

FRA Purpose Built Blocks

Responsible Person:	Islington Council
Auditor:	{REDACTED}
Location:	1-48 Grimthorpe House, Percival Street, London EC1V 0BS
Area Housing Office:	PURPOSE-BUILT BLOCKS - ST JOHN STREET
Date of Audit	09/09/2020
Suggested Review	



Overall Assessment of Fire Risk

Hazard from Fire:	Normal
Consequences Life:	Moderate Harm
Overall Risk from Fire:	Moderate

PRIVATE

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Introduction

This report has been completed in compliance with Article 9 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the risk to life from fire, and where appropriate, to make recommendations to ensure compliance with fire safety legislation.

The assessment was completed on the situation observed while at the premises and on information provided, either verbally or in writing.

The assessment does not involve destructive exposure, and it is not always possible to see in all rooms and areas, not inspect less readily accessible areas such as above ceilings. It is therefore necessary to rely on a degree of sampling and also reasonable assumptions and judgments.

The report represents only the best judgment of the auditor involved in the preparation and is based, in part, on information provided by others, such as other staff members or contractors.

Note that, although the purpose is to place the fire risk in context, the approach to fire safety risk assessment is subjective and for guidance only.

All hazards and deficiencies identified in this fire safety risk assessment should be addressed by implementing all the recommendations contained in the action summary.

General Building Information

Premises Description and/or Other Relevant Information:

Three separate stair cores; each leading to a lift and staircase. Two flats accessed at each floor level, via very short (6m) open balconies, one each side of the staircase. The end flats on the top three floors have access to alternative emergency escape staircases that exit onto the roof; access back into the block should be via the central staircase, thereby giving access to ground level. Flats on the upper levels (floors 5, 6 & 7) of the central stairway have pass balconies at the rear of the block. Laundry rooms were located at 6th, 3rd and ground floor level, accessed from the open balcony. It appears that the laundry rooms adjacent to flats 8 and 24 have been sealed off and may have been incorporated into the flats as extra accommodation. The door to the laundry room adjacent to flat 39 is still there, but not fitted with an FB type lock, so no access possible; it is likely being used by a resident for storage.

Brief Details of the Block Construction:

Concrete/brickwork with concrete stairs & floors.

Number of Floors:	8 Storeys	Total Number of Units:	48
Number of Emergency Exits:	3 separate stairways	Number of Employees Present:	0+
Approximate Number of Residents:	125	Maximum Number of members of the Public at any one time:	50
Disabled Occupants:	Not Known		

Fire Loss Experience (if known):

Fire in flat ■■■ 2012; one occupier injured and hospitalised.

Audit Details

Section	2. Identifying the Fire Hazards	
Sub-Section	2.1 Sources of Ignition	
Question	2.1.1 Naked flames	No
Question	2.1.2 Electrical sources	Low Risk
Question	2.1.3 Acts of nature eg lightning	Low Risk

Sub-Section	2.2 Sources of Fuel	
Question	2.2.1 Combustive materials	Low Risk

Sub-Section	2.3 Sources of Oxygen	
Question	2.3.1 Sources of oxygen other than naturally occurring?	None

Section	3. Identifying People at Risk	
Question	3.1 Are employees and/or visitors at risk from fire hazards?	Low Risk
Question	3.2 Are residents at risk from fire hazards?	Low Risk
Question	3.3 Are vulnerable persons at risk from the fire hazards?	Low Risk

Section	4. Evaluating the Fire Hazards	
Question	4.1 Do the premises have an effective smoking policy?	Low Risk
<i>“No Smoking “signage is displayed in the premises.</i>		
Question	4.2 Does electrical equipment or wiring appear to be free from damage or misuse?	Low Risk

<i>Electrical intake cupboards are routinely checked as part of the Estate Service Co-ordinators' inspection regime, which is documented. Estate/Caretaking Services will ensure doors remain adequately secured when not in use.</i>		
Question	4.3 Have satisfactory measures been taken to reduce the risk of arson?	Low Risk
<i>Block entry security system.</i>		
Question	4.4 Do the premises have any protection against acts such as lightning	Low Risk
<i>The installation of lightning protection is to be considered as part of future Cyclical Improvement Programme (CIP) works, following assessment by specialists.</i>		
Question	4.5 Are the common and landlord areas of the premises free from an accumulation of combustible materials, storage and/or waste?	Medium Risk
<i>Islington Council operates a two tiered approach to managing communal areas dependant on the design layout. Where corridors are enclosed or substantially enclosed a zero tolerance approach will be adopted. Where blocks have an open corridor design a managed use policy will be in place, where items of limited combustibility such as door mats, plant pots etc. are generally permitted in line with the guidance note for fire prevention in communal areas. Regular inspections are carried out by Estate Service Co-ordinators or TMO staff to ensure this policy is being adhered to and that properties are kept free of an accumulation of combustible waste. A 'zero tolerance' policy will be introduced where residents are unable to adhere to a sensible managed use arrangement.</i>		
ACTION	Clear waste/storage/combustibles from common/Landlord areas and advise residents of the policy for waste disposal and take enforcement action where appropriate.	
Findings (ISSUE)	{REDACTED}	Action & Completion By 09/03/2021
ACTION	Clear waste/storage/combustibles from common/Landlord areas and advise residents of the policy for waste disposal and take enforcement action where appropriate.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Clear waste/storage/combustibles from following areas: Roof.	Action & Completion By 09/03/2021
Question	4.6 Are wall, ceiling or floor coverings of a fire-resistant nature?	Low Risk
ACTION	Remove wooden wall & floor covering.	
Findings (ISSUE)	{REDACTED}	Action & Completion By 09/09/2021

Question	4.7 Are holes in fire resistant partitions (service ducts, fire compartments or flues) within the premises adequately fire stopped?	Low Risk
Question	4.8 Is fire separation on the means of escape routes adequately maintained?	Low Risk
Question	4.9 Are there arrangements to ensure the safe evacuation of the premises where it is used for sleeping?	Low Risk
<p><i>Security gates fitted within block to individual dwellings.</i></p> <p><i>Islington Council recognises the balance between safety and security, adopting an advisory approach to security gates/grills and warning residents of the dangers/potential delays to the fire and rescue authority. Where gates/grills hinder access/egress to more than one property they will be disabled and/or removed immediately. The Construction and Fire Safety Team (CFST) will write to residents with gates installed periodically to refresh this information. This will also be repeated through resident newsletters and web articles etc. periodically.</i></p>		
Question	4.10 Are evacuation arrangements for vulnerable people suitable/sufficient?	Low Risk
<p><i>No vulnerable people formerly identified but there may be occupants with varying degrees of physical/mental disability, in line with the general population.</i></p>		
Question	4.11 Are the escape routes identified with effective signage to allow for all people to safely evacuate the premises in the event of an emergency?	Low Risk
<p><i>Adequate signage for stairway exit routes.</i></p>		
ACTION	Provide emergency escape signage for rooftop escape route.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Currently no signage indicating roof top escape routes. Exit doors into centre stairway require marking too.	Action & Completion By 09/09/2021

Section	5. Means of Escape	
Question	5.1 Are the available escape routes and exit widths suitable and sufficient for the number of people within the premises?	Yes
Question	5.2 Are the available escape routes and widths suitable and sufficient for the physical layout of the premises?	Yes

Question	5.3 Are all pathways corridors and escape routes (internal and external) free from obstruction or other fire risks?	Medium Risk
ACTION	Clear waste/storage/combustibles and inform residents of the requirement to keep the common escape routes clear and free from trip hazards.	
Findings (ISSUE)	{REDACTED}	Action & Completion By 09/03/2021
Question	5.4 Are escape routes likely to be compromised in early stages of fire? i.e unprotected staircase or inadequate ventilation	Low Risk
<p><i>Open-able windows on stairway.</i></p> <p><i>Open balcony approach and semi-open stairway.</i></p>		
Question	5.5 Is the lighting adequate?	Low Risk
<p><i>Islington Council will install emergency lighting in purpose built blocks of flats (2 storey+) in line with its planned upgrade and renewal/cyclical improvement programme/CIP. High rise blocks (10 storey+) and those with complex layouts will be completed as a priority, with each block being assessed during the planning stages of CIP works. Properties with a simultaneous evacuation strategy will also be considered a priority.</i></p>		
ACTION	Provide emergency lighting to cover all common escape routes.	
Findings (ISSUE)	No EL on roof top escape route.	Action & Completion By 09/09/2021
Question	5.6 Do all exits within the premises lead to a place of reasonable or total safety?	Yes
Question	5.7 Are dwelling front entrance doors (from random sample) of a suitably fire resisting construction for the type of property and the location?	No
<p><i>Islington Council has established a dedicated fire safety project team to survey all flat front entrance doors (and alternative means of escape doors where applicable) and carry out upgrade or replacement works where required, in line with recommendations made in the LGG's Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats guidance document. For tenanted properties, as a minimum upgrade works will include the installation of a self-closing device. Surveys of leasehold properties will also be carried out, with leaseholders able to opt-in to the upgrade programme. The survey/works programme will also include communal doors where applicable, to ensure means of escape routes are suitably protected.</i></p> <p><i>In light of the MHCLG investigations and findings, Islington council, has a robust program in place to identify all composite fire doors/sets. As this program rolls out, dependent on the</i></p>		

findings, results of the testing and certification etc. taking into consideration the actions raised in the Fire Risk Assessment, the complexity of the premise design, layout, and the evacuation procedures, appropriate action will be taken.

(The appropriate remedial action will be undertaken within a suitable time frame on a risk managed basis).

Question	5.8 Are the dwelling front entrance doors (from random sample) fitted with fully functional self-closing devices?	No
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Question	5.9 Are the fire doors within the common and landlord areas suitable and sufficient, and fitted where necessary, with intumescent strips and smoke seals?	Low Risk
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Question	5.10 Are self-closing devices provided appropriately on fire doors within the common and landlord areas? If so, are they in working order?	N/A
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Question	5.11 Are the internal fire doors indicated with the appropriate signage	Yes
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Question	5.12 Do the doors used for means of escape from the premises open in direction of travel where necessary?	Yes
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Question	5.13 Are doors used for means of escape from the premises provided with suitable fastenings that can be easily and immediately opened without the use of a key?	Yes
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Entry doors are incorporated into routine Estate Service Co-ordinators' inspections, with any repair issues raised with Estate Maintenance Team/Housing Repairs Service.

Question	5.14 Are the floor surfaces on the escape route (internal and external) free from trip/slip hazards?	Low Risk
ACTION	The over roof escape route should be inspected and adequate action taken to eliminate the trip hazards, and a suitable marked out / guided walkway should be considered to ensure persons using this escape are safe from trips, slips and falls.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Roof has many trip hazards between the secondary means of escape on to the roof and roof exit door into stairway.	Action & Completion By 09/09/2027
Question	5.15 Are Fire Service facilities and access to the premises suitable and sufficient?	Low Risk
ACTION	Consider retro-fitting a dry-riser to this building.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Consideration could be given to retro fitting a dry riser to this building, however, due to the open nature of the balcony/lift lobby area, hauling hose aloft would not be too onerous for the Fire Service.	Action & Completion By 09/09/2027
Question	5.16 Are floor level indicators present and legible?	Yes
Question	5.17 Do Fire Services facilities such as dry/wet risers, door entry/lift overrides appear to be free from damage and vandalism?	Yes
Question	5.18 Are Fire Service facilities and controls for the premises subjected to a suitable system of maintenance and/or repair?	Yes
<p><i>Testing of LFB access switches is incorporated into routine Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) inspections, with any repair issues raised with Estate Maintenance Team/Housing Repairs Service.</i></p> <p><i>The lift overrides are tested on a monthly basis as part of the PPM maintenance visit carried out by the Lift Contractor.</i></p>		

Section	6. Detection and Warning	
Question	6.1 Do the dwellings (from random sample) appear to have suitable hard wired smoke/heat detection installed?	Low Risk
<p><i>Mains powered smoke/heat detection (to LD2 standard) was installed extensively to tenanted properties as part of the Decent Homes programme between 2004 & 2010. Since the conclusion of the Decent Homes programme, mains powered smoke/heat detection (LD2) is</i></p>		

now installed as part of void property process and the cyclical (5 yearly), domestic electrical inspection/testing regime where it is not already provided. It is likely the majority of leasehold properties will not benefit from mains powered detection systems, although some grade F systems (battery operated) are likely to exist.

Question	6.2 Are methods of detection and warning within the premises considered suitable and sufficient?	Yes
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Section	7. Emergency Plans	
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Question	7.1 Based upon the overall risk of fire, evaluation of fire hazards and means of escape, is the policy of "Stay put, unless affected by smoke or fire" considered adequate for the dwellings within these premises?	Yes
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Question	7.2 Based upon the overall risk of fire, evaluation of fire hazards and means of escape, is the policy of "Full Evacuation" considered adequate for the dwellings within these premises?	N/A
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Question	7.3 Have emergency plans been communicated to residents and other relevant people	Low Risk
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Fire action notice displayed in west entrance lobby to block.

The majority of purpose built blocks of flats operate on the principle that residents should 'stay put, unless directly affected by smoke, heat or fire'. This is communicated to residents through the tenant sign-up pack, regular newsletter articles and the Islington Council website, which also links to the LFB's 'know the plan' website. Caretakers are informed through periodic training.

ACTION	Install fire action notice/s in block.	
Findings (ISSUE)	A fire action notice has been installed in the west stairway (33-48) but not the east (1-16) or centre (17-32) stairways. People using these other stairways may never go into the west stairway. Display a fire action notice in each separate block entrance. Fire action notice SP01L should be used.	Action & Completion By 09/03/2021

Section	8. Further Surveys and Investigation	
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Question	8.1 Are there any serious or suspected structural deficiencies which could lead to spread of fire beyond the dwelling of origin, warranting further investigation	No
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	such as a Type 2, 3 or 4 survey?	
Question	8.2 Are there any un-accessed areas or known voids that warrant further investigation to confirm adequate fire safety measures are in place?	No
Question	8.3 Are the external escape staircases and gangways for the premises subjected to a suitable system of periodic inspection, maintenance and repair?	Low Risk
<i>Estate Service Co-ordinators' inspections include all external staircases, gangways and other such areas associated with a particular block. Defects are raised via Estate Maintenance Team/Housing Repairs Service and monitored to completion through the inspection process.</i>		
Question	8.4 Are there other types of occupancy forming part of/or within the block (shops, offices, nurseries etc)?	No
Question	8.5 Are there any other issues which may have an impact on the fire safety of the premises?	Low Risk
ACTION	Remove covering on private balcony.	
Findings (ISSUE)	{REDACTED}	Action & Completion By 09/03/2021
Question	8.6 Are the external surfaces of the building likely to promote fire spread?	No

Section	9. Overall Assessment of Fire Risk	
Question	9.1 Evaluation of overall fire hazard	Normal
Question	9.2 Evaluation of overall consequences for life safety	Moderate Harm
Question	9.3 Overall evaluation of fire risk	Moderate
Question	9.4 The most appropriate fire strategy for this building is	Stay-put
<i>Stay put unless directly affected by fire, heat, smoke or asked to leave by the Fire Service.</i>		
Question	9.5 Height of Building	N/A
Question	9.6 Next FRA Due	N/A

Audit Details

Section	4. Evaluating the Fire Hazards
Action Ref	0036663
Question	4.5 Are the common and landlord areas of the premises free from an accumulation of combustible materials, storage and/or waste?
Action Required	Clear waste/storage/combustibles from common/Landlord areas and advise residents of the policy for waste disposal and take enforcement action where appropriate.
Action Notes	{REDACTED}
Due Date	09/03/2021
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Tenancy Management
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0036664
Question	4.5 Are the common and landlord areas of the premises free from an accumulation of combustible materials, storage and/or waste?
Action Required	Clear waste/storage/combustibles from common/Landlord areas and advise residents of the policy for waste disposal and take enforcement action where appropriate.
Action Notes	Clear waste/storage/combustibles from following areas: Roof.
Due Date	09/03/2021
Responsible	Housing Repairs Service
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0036659
Question	4.6 Are wall, ceiling or floor coverings of a fire-resistant nature?
Action Required	Remove wooden wall & floor covering.

Action Notes	{REDACTED}
Due Date	09/09/2021
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Tenancy Management
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0036660
Question	4.11 Are the escape routes identified with effective signage to allow for all people to safely evacuate the premises in the event of an emergency?
Action Required	Provide emergency escape signage for rooftop escape route.
Action Notes	Currently no signage indicating roof top escape routes. Exit doors into centre stairway require marking too.
Due Date	09/09/2021
Responsible	Housing Repairs Service
Status	OPEN
Section	5. Means of Escape
Action Ref	0036656
Question	5.5 Is the lighting adequate?
Action Required	Provide emergency lighting to cover all common escape routes.
Action Notes	No EL on roof top escape route.
Due Date	09/09/2021
Responsible	CIP / Fire Safety Works Team
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0036657
Question	5.14 Are the floor surfaces on the escape route (internal and external) free from trip/slip hazards?

Action Required	The over roof escape route should be inspected and adequate action taken to eliminate the trip hazards, and a suitable marked out / guided walkway should be considered to ensure persons using this escape are safe from trips, slips and falls.
Action Notes	Roof has many trip hazards between the secondary means of escape on to the roof and roof exit door into stairway.
Due Date	09/09/2027
Responsible	CIP / Fire Safety Works Team
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0036658
Question	5.15 Are Fire Service facilities and access to the premises suitable and sufficient?
Action Required	Consider retro-fitting a dry-riser to this building.
Action Notes	Consideration could be given to retro fitting a dry riser to this building, however, due to the open nature of the balcony/lift lobby area, hauling hose aloft would not be too onerous for the Fire Service.
Due Date	09/09/2027
Responsible	CIP / Fire Safety Works Team
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0036665
Question	5.3 Are all pathways corridors and escape routes (internal and external) free from obstruction or other fire risks?
Action Required	Clear waste/storage/combustibles and inform residents of the requirement to keep the common escape routes clear and free from trip hazards.
Action Notes	{REDACTED}
Due Date	09/03/2021
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Tenancy Management

Status	OPEN
Section	7. Emergency Plans
Action Ref	0036662
Question	7.3 Have emergency plans been communicated to residents and other relevant people
Action Required	Install fire action notice/s in block.
Action Notes	A fire action notice has been installed in the west stairway (33-48) but not the east (1-16) or centre (17-32) stairways. People using these other stairways may never go into the west stairway. Display a fire action notice in each separate block entrance. Fire action notice SP01L should be used.
Due Date	09/03/2021
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Estate Services
Status	COMPLETE
Section	8. Further Surveys and Investigation
Action Ref	0036661
Question	8.5 Are there any other issues which may have an impact on the fire safety of the premises?
Action Required	Remove covering on private balcony.
Action Notes	{REDACTED}
Due Date	09/03/2021
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Tenancy Management
Status	OPEN

Previous O/S Actions (as of report generation date)

None