

Fire Risk Assessment

Durham House, 20A

Version 3

3 October 2023



Review Date: 3 October 2024

Score: Moderate Risk

Assessor: Mark Thomas

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Action Plan Summary

Task No.	Category	Sub Category	Action Required	Priority	Status	Action Taken	Date Completed
1	Fire Prevention	Arson	<p>Do not keep bins adjacent to the building.</p> <p>Refuse bins are located close to the building and immediately outside the main entrance door. Consideration should be given to relocate these bins as a fire occurring in the bins in their current location could spread to the building itself and compromise escape from the building via the main entrance door.</p>	Medium	Identified		

2	Detection & Warning	Automatic Fire Detection	<p>If, following an intrusive examination of compartmentation it is confirmed there is adequate compartmentation to support a stay-put strategy, then consider removing the provided common fire alarm. Should a decision be made to maintain this fire alarm provision, then it should be provided as per the LACoRS Fire detection and alarm system recommendations for a three-or four-storey building converted into self-contained flats which is:</p> <p>A mixed system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade A: LD2 coverage in the common areas and a heat alarm in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route (interlinked); and • Grade D: LD3 coverage in each flat (non-interlinked smoke alarm in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route) to protect the sleeping occupants of the flat <p>(This is subject to the fire separation recommendations as given in LACoRS)</p> <p>NOTE: This task refers to the common fire alarm only. It is always recommended to provide a fire alarm WITHIN flats to at least the recommendations of BS5839-6 LD3 standard.</p>	Advisory	Identified
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3	Detection & Warning	Manual Fire Alarms	Consider removing manual call points from public areas to reduce the likelihood of false alarms.	Advisory	Identified
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4	Signs & Notices	Other Signage	The current fire action notices are not suitable for a simultaneous evacuation strategy. The notices should be replaced with ones which reflect the building's fire safety measures and explain the simultaneous evacuation strategy.	Medium	Identified
5	Signs & Notices	Fire Door Signage	Replace Fire Door Keep Locked signs with Fire Door Keep Shut signs on the following doors: All staircase doors.	Low	Identified
6	Escape Routes & Fire Spread	Ease of Use	Cables are suspended in common areas using PVC conduit. A requirement introduced in 2015 in BS 7671 which covers electrical installations in the UK, states that all new wiring systems are to use metal, rather than plastic, to support cables in escape routes, to prevent their premature collapse in the event of a fire.	Advisory	Identified

Introduction

This report presents the significant findings of a fire risk assessment carried-out at the premises by QFSM Ltd. The scope, format and limitations of the fire risk assessment have been discussed and agreed with the client.

The scope of the assessment does not include individual dwellings. Notwithstanding any statement or recommendation made with respect to smoke/heat alarms within dwellings, it is always recommended as best practice to ensure that working smoke alarms are provided in all dwellings at least to a BS 5839-6 Category LD3 standard. These should ideally be Grade D alarms (mains powered with integral battery back-up), although Grade F alarms (battery powered only) are a reasonable short term measure.

The report includes an action plan which contains recommended tasks, each with a suggested due date. These due dates are only our suggestions, and may or may not be appropriate, depending on individual circumstances such as financial constraints and requirements of enforcing authorities.

The premises risk score was assessed at the time of the fire risk assessment, and a recommended review date has been provided. The actual level of risk may change over time, as a result of tasks being completed, or new risks arising. Regardless of the review date, the fire risk assessment should be reviewed regularly so as to keep it up to date and particularly if:

- there is reason to suspect that the fire risk assessment is no longer valid; or
- there has been a significant change in the matters to which the fire risk assessment relates.

If you have any queries please contact QFSM Ltd at office@qfsm ltd.co.uk.

Executive Summary

The previous FRA for this building was reviewed prior to this inspection, paying particular attention to any tasks generated by that FRA. During this inspection these tasks were inspected where access was possible, to ascertain if the recommended remedial work had been completed, and comments regarding the progress of any remedial work made accordingly.

Records for the testing and maintenance of fire safety related systems are not kept on site. These are managed centrally and are held at the ISHA Head Office.

The staircase doors on the first and second floors were found to be wedged open, and it may be reasonably assumed that this is general practice in the building. These doors protect the staircase in the event of a fire in any flat and it is imperative they are kept shut to maintain this protection at all times.

This building was originally a single private dwelling converted at some point, probably before the 1980's, to form separate flats. The building regulation standards in use today were not introduced until 1991, however, some of the principles within the early editions of ADB have been applied and generally the building meets the current guidance with the exception of smoke ventilation within the staircase.

However, a BS5839 Part 1 fire alarm system has been installed throughout the whole building including within the flats which prompts Simultaneous Evacuation rather than the more common approach of Stay Put. The Simultaneous Evacuation philosophy is not incorrect, but requires management consideration.

If the common fire alarm system should be considered for replacement or significant cost of remedial work there is value in reviewing the evacuation strategy. Following a Type 4 FRA, a decision may be taken to remove the common fire alarm and revert to a Stay Put philosophy. If this approach is adopted then it is recommended that a BS5839-6 Category system is provided within each flat which will enhance the fire safety protection of residents. For clarity this change should also include Part 6 Grade A detection within the common areas as per the guidance for this type of premises contained in the LaCORS Guide.

The Fire alarm panel was found to be in a "fire" condition. This was immediately reported to the ISHA Customer Homes Compliance Manager.

There is a Fire Action Notice provided on the noticeboard which is incorrect and is one intended for a building with a stay-put evacuation policy in place. The provision of a common fire alarm suggests the building has a simultaneous evacuation policy and it is imperative that the correct Fire Action Notice is provided to ensure residents and visitors are aware of the action they should take in the event of a fire.

Giving consideration to the general fire safety arrangements within the building, and the tasks recommended as detailed within this report, it is assessed that this building presents a moderate risk. This is in the main due to the condition of the fire alarm panel at the time of this inspection.

This new version was created on 03/10/2023 and is not a review of the fire risk assessment. This is purely an on-site audit carried out at the request of the client to ascertain the progress of any action carried out against previous tasks identified in previous versions of this fire risk assessment.

Premises Details

Address line 1

Durham House, Flats 1-6

Address line 2

20A Cathcart Hill

Town

Islington

Postcode

N19 5QP

FRA Type

Type 1 - Common parts only (non-destructive)

Description

A Type 1 fire risk assessment has been conducted at this building. This means the inspection of the building has been non-destructive. As well as considering the arrangements for means of escape, the fire risk assessment has included, where possible, the examination of a sample of flat entrance doors. It has also considered, so far as reasonably practicable, the separating construction between the flats and the common parts without any intrusive examination of construction. This Type of fire risk assessment has not involved entry to flats beyond the area of the flat entrance door.

Client

ISHA

Building Information

Use	Converted, self-contained flats
Number of floors - ground and above	3
Number of floors - below ground	1
Number of flats	6
Number of stair cores	1
Approach to flats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Via protected lobbies / corridors
Approximate period of construction	Pre 1900
Is the top occupied storey over 18 metres above access level?	No

Construction details

Traditional brick construction with intermediate timber floors and a covered pitched roof. Access to common area via secure door entry system with flats accessed from protected lobbies at each floor level.

Basement level accessed from ground floor common area, basement contains mains electrics and meters.



External walls - rear elevation.



External walls – side elevation.



External Walls - front elevation

External wall details

Brick and mortar external walls. No additional external wall system is installed.

Are there any private balconies?	No
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People

Are there any people especially at risk from fire?

Not Known

Fire Prevention

Electrical

Are electrical installations and appliances free from any obvious defect?

Yes

Are fixed installations periodically inspected and tested?

Yes

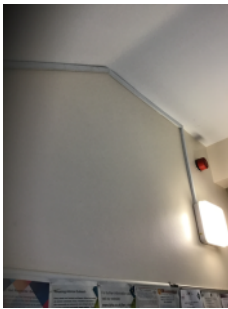
Are portable electrical appliances used?

No

Comments

Documentation regarding the testing and maintenance of fixed electrical installations is held centrally by ISHA. The Neighbourhood Officer has confirmed these are all up to date.

There are electrical sockets in the common areas, presumably for use by cleaning staff. These were in good condition and showed no evidence of misuse by residents or visitors.



PVC conduit used to support cables in common areas

Gas

Are gas installations and appliances free from any obvious defect?

Yes

Is gas equipment protected/located so as not to be prone to accidental damage?

Yes

Comments

Gas meters are located externally and not in any common areas.



Gas meters located externally

Heating

Are fixed heating installations free from any obvious defect?

N/A

Are portable heaters used?

No

Comments

There is no heating provision in the common areas.

Cooking

Does cooking take place on the premises?

No

Comments

Cooking takes place within flats only and does not take place in the common parts.

Arson

Is security against arson reasonable?

Yes

Is there a reasonable absence of external fuels and ignition sources?

Yes

Comments

Access was gained into this building via a secured main entrance door.

The main entrance door was found to be locked and secure, preventing unauthorised access.

Refuse bins are located close to the building and immediately outside the main entrance door. Consideration should be given to relocate these bins as a fire occurring in the bins in their current location could spread to the building itself and compromise escape from the building via the main entrance door.

Housekeeping

Is accumulation of combustibles or waste avoided?

Yes

Are there appropriate storage facilities for combustible & hazardous materials?

N/A

Comments

All common areas appeared clean, tidy and free of combustible items.

Building Works

Are there any hot works being carried-out at this time?

No

Are the premises free of any obvious signs of incorrect hot work procedures in the past?

Yes

Comments

Painting and decorating of the staircase was being carried out at the time of this inspection. No hot work was evident.

Smoking

Are there suitable arrangements taken to prevent fires caused by smoking?

Yes

Comments

“No Smoking” signage is provided, and there is no evidence of smoking taking place in the common parts.

Dangerous Substances

Are dangerous substances present, or liable to be present?

No

Lightning

Is a lightning protection system installed?

No

Escape Routes & Fire Spread

Ease of Use

Are exits easily and immediately openable?

Yes

Do fire exits open in direction of escape where necessary?

N/A

Are escape routes unobstructed and safe to use?

Yes

Are there reasonable measures for the evacuation of disabled people?

Yes

Comments

Note: There are cables supported in PVC conduit in the common parts of this building, which were probably installed prior to 2015. . A requirement introduced in 2015 in BS 7671 which covers electrical installations in the UK, states that all new wiring systems to use metal, rather than plastic, to support cables in escape routes, to prevent their premature collapse in the event of a fire.

Tenants are presumed to be a typical cross section of the public and could include visitors and contractors. It is assumed that all occupants and visitors are capable of using the means of escape unaided to reach a place of ultimate safety.

Dimensions

Are travel distances reasonable?

Yes

Is there sufficient exit capacity?

Yes

Fire Doors

Doors which are expected to be fire resisting:

- Basement
- Flats
- Staircases

Basement Doors

- FD30S self-closing

Flat Doors

- FD30 self-closing (notional)

Staircase Doors

- FD30S self-closing

Are fire doors to a suitable standard?

Yes

Is there suitable provision of self-closing devices?

Yes

Is there suitable provision of hold-open devices?

N/A

Are doors kept locked where appropriate?

Yes

Comments

As part of this Fire Risk Assessment, access was gained into a sample flat to assess the suitability of flat entrance doors, and any internal doors which open onto the entrance hallway.

Access was gained into flat 5 which has an entrance door fitted to FD30S SC (notional) standard, however the internal doors which open onto the entrance hallway are NOT fire resisting.

The remainder of flat front doors within the building could not be assessed due to access. However, these all appear to be of the same age, condition and design of those which were accessed and were probably all installed at the same time. It is therefore reasonable to assume that they are of the same fire resisting standard. The provision and condition of self closing devices, intumescent strips/cold smoke seals, and effective door closing action of these doors however could not be assessed and this should be confirmed ensure all doors afford FD30S SC standard of fire resistance.

It is also understood that communal doors are inspected regularly by neighbourhood officers and formally recorded in the quarterly/6 monthly estate inspections with residents. Records are held with the neighbourhood officers. Flat entrance doors are inspected during the annual LGSR visits where the gas engineers record on their PDA if a door closer exists and intumescent strips and cold smoke seals exist.

It is evident that since the previous fire risk assessment, new staircase doors have been installed on each level to an FD30S SC standard of fire resistance, however the staircase door on the second floor is still being wedged open, as noted within the previous fire risk assessment



Example of FED provided in the building.



Example of lobby door provided in the building

Construction & Glazing

Are escape routes protected with suitable walls and floors?

Yes

Is there adequate compartmentation?

Yes

Is there reasonable limitation of linings that might promote fire spread?

Yes

Glazing which is expected to be fire resisting, inc vision panels and fanlights:

- Lobbies

Lobby Glazing

- 30 mins E

Is glazing reasonable and free from any obvious defects?

Yes



Acid etching on staircase door glazing.



Evidence of fire stopping in lower ground floor electrical cupboard

Dampers, Ducts & Chutes

Are there suitable measures to restrict fire spread via ducts and concealed spaces?

Not Confirmed

Comments

No Dampers, Ducts or Chutes evident.

Smoke Ventilation

Areas where smoke ventilation is expected:

- None

Is smoke ventilation reasonable and free from any obvious defects?

Yes

Comments

Smoke ventilation is not required as the provision of a Part-1 common fire alarm system suggests there is a simultaneous evacuation strategy in place in this building, however openable windows are available on each level within the staircase should they be required for firefighting operations.

Detection & Warning

Is an electrical fire alarm system expected?

No

Why not?

Converted flats of stay-put standard

Is a fire detection and/or alarm system provided?

Yes

Areas covered

- Communal areas

Communal Areas

System Category

- BS 5839 Pt1 Category L3

Cause & Effect

- Not confirmed

Control Equipment

Is the control equipment suitably located?

Yes

Is the control equipment free from any obvious fault or defect?

No

Comments

The fire alarm panel was found to be in a fire condition. The panel should be serviced by an engineer.

Due to the common fire alarm, which extends into the individual flats, the premises currently has a simultaneous evacuation policy which means that if the fire service do not attend, one of the residents needs to be able to reset the fire alarm panel.

Consideration should be given to the residents being provided with a key to activate the fire alarm panel. The key should not be left in the control panel as this means that the fire alarm could be disabled by anyone within the entrance hallway.

The alternative is for ISHA to have an on-call arrangement where someone attends out of hours to reset the fire alarm system.



Fire alarm panel in fire condition. The panel should be serviced immediately

Manual Fire Alarms

Are there sufficient means of manually raising an alarm?

Yes

Are manual callpoints appropriately located and free from obvious defect?

Yes

Comments

Consider removing manual call points from public areas to reduce the likelihood of false alarms.



Manual call-point provided

Automatic Fire Detection

Is there sufficient provision of automatic fire detection?

No

Is the type of automatic fire detection suitable and free from obvious defect?

No

Comments

A BS5839 Part 1 fire alarm system has been installed throughout the whole building including within the flats which prompts Simultaneous Evacuation rather than the more common approach of Stay Put. There is no heat detection provided within the entrance hallways of flats. The Simultaneous Evacuation philosophy is not incorrect, but requires management consideration.

Should a decision be made to maintain this fire alarm provision, then it should be provided as per the LACoRS Fire detection and alarm system recommendations for a Three-or four-storey building converted into self-contained flats which is:

A mixed system

- Grade A: LD2 coverage in the common areas and a heat alarm in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route (interlinked); and
- Grade D: LD3 coverage in each flat (non-interlinked smoke alarm in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route) to protect the sleeping occupants of the flat

(This is subject to the fire separation recommendations as given in LACoRS)



Fire alarm panel

Audibility

Are there adequate means of alerting all relevant persons?

Yes



Fire alarm sounders provided in common areas.

Firefighting

Fire Extinguishers

Are fire extinguishers expected?

No

Why not?

- Not practicable to train residents
- Fire unlikely in communal areas
- Vandalism concerns

Are fire extinguishers provided?

No

Is the provision of fire extinguishers reasonable?

Yes

Fixed Systems

Are any fixed systems provided?

No

Is provision of fixed systems reasonable?

Yes

Fire Service Facilities

Are any fire service facilities provided?

No

Is provision of fire service facilities reasonable?

Yes

Lighting

Normal Lighting

Is there adequate lighting of internal escape routes?

Yes

Is there adequate lighting of external escape routes?

N/A

Is there adequate lighting in risk critical areas?

N/A

Emergency Lighting

Method of emergency lighting of internal escape routes:

- Maintained emergency lighting (local)

Is this provision reasonable?

Yes

Method of emergency lighting of external escape routes:

- Borrowed light

Is this provision reasonable?

Yes

Method of emergency lighting of other areas:

- Not applicable

Is this provision reasonable?

Yes

Comments

Although this inspection took place during daylight hours, given the provision of street lighting in the immediate vicinity and lighting provided by surrounding buildings, it is reasonable to assume there would be sufficient borrowed light to aid escape in these areas.

Signs & Notices

Escape Routes

Is escape route signage necessary?

No

Why not?

- Simple escape routes
- Routes in ordinary use

Is escape route signage provided?

No

Is provision of escape route signage suitable?

Yes

Fire Doors

Is there signage suitable for self-closing fire doors?

No

Is there signage suitable for locked fire doors?

Yes

Is there signage suitable for automatic fire doors?

N/A

Other Signs & Notices

Is there suitable signage for fire service facilities?

N/A

Are fire action notices suitable?

No

Are there suitable notices for fire extinguishers?

N/A

Is there suitable zone information for the fire alarm system?

Minor Defects

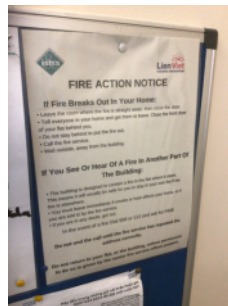
Comments

Zone information is hand written on the alarm panel. This could become illegible over time. Recommended to provide printed formal alarm zone information.

The provision of a common fire alarm suggests there is a simultaneous evacuation strategy in place in this building. The fire action notice posted adjacent to the fire alarm panel is applicable to this evacuation strategy, however there is an additional fire action notice posted on the noticeboard which gives instruction and information regarding a stay put policy. This notice should be removed.



Provided Fire Action Notice



Incorrect fire action notice

Fire Safety Management

Procedures & Arrangements

Current evacuation policy	Simultaneous
Are fire action procedures suitable and appropriately documented?	Not Known
Are there suitable arrangements for calling the fire service?	N/A
Is there a suitable fire assembly point?	Yes
Are there suitable arrangements for the evacuation of disabled people?	Yes

Comments

These are general needs flats and as such no specific occupancy risk is identified. Tenants are presumed to be a typical cross section of public and could include visitors and contractors. It is assumed that all occupants and visitors are capable of using the means of escape unaided to reach a place of ultimate safety.

Training & Drills

Are staff regularly on the premises?	No
Are employees from outside organisations given appropriate fire safety information?	Yes

Comments

Fire Action notices provide sufficient information to inform persons from outside organisations of the action to take in the event of a fire alarm actuation or discovering a fire.

Testing & Maintenance

Was testing & maintenance information available?	No
Are fire extinguishers subject to suitable test & maintenance?	N/A

Comments

Fire Safety documentation for the testing and maintenance of fire safety systems is held centrally at the ISHA Head Office. The ISHA Neighbourhood Officer has confirmed that these are up to date.

Record Keeping

Were fire safety records available?

No

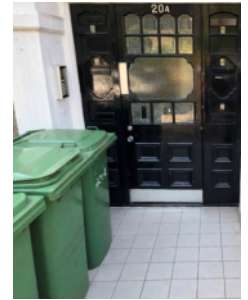
Comments

Fire Safety documentation for the testing and maintenance of fire safety systems is held centrally at the ISHA Head Office. The ISHA Neighbourhood Officer has confirmed that these are up to date.

Tasks

Task 1

Source Version	1
Category	Fire Prevention
Sub Category	Arson
Action Required	Do not keep bins adjacent to the building. Refuse bins are located close to the building and immediately outside the main entrance door. Consideration should be given to relocate these bins as a fire occurring in the bins in their current location could spread to the building itself and compromise escape from the building via the main entrance door.
Priority	Medium
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	3 December 2020



Task 2

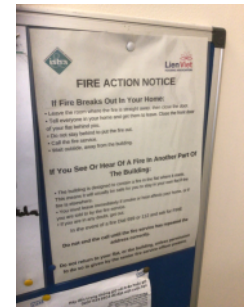
Source Version	1
Category	Detection & Warning
Sub Category	Automatic Fire Detection
Action Required	<p>If, following an intrusive examination of compartmentation it is confirmed there is adequate compartmentation to support a stay-put strategy, then consider removing the provided common fire alarm. Should a decision be made to maintain this fire alarm provision, then it should be provided as per the LACoRS Fire detection and alarm system recommendations for a three-or four-storey building converted into self-contained flats which is:</p> <p>A mixed system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grade A: LD2 coverage in the common areas and a heat alarm in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route (interlinked); and• Grade D: LD3 coverage in each flat (non-interlinked smoke alarm in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route) to protect the sleeping occupants of the flat (This is subject to the fire separation recommendations as given in LACoRS) <p>NOTE: This task refers to the common fire alarm only. It is always recommended to provide a fire alarm WITHIN flats to at least the recommendations of BS5839-6 LD3 standard.</p>
Priority	Advisory
Status	Identified
Owner	Customer Homes
Due Date	4 June 2022

Task 3

Source Version	2
Category	Detection & Warning
Sub Category	Manual Fire Alarms
Action Required	Consider removing manual call points from public areas to reduce the likelihood of false alarms.
Priority	Advisory
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	23 April 2023

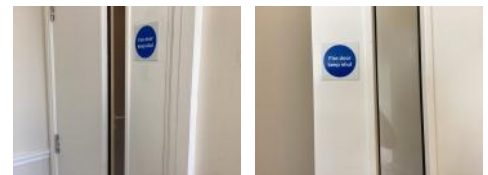
Task 4

Source Version	2
Category	Signs & Notices
Sub Category	Other Signage
Action Required	The current fire action notices are not suitable for a simultaneous evacuation strategy. The notices should be replaced with ones which reflect the building's fire safety measures and explain the simultaneous evacuation strategy.
Priority	Medium
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	22 October 2021



Task 5

Source Version	2
Category	Signs & Notices
Sub Category	Fire Door Signage
Action Required	Replace Fire Door Keep Locked signs with Fire Door Keep Shut signs on the following doors: All staircase doors.
Priority	Low
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	23 April 2022



Task 6

Source Version	2
Category	Escape Routes & Fire Spread
Sub Category	Ease of Use
Action Required	Cables are suspended in common areas using PVC conduit. A requirement introduced in 2015 in BS 7671 which covers electrical installations in the UK, states that all new wiring systems are to use metal, rather than plastic, to support cables in escape routes, to prevent their premature collapse in the event of a fire.
Priority	Advisory
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	23 April 2023

Risk Score

Risk Score

Moderate Risk

Next Assessment Due

3 October 2024

Likelihood	Potential Consequence		
	Slight Harm	Moderate Harm	Extreme Harm
High	Moderate	Substantial	Intolerable
Medium	Tolerable	Moderate	Substantial
Low	Trivial	Tolerable	Moderate

Likelihood

Low Unusually low likelihood of fire as a result of negligible potential sources of ignition.

Medium Normal fire hazards (e.g. potential ignition sources) for this type of occupancy, with fire hazards generally subject to appropriate controls (other than minor shortcomings).

High Lack of adequate controls applied to one or more significant fire hazards, such as to result in significant increase in likelihood of fire.

Consequence

Slight Outbreak of fire unlikely to result in serious injury or death of any occupant (other than an occupant sleeping in a room in which a fire occurs).

Moderate Outbreak of fire could foreseeably result in injury (including serious injury) of one or more occupants, but it is unlikely to involve multiple fatalities.

Extreme Significant potential for serious injury or death of one or more occupants.