

Mr Mike Quinton
NHBC House,
Davy Avenue,
Milton Keynes,
Bucks,
MK5 8FP

October 16th 2013

Ref: New build property

Dear Mr Quinton

Further to my recent complaint and your confirmation that you are investigating, I can confirm that yesterday afternoon we met with Nigel Soloman from Benningtongreen, whom TaylorWimpey have appointed as a consultant to 'mediate' in our situation. We have also received the report from the independent electrical inspection that we arranged on Thursday 10th October, the findings of which were discussed with Mr Soloman.

Before advising you of its content, I feel it is important to inform you that our initial concerns in respect of the electrical installations were first raised with the site manager Richard Crawford and assistant site manager, David, during our meeting on Monday 23rd September, the first weekday morning following completion of sale. During that meeting we showed them images on our laptop, amongst them were photographs of inappropriate electrical installation methods. These issues were further highlighted to James Field, Area Production Manager and the assistant site manager David, during their site visit on Tuesday 24th September. We advised TaylorWimpey that our concerns were supported by my brother, who runs a contracting business in Devon and has over 25 years' experience as an NIC EIC registered electrician. At no time during either discussion did any representative from TaylorWimpey raise their own concerns in respect of the electrical safety issues.

As I am sure you are aware, a new build property should have no electrical defects, faults or incorrect installations upon handover. This is assured by NIC EIC guidance, enforcement of British Standards and supported by a stringent process for supervisory sign off for all works carried out, as documented in the installation certificate issued to homeowners. Our local independent NIC EIC registered and qualified electrical contractor spent 5 hours at our property and carried out a "sample" inspection and test. The report summarises the condition of the installation as per NIC EIC guidance as being either 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'.

In the case of our brand new property the report states;

General condition of the installation in terms of electrical safety: **UNSATISFACTORY**

Overall assessment of the installation in terms of its suitability for continued use: **UNSATISFACTORY**

The report (attached and via Link “7” below) details 27 faults and defects, 16 of which are Code 3 “improvement recommended”, 2 items require further investigation and, of more serious concern, a further 9 defects are classed as “Code 2 Potentially dangerous – urgent remedial action required” I must stress that this was a sample test. We have been advised that given the incredibly high number of faults, there are likely to be other potentially dangerous issues in the property.

Whilst we have been in touch with TaylorWimpey’s electrical subcontractor, ClarksonEvans and the NIC EIC, we wanted to have our own independent inspection carried out. The NIC EIC response was simply to invite ClarksonEvans back on site to carry out an inspection. Given the commercial implications with what they would have found and our experience to date with TaylorWimpey’s apparent attempts to mislead us, how likely is it that ClarksonEvans would own up to the extent of the issues and the potential implications across all of the properties they have worked on? With TaylorWimpey’s award winning site manager’s earlier denial of the true extent of the works required, and the clear lack of care across all aspects of the finish, we believe that we are justified in our lack of trust in all of the trades that have worked on behalf of TaylorWimpey.

This situation is dire and is an affront to the building industry. It highlights an endemic abuse of the trust of honest consumers who are buying houses based on the assurances of the NHBC. We believe we have solid evidence of wilful and professional negligence on several counts, most notably;

1. It is reasonable to have expected any site manager, let alone one who has received an NHBC award, to have followed up on the visual defects to the electrical installations, having been advised by ourselves and having himself carried out “numerous inspections” of our property? Or, given the extensive faults clearly visible across all aspects of the finish, is it more likely that no such inspections ever took place?
2. If a ClarksonEvans supervisor did indeed carry out their duties under the NIC EIC guidance, how were they able to sign our installation certificate to say that “having exercised reasonable skill and care when carrying out the inspection and testing and hereby certify that the said work for which I have been responsible is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, in accordance with BS 7671”?

The inspection report does not include general details of shoddy workmanship, but I have numerous photographs of poor terminations, badly installed backboxes and a complete lack of care and attention, all of which simply echo what you have now seen across all aspects of the property.

There is irrefutable evidence of a complete lack of professional care and a significant number of breaches of the IEE Regulations in accordance with BS 7671 throughout the 2nd fix stage. Even with a 100% condition inspection and test, it will not include such items as cables installed within the fabric of the building or underneath floors or in inaccessible roof spaces. Without a full intrusive inspection of the 1st fix installations there can be no guarantee of the quality or safety of the entire installation, particularly given that it was the same electrician who carried out all of the work. Any testing carried out will identify the condition at the time of the inspection, it will not identify the future likelihood of deterioration as a result of improper installation methods and inappropriate use of materials, resulting from things such as burring of cables or other such damage during the 1st fix stage.

The purpose of enrolment to the NIC EIC and its standalone accreditation is to provide assurance to the consumer in respect of adherence to standards and aspects of safety. No one can deny from the evidence presented, that TaylorWimpey and ClarksonEvans have failed in every aspect of this process.

- How did the NHBC sign this off?
- How was the site manager awarded NHBCs highest accolade for the same development?
- How can TaylorWimpey continue to market the Chariots as an award winning site?
- What confidence can we have in any of the 1st and 2nd fix stages of the build?

These are reasonable questions to which we need comprehensive answers. Particularly given that we have been placed in harm's way by TaylorWimpey, seemingly exacerbated by catastrophic failures in the NHBC process. The fact that the property was sold to us on the basis of the NHBC quality standard and your awards process, simply adds insult to injury and raises serious questions about the rigour of judging and the commercial independence of the NHBC.

As the responsible developer, TaylorWimpey have placed our lives in danger by handing us the keys to this property. It needs repeating that even when presented with over 700 photographs and having been personally shown the visible defects to the electrical installations, they maintained that it was suitable and satisfactory for handover whilst insisting that there was no reason we could not move in.

We have now spent over £1000 on independent advice, as we simply cannot trust TaylorWimpey. My partner has been signed off from work with stress and I have now taken 3 weeks leave from work to deal with this. Despite TaylorWimpey being fully aware of our issues and concerns, they have still not fully responded to us in writing to acknowledge the enormity of the situation.

There are clear grounds to suspect issues across the whole development and potentially with other neighbouring developments in Augusta Park, where ClarksonEvans have carried out installations. With such blatant failures in their supervision process and questions to be answered in respect of competence, what confidence can homeowners and the NHBC have in the worth of their electrical installation certificates and the robustness of TaylorWimpey's management of its subcontractors?

This matter needs your urgent attention. Code 2 faults include those that may cause a fire. The number of potential dangers that may be lurking throughout TaylorWimpey's occupied properties is surely now a matter for the HSE?

Given the gravity of this situation I would like you to arrange for an inspector to meet me at the property as soon as possible. We have found ourselves in a desperate situation with a national housebuilder initially attempting to conceal the facts. They also know that we cannot afford to pay for rent and a mortgage indefinitely, forcing us to move into the property irrespective of the state it's in, as highlighted by TaylorWimpey's Production Director, Steve Bennet in his email of the 4th October: *"I am conscious that we have agreed set timescales for you to be out of your home and I must reinforce that we will not be extending this offer even if issues remain outstanding"*

This new evidence in respect of the electrical work must surely warrant a site-wide investigation before someone is injured or killed due to faulty installations? How many new home owners could afford the £375 or would even think to have an independent electrical inspection carried out. I would suggest that most would simply rely on a return visit from the same contractors who carried out the original work.

I hope you see this as a golden opportunity for you to more effectively enforce industry safeguards and uphold standards. It is also a chance to engage with other accrediting and industry bodies to, not only hold TaylorWimpey to account with our property, but also to ensure that they are not afforded the opportunity to cause upset to, and endanger the lives of, other unsuspecting homeowners.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours Sincerely

cc. Emma Clancy Chief Executive NIC EIC

Updated Links;

1. Examples: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/zc1ktvpgwcu7evc/BFuU3v9EIF>
2. Electrical: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/pzdao7waoz6h0q/kl9d129RO9>
3. Electrical inspection: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/nrc6clxw49pf4er/WWYZwGY6ss>
4. £7k Amtico Flooring: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ax6ucvynyr9tsel/PefnC2CHp4>
5. Walls & reveals: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/me9tcdfy158edi3/bRW1c8KWrB>
6. Other snagging: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/jfw2isyegknx4f/HIMOouGIEq>