



PRESS RELEASE

GE's Protimeter HygroTrac In Pilot Project To Help Predict Optimum Glazing and Insulation of Refurbished Tower Blocks

Accurate and Reliable Monitoring of Psychometric Conditions Without Disruption to Occupants

Groby, Leics. 9 September 2010 - A Protimeter HygroTrac environmental monitoring system from GE's Advanced Sensors business is being used as part of a pilot project which is expected to enhance the specification of optimised glazing and insulation in future tower block refurbishments. The research work is being carried out during the refurbishment of the 23-storey Ferrier Point tower block in Canning Town, London, which is part of the £3.7billion regeneration scheme being carried out by the London Borough of Newham. Principal contractor for the project is Rydon Group Ltd of East Grinstead.

Today's tower blocks provide homes for a wide variety of occupants, often living very different lifestyles. Furthermore, lifestyles vary from region to region and these changes can have significant effect on the living environment within the building envelope. What is seen as a comfortable room temperature in Glasgow is often very different to room temperature in Southampton. As a result, there can never be a "one size fits all" approach to glazing and insulation and the Ferrier Point Research Pilot Project has been initiated by external envelope contractor, Harley Curtain Wall Ltd to examine the feasibility of profiling individual tower blocks before they are refurbished.

This means that the Hygrotrac system is monitoring temperature, humidity and dew point within seven selected flats in the tower block to allow assessments to be made of the internal building environment. In each flat, Hygrotrac sensors are fitted in the kitchen lounge and main bedroom and a further two sensors monitor external conditions simultaneously. Each sensor uploads its temperature, humidity and dew point data wirelessly every 15 minutes to a central data acquisition gateway, located in one of the flats. The gateways forward the sensor readings in real time over an internet connection to the HygroTrac server where subscribers can log in to view both real time and historical data. If an internet connection is not available the gateway stores data to its internal FLASH memory and uploads it to the server when connection is restored.

As Harley's technical manager, Graham Hackley, explains, "Monitoring the conditions within the flats obviously generates a great deal of data and this must be collected in a way that does not disrupt the daily lives of the occupants. In addition, it is important that we are confident that the sensors are functioning continuously or, if not, that we receive indication of any problem. With a manual data downloading system, we would cause disruption and would not have confidence in sensor operation between downloads. We had already come across the Hygrotrac system in a project being carried out at Bath University and had no hesitation in specifying the system for this application. Hopefully, future projects can involve profiling tower blocks with sensor systems well before refurbishment begins to tailor the glazing and insulation to meet the real needs of the occupants."

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