence application from initial inspection through to final inspection as double quick time.

In summary, it is not safe to assume that minor works can be carried out without a licence, so if there is any doubt, we are always happy to review the lease, the proposed works and offer our recommendations as to whether consent is required” ■

If you have any questions about LTA scenarios, please don't hesitate to contact me: [rupert@licencetoalter.com](mailto:rupert@licencetoalter.com)



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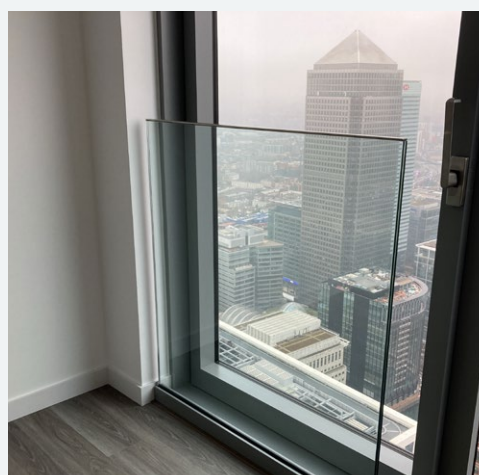
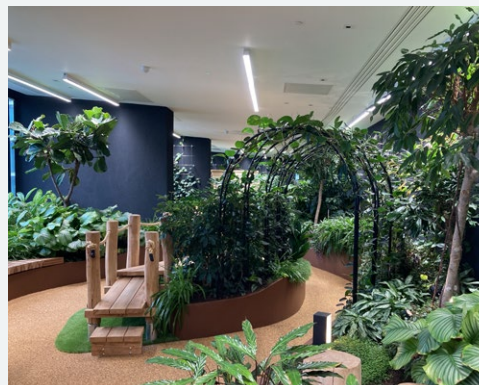


● Landmark Pinnacle in London's Docklands

## Landmark Pinnacle

EK Reinstatement Cost Assessments has just completed their insurance valuation of the UK's 4<sup>th</sup> tallest building — Landmark Pinnacle, in London's Docklands.

Built chiefly during the pandemic, the imposing tower stretches 75 floors above ground level with a two-level basement, and reaches 233m into the sky. There are residents' viewing galleries at levels 26, 54 and 75 including this attractive tropical garden on level 54. Levels 2–10 are now occupied by the 'The Cove' serviced apartments, and there are private hire spaces in the viewing galleries for the long term residents to hold private parties if their own apartments are not sufficiently expansive! The building is so tall that it has one 11kV substation in the basement and another one on level 75 to reduce transmission losses. "It's almost as if they are treating the top half of the building as a 'village down the road' rather than part of the same structure" claimed our guide from the on site estates team ■



## What exactly is an 'inflation provision'?

You may have noticed in the small print of your buildings insurance schedule a '10%' or '25%' inflation provision previously. This converts your day one declared value (DV) into a 'sum insured' (SI). So a building insured for £1m becomes £1.25m with a 25% inflation provision. And this extra provision covers inflation from the time the policy was taken out, to the hypothetical time in the future when the destroyed building is reinstated — remember some buildings can take many years to reinstate.

With inflation as high as it is now, inflation provisions are becoming more important and as well as ensuring your DV is accurate with an RCA, it is well worth talking to your insurance broker to insure the inflation provision in your policy is adequate as well. It is not unheard of for even relatively simple and non-prominent buildings to be carrying inflation provisions of 50% at the moment. Remember, you've got to think not 'what this would cost today', but what it could potentially end up costing to build after a fire investigation, years' worth of legal wranglings, and a 3 year+ rebuild period with a protracted and volatile supply chain.



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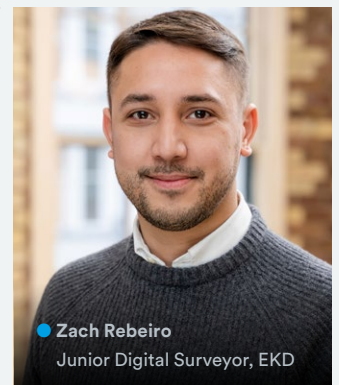
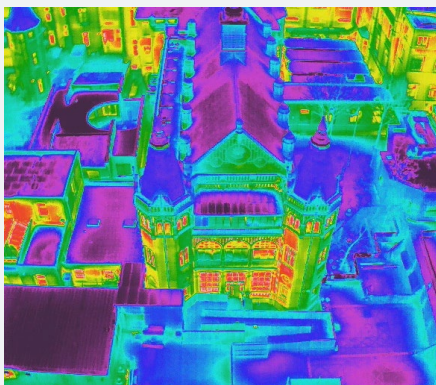


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## A day in the life... Zach Rebeiro — Lead Thermographer



**Zach Rebeiro**  
Junior Digital Surveyor, EKD

**“As the lead thermographer at EK Digital, my days are often filled with new challenges. Here is a glimpse into my typical working day.**

My day usually starts early in the morning and I review the schedule for the day ahead. My first task is to assess the locations that need to be surveyed. This involves examining site plans of the building and identifying the areas of potential energy loss and moisture intrusion to ensure these are included as part of the full building envelope survey.

Once I have completed my desktop analysis, I undertake any necessary maintenance of our equipment ensuring it is working correctly and calibrated for the survey to be undertaken. I then prepare to head to site.

Upon arrival at the site, I conduct a preliminary walk-through to identify the areas of interest and confirm the locations to be scanned. This is undertaken during daylight hours and I ensure standard photographs are taken of all the areas to be collected during this time. I then typically have around 2 hours of waiting time to allow the heat gained from the sun to dissipate. During

this time I review the information I have already collected.

The actual thermal scanning process can take anything from a few hours to an entire night depending on the size of the building and the complexity of the issues being investigated. During the scan, I carefully examine the building’s exterior walls, roofing, windows and doors to detect any thermal anomalies. Some surveys also require that I undertake scans of the interior areas as these can help support the findings of the external thermal survey.

After completing the thermal capture, I review the images I have taken to ensure that there is no missing data or areas.

Following the on-site survey I then undertake an analysis of the thermal data. Firstly I need to tune the images using specialist software so that they correctly display the thermal data embedded in them. During this process I’m looking for thermal anomalies that indicate potential energy loss or moisture ingress. I then compile my findings into a comprehensive report, which then goes through a quality assurance check by a colleague before being sent to the client. This part of

the process can take several hours to ensure that it contains all the relevant information to support our findings and provide the necessary recommendations regarding the next steps our client should consider.

As well as conducting thermal surveys, I spend time researching new technologies and attending training sessions to stay up-to-date with the latest industry trends and best practices. I’m also part of the drone survey team at EK Digital and use thermally equipped drones for a number of our thermal surveys.

My work as a thermographer in the building sector is both challenging and rewarding. I take a great deal of satisfaction when helping freeholders, leaseholders and tenants to improve the energy efficiency, safety, and comfort of buildings, while also ensuring that they are structurally sound and meeting their Net Zero 2030 requirements.” ■

If you have any questions about my work or would like to schedule a thermal survey for your building, please don’t hesitate to contact me: [zach@ek.digital](mailto:zach@ek.digital)



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● **Abbie Reid MSc**  
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I have also been able to further my knowledge and experience surrounding the Party Wall Act and since joining EK McQuade, I have become a member of the Pyramus and Thisbe Society

## Meet Abbie

**“I began my career in the head office of a prominent London estate agency, training new agents in ethics and company values. As part of my training, I had to sit the Propertymark exam which included modules in Building Construction and Defects which I found very interesting indeed.**

I then made the decision to switch career paths, so I returned to school to get my master’s degree in building surveying whilst working full time within a general building practice to gain experience whilst learning.

It was at this practice that I was introduced to the Party Wall etc. Act 1996 and from an early stage in my career, I was involved in many party wall projects. I found that I enjoyed the process, the legal element, and the negotiations involved with progressing projects. After a few years of general practice, I made the decision to specialise in Party Wall and have since joined the amazing team at EK McQuade almost two years ago now as

Senior Party Wall Surveyor.

It has been an incredible experience being a part of not only the wider Earl Kendrick Project & Building Consultancy group, but also the party wall team itself, being a crucial part of EK McQuade’s ongoing success. I have also had the opportunity to work on some interesting and at sometimes challenging schemes while making some great connections within a variety of areas of the built environment. I have also been able to further my knowledge and experience surrounding the Party Wall Act and since joining EK McQuade have become a member of the Pyramus and Thisbe Society.

One scheme I was involved in was a large-scale demolition and rebuild for the London Borough of Camden which involved numerous adjoining owners who appointed a handful of different surveyors to act on their behalf — which can be very challenging just trying to coordinate all of the schedules of condition!

This scheme also involved non-act related access requirements where our input was needed in preparing and agreeing scaffold access licences alongside other surveyors and solicitors.

Over the last year, I have visited many architects’ offices and have delivered several Zoom CPD sessions specifically tailored for architects and their involvement in party wall matters, and how they can advise their clients from the outset to mitigate against delays and costs. This has been not only a great networking opportunity, but my confidence has also grown hugely. I get a lot of satisfaction from helping people navigate the often difficult-to-understand party wall process” ■

To get in touch with Abbie, send her an email or call the London office:

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## Spring 2023 EK Retrofit Update

It's been a busy and interesting quarter at EK Retrofit. I wrote articles for Flat Living magazine and Garland UK (roofing), and contributed to the RICS's "Value of Green Initiatives". And I was honoured to have been invited to join an expert working group (EWG) for the RICS alongside what I consider to be an all-star cast of leaders in the retrofit field, to inform the production of a new RICS Professional Standard on retrofit. The aim of the standard is to provide a framework for RICS members undertaking energy efficiency retrofit surveys for homeowners, occupiers and landlords of residential property. The focus is freehold dwellings (houses) initially, with leasehold flats likely to follow separately owing to its various complexities. The intention is to publish the professional standard by the end of 2023, pending public consultation, so watch this space!

Alongside getting actively involved in the wider industry discussion around retrofit, we have continued to advise our clients on the available thermal improvements for their properties. Now we have entered 2023, the projected 2025 increase in the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard's minimum energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of "C" by 2025 looms ever closer. This, combined with what felt like a particularly cold winter and record high heating bills means that the improvements required to our residential building stock are increasingly urgent.

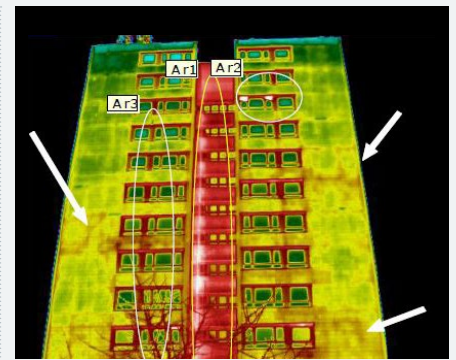
Here is an interesting case study: a 15-storey block of flats in east London. The building was constructed in the 1960s using Large Panel Construction, and it is underperforming thermally, with the majority of flats achieving EPC ratings of D or worse. Our client was keen to understand their options for retrofit, and they were particularly

interested in the feasibility of installing external wall insulation (EWI).

Our colleagues at EK Digital attended site one freezing morning before dawn to carry out a thermal imaging survey of the building's elevations and roof using aerial drones. The resulting thermal report demonstrated thermal patterns consistent with considerable energy loss via the external envelope. Heat-loss was visible via the concrete panelled construction, which was uninsulated and losing heat via its joints. However heat loss was most notable from the window frames and mullions.

The windows were double glazed PVCu units, installed only 10 years ago. PVCu windows are often guaranteed for 10 years but can be expected to last for 20 years or more. Whilst these windows were in reasonable condition, window design has developed a lot in recent years in terms of thermal performance. Modern window frames often incorporate a "thermal break" which interrupts thermal conductivity by cutting heat flow and drastically reducing energy loss. This also reduces condensation forming on the inner surfaces, which often results in mould and rot. So at just 10 years old, these windows can be considered as "dated", and can expect to receive a score of "average" on the EPCs, bringing the property's overall rating down.

We have advised our client not to consider external wall insulation without upgrading their windows (or undertaking alternative methods to improve the windows' thermal performance) at the same time. External wall insulation on high-rise buildings is no small project, with the scaffolding costs alone well into the tens of thousands of pounds. Some EWI systems offer a 70-year guarantee, but undertaking other works during that time such as window replacements



could result in damage to the insulation and rendering the guarantee worthless. Planning, timing and a holistic approach are essential factors in achieving successful retrofit. As always, there is a balance to be struck between upfront investment and long-term gain.

Looking forward to the rest of spring and the summer, EK Retrofit have some exciting instructions in the pipeline and I'm delighted to have presented on retrofit at the NOTB Leasehold London event on 22 March and I'm looking forward to the Oxford Weekend at the end of the month ■

### EK Retrofit is hiring!

**We are looking for an experienced building surveyor with Level 5 Diploma in Retrofit Coordination (completed or ongoing) to join our expanding team.**

The role will be hybrid, and the ideal candidate will have experience in and knowledge of traditional building surveying services such as defect diagnosis, design and specification and contract administration, plus they must have a passion for retrofit and a keen interest in spreading the word. If you are interested or know anyone who might be suitable, please reach out to me directly to discuss.

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