

NEWS RELEASE

L&Q finds infra-red thermography from Thermal Inspections Ltd “surprising” — positively

As one of the United Kingdom’s largest housing associations, L&Q views sustainability as a highly important factor — alongside high quality and affordability. An ongoing activity at L&Q is seeking out new technologies which may help in the group’s work of developing new homes, on one hand, and on the other, maintaining the huge volume of existing housing stock, to ever-higher levels of regulatory standards, and beyond. The discovery of how infra-red thermography by Thermal Inspections Ltd could assist traditional surveying techniques, bringing greater speed and efficiency to clarification of deficiencies in a building’s ‘envelope’, and playing a useful part in the overall drive towards sustainability goals, has been a very positive one for the group.

L&Q works with more than 90 authorities in London and the South East, and with more than 70 specialist agencies in the supported housing sector. It employs more than 1,000 staff in 20 locations in the task of managing more than 60,000 homes. Robin Feeley, L&Q’s sustainable development manager, with a corporate-wide remit, explains that the group builds its new homes — between one and two thousand a year — to sustainability criteria which are far above those dictated by standard building regulations. As part of this, he and his colleagues are constantly on the lookout for innovative ways of working or new technologies which might help the development teams towards more cost effective operations. His remit is a wide one, as the sustainability strategy covers all aspects of the group’s work, including retrofitting existing housing stock, improving the efficiency of the company’s offices, and behavioural change towards aspects of sustainability for residents and staff.

During a recent behavioural change project Mr Feeley was working with six groups of elderly people who live in sheltered schemes — two storey buildings, each for 30 residents. He was talking to them about energy efficiency, making the link between saving money and following a lower carbon lifestyle. Some of the residents responded by telling him that they already did a lot of what he was advocating, but that they had real problems with their windows — problems which they thought made their homes much colder.

Mr Feeley did not want to add to the already huge planned maintenance programme, but he also felt bad about recommending energy frugality to elderly people if, as it seemed, they were being somewhat let down by the physical fabric of their homes. He is not a surveyor, and he was pondering on how he might put some facts behind the residents' complaints without taking up surveyor colleagues' time when he happened to receive a mailshot from Thermal Inspections Limited, outlining how infra-red thermography (IRT) can speed up diagnosis of faults in older buildings.

"This information arrived in front of me at exactly the right time," says Mr Feeley. He had been aware of thermal imaging as a technique, used in various different applications, but had not previously thought of using it in the context of his work at L&Q. Now he realised that it could offer his group some of the benefits that it was already providing to other Thermal Inspections clients, not least the savings in time and cost in bringing facts to the fore. "What you see in the images tells such a strong story without using any words."

Having engaged the services of Thermal Inspections to take images of the sheltered housing, Mr Feeley was pleased with the speed with which the images and succinct report were delivered to him, as well as with the fact that the process impinged not at all on either the residents, or on any of his maintenance management team colleagues. The results demonstrated that there were problems with some of the buildings — slippage of insulation in some instances, broken window seals in others.

Taking thermographic images does not replace traditional surveying techniques, but rather is used as part of the toolbox deployed towards saving time, reducing cost, bringing greater evidence and precision into decisions regarding maintenance priorities. Robin Feeley believes that the United Kingdom has been slower to take up IRT as a helpful technology than, for example, North America because our milder climate has made the achievement of highly efficient insulation standards less of a priority. Climate change, and the need to cut carbon emissions as well as reduce energy usage and costs, are changing people's and government's views on this subject. As for L&Q, he is spreading the word among his colleagues about the usefulness and benefits of this relatively innovative technology, following his own experience. "It has been surprising, and we are going to look to use it again in the future."

Notes to Editors:

Thermal Inspections Ltd

Thermal Inspections Ltd specialises in infra-red thermographic surveys of buildings. The results provide immediate proof of any energy inefficiencies and/or defects in a building's envelope. These insights help clients towards reducing energy costs and improving environmental credentials. They can also help towards regulation compliance, for example, Registered Social Landlords who need to meet 2010 Decent Homes Standard targets.

Since 2005 numerous organisations have retained Thermal Inspections' leading edge technology services. Evidence-based understanding of their buildings helps clients towards better targeted predictive maintenance and sustainability programmes.

For further information go to: www.thermal-inspections.com

L&Q

L&Q is one of the largest housing associations in England and manages a stock of over 60,000 properties. They have been operating since 1963 and their mission is 'creating places where people want to live'. L&Q works with more than 90 local authorities in London and the South East and in 2009 was ranked 22nd in The Sunday Times Top 100 Companies to Work For list.

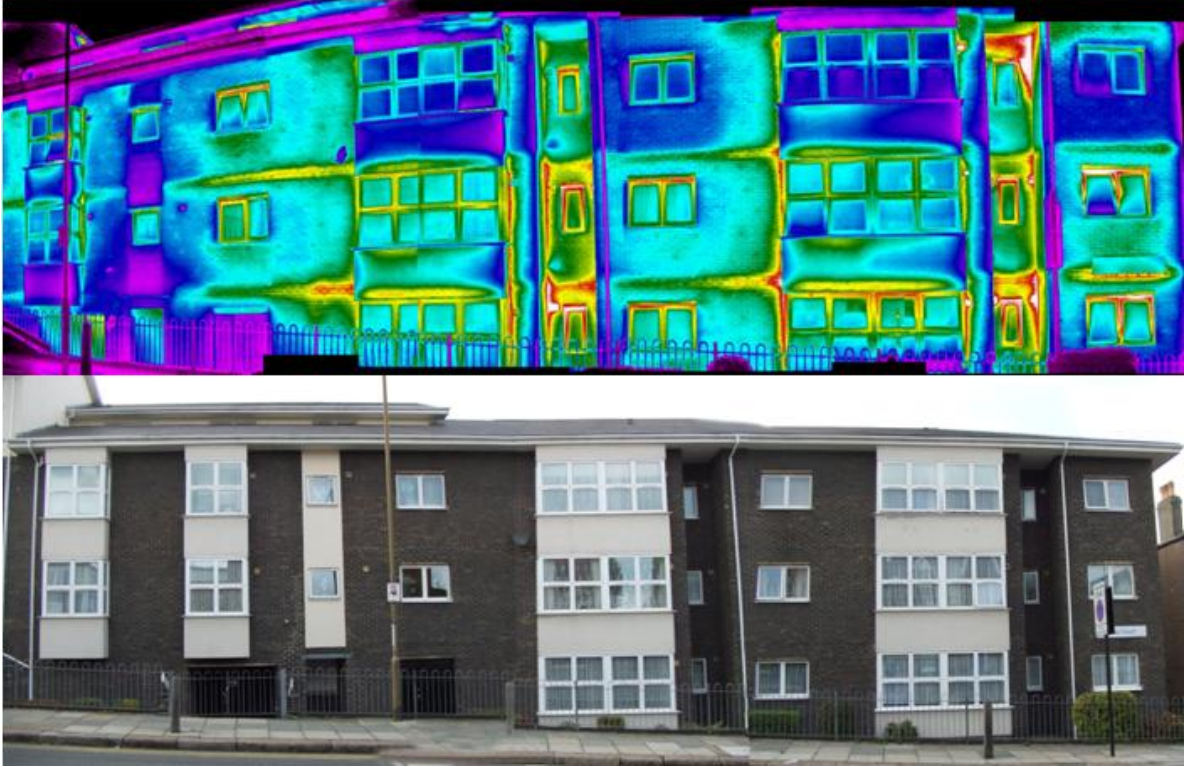
For further information go to: www.lqgroup.org.uk



A Thermal Inspections Ltd survey confirmed residents' and L&Q's suspicions that these single glazed windows were inefficient, enabling L&Q to remedy the issue.



These cavity wall anomalies could have gone undetected had they not been identified by Thermal Inspections Ltd for L&Q.



Otherwise invisible issues in this block of flats are shown up clearly in this thermal image taken by Thermal Inspections Ltd for L&Q.



A Thermal Inspections Ltd survey can highlight a building that is in apparently good thermal condition, such as this, taken for L&Q.