



# The **STRUCTURA** Commercial Dilapidations Defense Checklist

**How to strip out your commercial lease without paying inflated landlord penalties.**

When your commercial lease ends, your landlord does not want your bespoke office partitions, your custom lighting, or your branded carpets. They want a blank canvas.

If you do not return the property to its exact original state, your landlord will serve a **Schedule of Dilapidations**. They will hire their own contractors at inflated rates, add a 20% project management fee, and hand you a catastrophic final bill.

The best defense is a proactive offense. At Structura, we execute rapid, compliant commercial strip-outs that satisfy the strictest lease agreements. Use this checklist to audit your premises before your landlord audits you.

## **Phase 1: The Lease & Paperwork Audit**

*Before you touch a single wall, you need to know exactly what you are legally obligated to remove.*

- **Review the "Yielding Up" Clause:** Locate the section in your lease dictating exactly how the property must be handed back.
- **Locate the Schedule of Condition:** Did you sign a Schedule of Condition (with photos) when you moved in? This is your ultimate defense—you only have to return it to *that* condition, not a brand-new state.
- **Identify the License to Alter:** If you requested permission to install mezzanines, HVAC, or partitions, check if the license explicitly demands their removal at the end of the tenancy.

## Phase 2: The Structural Strip-Out

*The heavy lifting required to return the space to a "Cat A" (blank canvas) standard.*

- **Bespoke Partitions & Glazing:** All non-structural stud walls, glass meeting rooms, and acoustic baffles must be carefully dismantled and safely disposed of.
- **Mezzanine Floors:** Structural steel mezzanines must be unbolted and removed without damaging the primary structural frame of the building.
- **Branding & Signage:** All external and internal illuminated signage, vinyl window wraps, and bolted plaques must be removed, and the mounting holes filled and made good.
- **Data Cabling (The Hidden Mess):** Miles of CAT6 cabling running under raised access floors or above suspended ceilings usually need to be entirely stripped back to the main comms room.

## Phase 3: M&E (Mechanical & Electrical) Reinstatement

*Landlords will penalize you heavily for unserviced or modified life-support systems.*

- **HVAC Servicing:** Has the air conditioning been altered to suit your layout? It must be reconfigured to a generic open-plan layout, fully serviced, and certified.
- **Fire Alarms & Sprinklers:** Any repositioned smoke detectors or sprinkler heads must be returned to the original grid and re-certified by a competent engineer.
- **Lighting Grids:** Bespoke pendant lighting must be removed and replaced with standard LED grid lighting, fully tested and certified (NICEIC).

## Phase 4: Finishes & "Making Good"

*The final cosmetic sweep that stops landlords from withholding your deposit.*

- [ ] **Suspended Ceilings:** Replace any cracked, water-stained, or missing ceiling tiles.
- [ ] **Flooring:** Remove custom carpets or LVT. If the raised access floor tiles underneath are damaged or covered in heavy adhesive, they must be cleaned or replaced.
- [ ] **The "White Box" Paint Job:** All walls, columns, and skirting boards must be filled, sanded, and painted in a standard, neutral commercial colour (usually brilliant white or magnolia) to professional standards.

## The STRUCTURA Solution: Don't Pay the Landlord's Premium

Managing a commercial strip-out while trying to relocate your business is a logistical nightmare.

**Stop worrying about the landlord's bill.** Hand your Schedule of Dilapidations to the Structura B2B Commercial Team. We act as your Principal Contractor, executing a rapid, legally compliant strip-out and make-good service. We handle the RAMS, coordinate the waste management, and hand the keys back to the landlord on time, on budget, and fully certified.

We hope you found this free resource useful.