

FRA Purpose Built Blocks

Responsible Person:	Islington Council
Auditor:	{REDACTED}
Location:	Spring House, 6 Margery Street, London WC1X 0HT
Area Housing Office:	PURPOSE-BUILT BLOCKS - ST JOHN STREET
Date of Audit	16/12/2020
Suggested Review	



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:

This block has a single central enclosed staircase and lift with dead end open balcony approaches to a mix of flats and maisonettes. There is a disused boiler room at roof level with access to the lift motor room. Block built around 1935. There is a caretakers' facility on the lower ground floor.

Brief Details of the Block Construction:

Solid floors & stairs; brick walls; May have some timber floors separating upper/lower levels within maisonettes. Pitched roof, of timber construction.

Number of Floors:	Part 5 and part 6 storey.	Total Number of Units:	23
Number of Emergency Exits:	2	Number of Employees Present:	0+
Approximate Number of Residents:	60	Maximum Number of members of the Public at any one time:	20
Disabled Occupants:	Not Known		

Fire Loss Experience (if known):

None 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. Refuse & recycling stored away from block.</i>		
ACTION	Sheds in gardens should be located away from the main building (ideally at least 6m away).	
Findings (ISSUE)	{REDACTED}	Action & Completion By 16/12/2021
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>		
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 16/06/2021
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
<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?	Yes

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
See 4.5.		
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 balcony approach and windows on stairway.</i>		

Question	5.5 Is the lighting adequate?	Low Risk
<p><i>No emergency lighting on means of escape.</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>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>Boiler room door at top of stairway is louvered. Weather doors have been fitted to the balcony access so the boiler room door is now enclosed within the stairway. This door should be upgraded when doors are assessed. Boiler room does not appear to be functional anymore.</i></p>		

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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?	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?	Low Risk

Entry doors are incorporated into routine Estate Service Co-ordinators' inspections, with any repair issues raised with Estate Maintenance Team/Housing Repairs Service.

ACTION	Remove lock from balcony access door.	
Findings (ISSUE)	{REDACTED}	Action & Completion By 16/06/2021
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

Part of this block is 6 floors high and doesn't have a dry riser. Getting water to the upper floors would be made easier if a dry riser were installed. However, due to the open nature of the balconies hauling hose aloft would not be too onerous for the Fire Service.

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	Action & Completion By 16/12/2021

	note GN70.	
ACTION	Install door entry override system as appropriate to allow fire brigade access.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Install door entry override system on the rear door to allow Fire Brigade access. The best firefighting access to this block is at the rear via Lloyd Baker Street.	Action & Completion By 16/12/2021
Question	5.16 Are floor level indicators present and legible?	Low Risk
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>		
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	Action & Completion By 16/12/2027

	dwelling.	
Question	6.2 Are methods of detection and warning within the premises considered suitable and sufficient?	Yes

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 and excessive spaces subdivided with cavity barriers at maximum 20m intervals.	
Findings (ISSUE)	Roof space not accessed.	Action & Completion By

		16/12/2021
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
<p><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></p>		
Question	8.4 Are there other types of occupancy forming part of/or within the block (shops, offices, nurseries etc)?	Low Risk
<p><i>Caretakers' facility on the lower ground floor. Whilst this facility was accessed to assess its likely impact on the residential and common parts of the block, this does not constitute a full fire risk assessment as required by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 for commercial premises/places of work.</i></p> <p><i>Associated premises will be audited by the London Fire Brigade, to assess compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, under its risk based audit programme. The London Fire Brigade audit all commercial premises periodically according to risk.</i></p> <p><i>A percentage of even the lowest risk premises are audited each year, so over a longer period all commercial premises will receive a visit to assess compliance.</i></p>		
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 building is	Stay-put
<p><i>Stay put unless directly affected by fire, heat, smoke or asked to leave by the Fire Service.</i></p>		
Question	9.5 Height of Building	N/A

Question	9.6 Next FRA Due	N/A
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Audit Details

Section	4. Evaluating the Fire Hazards
Action Ref	0037362
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	16/06/2021
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Tenancy Management
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0037361
Question	4.3 Have satisfactory measures been taken to reduce the risk of arson?
Action Required	Sheds in gardens should be located away from the main building (ideally at least 6m away).
Action Notes	{REDACTED}
Due Date	16/12/2021
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Tenancy Management
Status	OPEN
Section	5. Means of Escape
Action Ref	0037363
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?
Action Required	Remove lock from balcony access door.

Action Notes	{REDACTED}
Due Date	16/06/2021
Responsible	Area Housing Office - Estate Services
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0037357
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	16/12/2021
Responsible	Estate Maintenance Team
Status	OPEN
Action Ref	0037358
Question	5.15 Are Fire Service facilities and access to the premises suitable and sufficient?
Action Required	Install door entry override system as appropriate to allow fire brigade access.
Action Notes	Install door entry override system on the rear door to allow Fire Brigade access. The best firefighting access to this block is at the rear via Lloyd Baker Street.
Due Date	16/12/2021
Responsible	Cyclical Improvement Programme (CIP)

Status	OPEN
Section	6. Detection and Warning
Action Ref	0037359
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	16/12/2027
Responsible	Fire Safety Works Team
Status	COMPLETE
Section	8. Further Surveys and Investigation
Action Ref	0037360
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 and excessive spaces subdivided with cavity barriers at maximum 20m intervals.
Action Notes	Roof space not accessed.
Due Date	16/12/2021
Responsible	Fire Safety Works Team
Status	COMPLETE

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

None