

FRA Purpose Built Blocks

Responsible Person:	Islington Council
Auditor:	{REDACTED}
Location:	Earnshaw House, Percival Street, London EC1V 0HT
Area Housing Office:	PURPOSE-BUILT BLOCKS - ST JOHN STREET
Date of Audit	16/03/2021
Suggested Review	16/03/2022



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:

Single enclosed staircase building, no lift. Two flats accessed at each floor level between ground and 3rd; two maisonettes accessed on 4th floor with alternative exits from them on the 5th floor. Watertank room accessed from the 5th floor landing, and an electrical intake cupboard is located under the stairs on the ground floor. Block completed in 1947.

Brief Details of the Block Construction:

Concrete floors and stairs with brickwork walls; Timber construction pitched roof.

Number of Floors:	6 Storeys	Total Number of Units:	10
Number of Emergency Exits:	1	Number of Employees Present:	0+
Approximate Number of Residents:	25	Maximum Number of members of the Public at any one time:	10
Disabled Occupants:	Not Known		

Fire Loss Experience (if known):

Not known

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?	Low Risk
<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>		
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
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</i>		

repeated through resident newsletters and web articles etc. periodically.

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?	Yes
<i>Simple single stairway exit route.</i>		

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?	Yes
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.</i>		
Question	5.5 Is the lighting adequate?	Low Risk
<i>No emergency lighting on means of escape.</i>		
<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>		
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>All doors appear to be notional FD30 doors.</i></p> <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	5.8 Are the dwelling front entrance doors (from random sample) fitted with fully functional self-closing devices?	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>		
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>		
ACTION	Inspect door to ensure it provides adequate fire resistance.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Consider replacing electrical intake cupboard door which currently has vents in it.	Action & Completion By 19/03/2022
Question	5.10 Are self-closing devices provided appropriately on fire doors within the common and landlord areas? If	N/A

	so, are they in working order?	
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
<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>		
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 19/03/2022
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
<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>		

Section	6. Detection and Warning
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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>		
ACTION	Determine if the existing provision of detection installed is suitable for the current layout and upgrade if required.	
Findings (ISSUE)	This block appears to contain maisonettes. Inspect internally to determine if original fire safety measures are still in place/available and adequate means of escape/warning are provided for the layout of the dwelling.	Action & Completion By 19/03/2028
Question	6.2 Are methods of detection and warning within the premises considered suitable and sufficient?	Low Risk

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
<p><i>Fire action notice displayed in entrance lobby to block.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>		

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?	Low Risk
ACTION	The roof space should be inspected to ensure that the fire separation is maintained. If the separating walls are compartment walls (a continuation of the party walls between each flat) any hatches and/or doors should provide a minimum of 60 minutes fire resistance (i.e. FD60). If the separating walls are not compartment walls but are provided to reduce the size of roof space void the provision of FD30 hatches and/or doors will be acceptable.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Tank room section of the roof space was accessed, but other sections were not accessible.	Action & Completion By 19/03/2028
Question	8.3 Are the external escape staircases and gangways for the premises subjected to a suitable system of periodic inspection, maintenance and repair?	N/A
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

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	Stay-put

	building is	
<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	Medium Rise (6-9 Storey)
Question	9.6 Next FRA Due	16/03/2022

Audit Details

Section	5. Means of Escape
Action Ref	0039547
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?
Action Required	Inspect door to ensure it provides adequate fire resistance.
Action Notes	Consider replacing electrical intake cupboard door which currently has vents in it.
Due Date	19/03/2022
Responsible	Cyclical Improvement Programme (CIP)
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0039548
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	19/03/2022
Responsible	Estate Maintenance Team
Status	OPEN
Section	6. Detection and Warning
Action Ref	0039545

Question	6.1 Do the dwellings (from random sample) appear to have suitable hard wired smoke/heat detection installed?
Action Required	Determine if the existing provision of detection installed is suitable for the current layout and upgrade if required.
Action Notes	This block appears to contain maisonettes. Inspect internally to determine if original fire safety measures are still in place/available and adequate means of escape/warning are provided for the layout of the dwelling.
Due Date	19/03/2028
Responsible	Cyclical Improvement Programme (CIP)
Status	OPEN
Section	8. Further Surveys and Investigation
Action Ref	0039546
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?
Action Required	The roof space should be inspected to ensure that the fire separation is maintained. If the separating walls are compartment walls (a continuation of the party walls between each flat) any hatches and/or doors should provide a minimum of 60 minutes fire resistance (i.e. FD60). If the separating walls are not compartment walls but are provided to reduce the size of roof space void the provision of FD30 hatches and/or doors will be acceptable.
Action Notes	Tank room section of the roof space was accessed, but other sections were not accessible.
Due Date	19/03/2028
Responsible	Cyclical Improvement Programme (CIP)
Status	OPEN

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

None