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A BUILDING TRANSFORMATION CASE STUDY

Pullman London, St Pancras – Façade Condition Survey

Sitting on one of London's busiest thoroughfares and close to a couple of its main transport hubs, the Pullman hotel is a modern example of the city's eclectic mix of buildings. The façade itself required a full condition survey, reinforcing the client's commitment to safety, compliance and as part of their relationship with the owner.

Project description

The Pullman London St Pancras, one of Accor's many properties within London and the UK, is a 17-storey, modern, luxury hotel that dominates the skyline along the Euston Road and holds a prime position for anyone visiting the city.

Through our ongoing relationship that has been developed over the last decade, we were asked to undertake a façade condition survey that concentrated primarily on the aluminium façade cladding panels, but with consideration to the other façade materials, and designed to provide essential fabric condition information. This data could then be used to identify any immediate repairs, provide the client with a specification and plan for the future, and identify maintenance activities that could be utilised to re-align and future-proof each elevation.

Project overview

With the client adopting a proactive approach to their responsibilities, compliance and in order to ensure the safety of the façade, the logical step was a condition survey. Although generally well maintained, the hotel's location above the busy Euston Road heightened the need to ensure all panels were correctly fixed. With

localised historical issues having previously been raised and repaired, this proactive approach of ongoing, regular inspections is a core requirement.

With our holistic approach and understanding of the building envelope, our abseil and MEWP teams were ideally placed for delivering the façade survey across a building which stretched up to 17-floors. The unique layout of the hotel required a mixed access solution, with the team surveying, documenting and geo-locating each defect, as well as ensuring that any high risk defects were made safe, or where needed they were safely removed. This ensured that all critical data was captured and the integrity of the building, as well as a safe environment for the public and occupants was maintained.

With the main survey now completed, all data was logged within our bespoke façade management software, allowing us to analyse the key details and provide the client with an all-encompassing report that documented and detailed the condition of each element of the façade, identified any areas of weakness or concern, made recommendations for rectification of those issues, and provided accurate costs for delivering the work.

Why were we surveying?

As part of the client's lease requirements, and in order to ensure that the building is safe and compliant, the key objectives of the condition survey were to provide the client with a full understanding of the façade's current condition, initially allowing them to understand any immediate actions that were required, as well as looking to the future for any maintenance and compliance driven repairs. Although the key focus was the cladding, the elements that were surveyed include:

- The aluminium cladding panels
- Cover caps, pressure plates and cills.
- Seals and gaskets.
- Glazing and windows
- All high-level detailing and finishes.
- Cappings, coping and waterproofing details.
- Spandrel panels and supporting façade materials.



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Project challenges

Due to the hotel's central London location, including the extreme volumes of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, we encountered various challenges throughout the project, including:

- Unique and difficult access to each section of the façade, including a lack of fixed abseil anchor points.
- Roof level phone masts affecting the safe delivery of the work. Each mast must be turned off to allow operatives to work around it, which required advanced negotiations with the phone companies and daily safety checks.
- Delivery of works at high-level, with exposure to higher wind speeds.
- An active hotel open for business, with delivery of works during restricted timescales.
- Pedestrian access across the front and side elevations, requiring exclusion zones, a banksperson and council permits.