

FRA Purpose Built Blocks

Responsible Person:	Islington Council
Auditor:	{REDACTED}
Location:	34-50 Aubert Court, Avenell Road, London N5 1BJ
Area Housing Office:	PURPOSE-BUILT BLOCKS - UPPER STREET EAST
Date of Audit	17/05/2021
Suggested Review	17/05/2022



Overall Assessment of Fire Risk

Hazard from Fire:	Normal
Consequences Life:	Slight Harm
Overall Risk from Fire:	Tolerable

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:

Mid terraced block of flats with single staircase and a lift; with flats accessed directly off staircase. Originally built in 1950-51 the block was designed with an alternative MOE from flat 50 via the roof of adjacent building 51-67. Other dwellings in the block were designed with an alternative MOE via pass doors on the balcony which are generally blocked with residents storage. Block communally heated; boiler room part of 1-17 basement. No.34 has OFD into garden.

Brief Details of the Block Construction:

Concrete floors and stairs & brick walls. Rear ground floor alternative exit into extensive gardens.

Number of Floors:	8	Total Number of Units:	17
Number of Emergency Exits:	2	Number of Employees Present:	0+
Approximate Number of Residents:	40	Maximum Number of members of the Public at any one time:	20
Disabled Occupants:	Not Known		

Fire Loss Experience (if known):

None

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

<p><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></p>		
Question	4.3 Have satisfactory measures been taken to reduce the risk of arson?	Low Risk
<p><i>Block entry security system. Recycling stored away from block.</i></p>		
ACTION	Secure refuse bin store/chamber.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Refuse chamber unsecured. Fires in refuse chambers are unfortunately relatively common. The chute can transfer smoke and hot gases to the upper floors of a building. For this reason, it is important that refuse chambers are secured between refuse collections.	Action & Completion By 20/11/2021
ACTION	Secure doors, cupboards, risers etc to prevent unauthorised access.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Roof access gates are not secure. This may be due to on going work.	Action & Completion By 20/05/2022
Question	4.4 Do the premises have any protection against acts such as lightning	Yes
<p><i>Lightening protection evident on building.</i></p>		
Question	4.5 Are the common and landlord areas of the premises free from an accumulation of combustible materials, storage and/or waste?	Low Risk
<p><i>Islington Council operates a risk based approach to managing communal areas dependent 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></p>		
ACTION	Reduce combustible materials and excessive storage from private balconies.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Some balconies have too much storage which could aid fire spread. Some balconies within this block are pass balconies which should provide escape onto the neighboring balcony but excessive storage will prevent this.	Action & Completion By 20/05/2022
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: Ground floor cupboard opposite rear exit door.	Action & Completion By 20/05/2022
Question	4.6 Are wall, ceiling or floor coverings of a fire-resistant nature?	Low Risk
Question	4.7 Are holes in fire resistant partitions (service ducts, fire compartments or flues) within the premises adequately fire stopped?	Low Risk
<i>Fire stopping in riser addressed September 2019.</i>		
ACTION	Seal off the gaps and/or service penetrations with fire stopping materials.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Ensure gaps around holes are adequately fire stopped where new cables have been run up riser to new emergency lighting on roof.	Action & Completion By 20/11/2021
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
<i>Security gates fitted within block to individual dwellings.</i>		
<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>		
Question	4.10 Are evacuation arrangements for vulnerable people suitable/sufficient?	Low Risk
<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>		
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
ACTION	Provide emergency escape signage for rooftop escape route.	
Findings (ISSUE)	No signage on roof top escape route.	Action & Completion By

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?	Low Risk
<i>See 4.5.</i>		
Question	5.4 Are escape routes likely to be compromised in early stages of fire? i.e unprotected staircase or inadequate ventilation	Low Risk
<i>Open-able windows on stairway and vent at roof level.</i>		
Question	5.5 Is the lighting adequate?	Low Risk
<p><i>New Commulite emergency lighting on roof top exit route but not within block stairway.</i></p> <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>		
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>The majority of flat entrance doors have been replaced to comply with current standards, however, this block contains a number of leaseholder doors which have not been replaced.</i></p>		
ACTION	Inspect front entrance door to ensure it provides 30 minutes' fire resistance.	

Findings (ISSUE)	{REDACTED}	Action & Completion By 20/11/2021
Question	5.8 Are the dwelling front entrance doors (from random sample) fitted with fully functional self-closing devices?	No
<p><i>The majority of doors have recently been upgraded to current standards, therefore, most self-closers are likely to be in place and working, however, this block contains a number of leaseholder doors which may not have a working self-closer.</i></p>		
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
<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>		
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?	Yes
Question	5.11 Are the internal fire doors indicated with the appropriate signage	Yes
Question	5.12 Do the doors used for means of escape from the premises open in direction of travel where necessary?	Yes
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
<p><i>Entry doors are incorporated into routine Estate Service Co-ordinators' inspections, with any repair issues raised with Estate Maintenance Team/Housing Repairs Service.</i></p>		
Question	5.14 Are the floor surfaces on the escape route (internal and external) free from trip/slip hazards?	Low Risk
Question	5.15 Are Fire Service facilities and access to the premises suitable and sufficient?	Low Risk
ACTION	Prominently display at/within main entrance area a premises information box (PIB) containing layout drawings with details of high risk areas;	

	location of emergency cut off valves/switches and room usage for fire brigade use in an emergency. Including location details of known vulnerable residents (EAR List).	
Findings (ISSUE)	Premises information box should be provided in accordance with information supplied in the London Fire Brigade's fire safety guidance note GN70.	Action & Completion By 20/05/2022
ACTION	Consider retro-fitting a dry-riser to this building.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Due to the height of this building, getting water to the upper floors in order to fight a fire will be extremely difficult. Also, consideration should also be given to increasing the size of the windows on the stairway. The current small window openings would make hauling hose aloft difficult.	Action & Completion By 20/05/2028
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 Estate Service Co-ordinators' 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 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.</i></p>		

Question	6.2 Are methods of detection and warning within the premises considered suitable and sufficient?	Low Risk
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Section	7. Emergency Plans	
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
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
Question	7.3 Have emergency plans been communicated to residents and other relevant people	Yes

Fire action notice displayed in 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.

Section	8. Further Surveys and Investigation	
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 such as a Type 2, 3 or 4 survey?	No
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

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.

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?	No
Question	8.6 Are the external surfaces of the building likely to promote fire spread?	No

External surfaces appear to be predominately brick and masonry.

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	Slight Harm
Question	9.3 Overall evaluation of fire risk	Tolerable
Question	9.4 The most appropriate fire strategy for this building is	Stay-put
Question	9.5 Height of Building	Medium Rise (6-9 Storey)
Question	9.6 Next FRA Due	17/05/2022

Audit Details

Section	4. Evaluating the Fire Hazards
Action Ref	0040298
Question	4.3 Have satisfactory measures been taken to reduce the risk of arson?
Action Required	Secure refuse bin store/chamber.
Action Notes	Refuse chamber unsecured. Fires in refuse chambers are unfortunately relatively common. The chute can transfer smoke and hot gases to the upper floors of a building. For this reason, it is important that refuse chambers are secured between refuse collections.
Due Date	20/11/2021
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Estate Services
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0040299
Question	4.3 Have satisfactory measures been taken to reduce the risk of arson?
Action Required	Secure doors, cupboards, risers etc to prevent unauthorised access.
Action Notes	Roof access gates are not secure. This may be due to on going work.
Due Date	20/05/2022
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Estate Services
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0040300
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	Reduce combustible materials and excessive storage from private balconies.
Action Notes	Some balconies have too much storage which could aid fire spread. Some balconies within this block are pass balconies which should provide

	escape onto the neighboring balcony but excessive storage will prevent this.
Due Date	20/05/2022
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Tenancy Management
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0040301
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: Ground floor cupboard opposite rear exit door.
Due Date	20/05/2022
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Estate Services
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0040302
Question	4.7 Are holes in fire resistant partitions (service ducts, fire compartments or flues) within the premises adequately fire stopped?
Action Required	Seal off the gaps and/or service penetrations with fire stopping materials.
Action Notes	Ensure gaps around holes are adequately fire stopped where new cables have been run up riser to new emergency lighting on roof.
Due Date	20/11/2021
Responsible	Fire Safety Works Team
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0040303

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	No signage on roof top escape route.
Due Date	20/05/2022
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Estate Services
Status	OPEN
Section	5. Means of Escape
Action Ref	0040304
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?
Action Required	Inspect front entrance door to ensure it provides 30 minutes' fire resistance.
Action Notes	{REDACTED}
Due Date	20/11/2021
Responsible	Housing Repairs Service
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0040305
Question	5.15 Are Fire Service facilities and access to the premises suitable and sufficient?
Action Required	Prominently display at/within main entrance area a premises information box (PIB) containing layout drawings with details of high risk areas; location of emergency cut off valves/switches and room usage for fire brigade use in an emergency. Including location details of known vulnerable residents (EAR List).
Action Notes	Premises information box should be provided in accordance with information supplied in the London Fire Brigade's fire safety guidance note GN70.

Due Date	20/05/2022
Responsible	Estate Maintenance Team
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0040306
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	Due to the height of this building, getting water to the upper floors in order to fight a fire will be extremely difficult. Also, consideration should also be given to increasing the size of the windows on the stairway. The current small window openings would make hauling hose aloft difficult.
Due Date	20/05/2028
Responsible	Cyclical Improvement Programme (CIP)
Status	OPEN

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

None