

Fire Risk Assessment

St Katharine's House

Version 4

4 September 2023



Review Date: 4 September 2024

Score: Tolerable 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	Escape Routes & Fire Spread	Fire Doors	<p>Install a self-closing device on the following doors:</p> <p>Entrance door to flat 4.</p> <p>Version 3 This should be checked by the Neighbourhood Officer</p>	Medium	Identified		
2	Fire Management	Testing & Maintenance	The firefighting lifts should be tested and serviced in accordance with the recommendations of BS 9999.	Low	Identified		
3	Escape Routes & Fire Spread	Construction and Glazing	The insulating material over the structural steel pillars supporting balconies has degraded, exposing the steel pillars within. These appear to have severe water damage. It's advised to have structural engineer inspect these structural elements to ensure they perform as would be expected if exposed to fire.	Advisory	Identified		
4	Fire Fighting	Fire Service Access & Facilities	The firefighter lift override facility should be tested.	Medium	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.

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 tolerable risk.

VERSION 2, 13/01/2021:

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.

It was noted that there remains a number of tasks outstanding from the previous FRA which detail recommended remedial work required to ensure the safety of the building and that it is compliant with relative fire safety regulations and guidance. It is imperative that such remedial work is carried out within the recommended time frames given.

Due to current government guidelines regarding the current COVID-19 pandemic, access into flats to confirm the provision and standard of fire resisting flat entrance doors, or the provision and standard of fire alarms within flats was not possible. Inspection of flat entrance doors was made by external examination only, taking into account the age and condition of the doors, and where possible referring to previous FRAs where more detailed information regarding flat entrance doors and fire alarm provision may be found.

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 wall, floors and stairs in the common areas are of masonry/concrete construction.

As expected, there is no common fire detection and alarm system, which supports the Stay Put strategy appropriate for the building.

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 tolerable risk.

VERSION 3 - 17/11/21

This is the annual review of the fire risk assessment and it is noted that there are a number of outstanding actions from the previous assessment.

These actions should be completed and evidence provided so that this fire risk assessment can be updated.

This new version was created on 04/09/2023 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

Building Information

Address line 1	St Katharine's House
Town	Islington
Postcode	N1 0HA
FRA Type	Type 1 - Common parts only (non-destructive)
Description	<p>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.</p>
Client	ISHA
Use	Purpose-built, self-contained flats
Number of floors - ground and above	5
Number of floors - below ground	0
Number of flats	13
Number of stair cores	1
Approach to flats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Via balconies / decks• Direct external access

Approximate period of construction

1920-1940

Is the top occupied storey over 18 metres above access level?

No

Construction details

Traditional brick construction with solid concrete intermediate floors and a flat roof.

The building was originally built in 1934, but has undergone some modernisation in the 1980's.

Access to common area via secure gate entry system at front elevation, with flats accessed from open deck balconies at each floor. Electric cupboard located under common area stair. Electric meter cupboard, lift motor room and bin store at ground floor level. Fireman's lift provided to all floor levels. Bin chute hatches located on open deck balconies. Dry Riser located at each floor level of open stairwell.

On the front elevation there are steel pillars which have are clad in an unidentified insulating material.

It cannot be confirmed within the scope of this fire risk assessment whether these pillars are considered to be elements of structure of the building, or whether this material has been added to provide protection to the steel pillars in the event of a fire. It was noted that this material has degraded exposing this the steel in some areas.



Rear elevation (Eckford St elevation)



Side elevation (Penton Street elevation)



Front elevation.

External wall details

Despite the building undergoing some refurbishment and modernisation the majority of the external walls are of the original brick and mortar construction.

Are there any private balconies?

Yes

Private balcony details

There are private balcony is located on the front side and rear elevations of the building. These have concrete decks which are probably an extension of the concrete compartment floor.

Private balconies at the side and rear elevation have brick upstands the private balconies at the front elevation of steel upstands.

People

Are there any people especially at risk from fire?

No

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.

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

Heating

Are fixed heating installations free from any obvious defect?

N/A

Are portable heaters used?

No

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 the building compound via a secured main gate.

Housekeeping

Is accumulation of combustibles or waste avoided?

Yes

Are there appropriate storage facilities for combustible & hazardous materials?

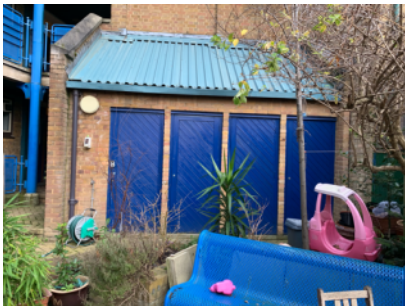
N/A

Comments

All common areas appeared clean, tidy and free of combustible items, with the exception of the electrical cupboard at the base of the staircase where plastic inflatable items were found to be stored.

Residents lock-up storage cupboards are located externally and are detached from the main building.

Version 3 - bikes should not be stored in the lift motor room.



Residents storage cupboards are located away from the building.

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

Smoking

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

Yes

Comments

"No Smoking" signage has now been provided in the communal areas.

Dangerous Substances

Are dangerous substances present, or liable to be present?

No

Lightning

Is a lightning protection system installed?

No

Comments

There is no lightning protection visible, However, if there is lightening protection in place it should be periodically inspected by a competent person, to the frequency recommended in BS EN 62305.

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

The provision of thumb turn devices on final gate means it can be opened without the use of a key.

No specific occupancy risk identified. Tenants are a typical cross section of public and would include visitors and contractors. It is assumed occupants are capable of using the means of escape, unaided to reach a place of ultimate safety.

There are a small number of items located in the common areas, which whilst currently do not present a significant risk, these areas should be monitored to ensure they do not build up.

Stair nosings are of a contrasting colour to assist identification.



Stair nosings are of a contrasting colour to assist identification.



The provision of thumb turn devices on final gate.

Dimensions

Are travel distances reasonable?

Yes

Is there sufficient exit capacity?

Yes

Fire Doors

Doors which are expected to be fire resisting:

- Electrical Cupboards
- Flats

Electrical Cupboard Doors

- FD30

Flat Doors

- FD30S self-closing

Are fire doors to a suitable standard?

Yes

Is there suitable provision of self-closing devices?

Minor Defects

Is there suitable provision of hold-open devices?

N/A

Are doors kept locked where appropriate?

Yes

Comments

Flats have either direct access, or are approached via common balconies.

Entrance doors to flats which have direct external access, and flats which are at the far end of balconies (and therefore would not need to be passed by escaping occupants of other flats in the event of a fire) are not required to be fire resisting. The remainder (the entrance doors to flats 4, 6, 9, and 12) should afford at least an FD30SC standard of fire resistance. 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.

Some Flats which could not be accessed were noted to have externally fitted self closing devices, others did not.

Access was gained into flat 4 which has an entrance door fitted to FD30S standard however, there was no self closing device fitted. The internal doors which open onto the entrance hallway appeared to be 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.

VERSION 2:

Due to current government guidelines regarding the current COVID-19 pandemic, access into flats to confirm the provision and standard of fire resisting flat entrance doors was not possible. Inspection of flat entrance doors was made by external examination only, taking into account the age and condition of the doors, and where possible referring to previous FRAs where more detailed information regarding flat entrance doors and fire alarm provision may be found. All flat entrance doors appeared to be in good condition, with no obvious visible damage or defects and therefore it can reasonably assume they would afford the same level of fire resistance as found in the previous FRA.

Version 3 - regular door checks should be made by the Neighbourhood Officer.



Example of flat entrance door without visible external self closing device



Example of flat entrance door with visible external self closing device

Construction & Glazing

Are escape routes protected with suitable walls and floors?

Yes

Is there adequate compartmentation?

Minor Defects

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:

• None

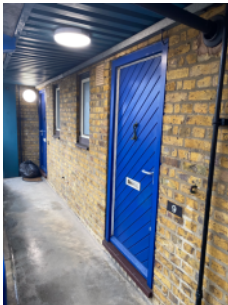
Is glazing reasonable and free from any obvious defects?

Yes

Comments

The insulating material over the structural steel pillars supporting balconies has degraded, exposing the steel pillars within. These appear to have severe water damage. It's advised to have structural engineer inspect these structural elements to ensure they perform as would be expected if exposed to fire.

Glazing to flat windows is above 1.1m from the balcony deck and therefore is not required to be fire resisting.



Glazing installed on common balconies is above 1.1 m.



Photograph showing degraded insulating material around structural steels.



Version 3 - Evidence of fire stopping in lift motor room

Dampers, Ducts & Chutes

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

Yes

Comments

There is a rubbish chute provided, with all hatches in good condition.



Rubbish chute hatches in good condition

Smoke Ventilation

Areas where smoke ventilation is expected:

- Staircases

Staircases

- Permanently Open

Is smoke ventilation reasonable and free from any obvious defects?

Yes

Detection & Warning

Control Equipment

Is an electrical fire alarm system expected?

No

Why not?

Purpose-built flats

Is a fire detection and/or alarm system provided?

No

Is the control equipment suitably located?

N/A

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

N/A

Manual Fire Alarms

Are there sufficient means of manually raising an alarm?

N/A

Are manual callpoints appropriately located and free from obvious defect?

N/A

Automatic Fire Detection

Is there sufficient provision of automatic fire detection?

N/A

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

N/A

Comments

As part of this Fire Risk Assessment access was gained into a sample flat to assess the provision and suitability of fire alarms.

Access was gained into flat 4 which has a fire alarm provided to BS5839-6 LD3 standard.

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.

VERSION 2:

Due to current government guidelines regarding the current COVID-19 pandemic, access into flats to confirm the provision and standard of fire alarms within flats was not possible. It is reasonable to assume that the provision of fire alarms within the flats is as found in the previous fire risk assessment, i.e. a system provided to the recommendations of BS5839-6.

Audibility

Are there adequate means of alerting all relevant persons?

N/A

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?

Yes

Types of facility

- Dry rising main
- Fire fighting lift

Is provision of fire service facilities reasonable?

Minor Defects

Comments

The Firefighting override switch to the lift is rusted and does not appear to have been recently serviced.



Rusted firefighters override switch to the lift.



Dry rising main outlet

Lighting

Normal Lighting

Is there adequate lighting of internal escape routes?

Yes

Is there adequate lighting of external escape routes?

Yes

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

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?

N/A

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?

Yes

Are fire action notices suitable?

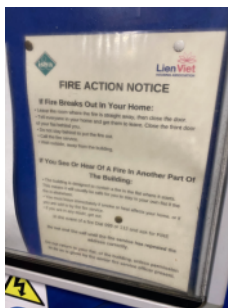
Yes

Are there suitable notices for fire extinguishers?

N/A

Is there suitable zone information for the fire alarm system?

N/A



The provided fire action notice.

Fire Safety Management

Procedures & Arrangements

Current evacuation policy	Stay Put
Are fire action procedures suitable and appropriately documented?	Yes
Are there suitable arrangements for calling the fire service?	N/A
Is there a suitable fire assembly point?	N/A
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 of outside organisations of the action to take in the event of a fire.

Testing & Maintenance

Was testing & maintenance information available?	No
Are fire extinguishers subject to suitable test & maintenance?	Yes

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	Escape Routes & Fire Spread
Sub Category	Fire Doors
Action Required	Install a self-closing device on the following doors: Entrance door to flat 4. Version 3 This should be checked by the Neighbourhood Officer
Priority	Medium
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	7 January 2021

Task 2

Source Version	1
Category	Fire Management
Sub Category	Testing & Maintenance
Action Required	The firefighting lifts should be tested and serviced in accordance with the recommendations of BS 9999.
Priority	Low
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	7 January 2022

Task 3

Source Version	1
Category	Escape Routes & Fire Spread
Sub Category	Construction and Glazing
Action Required	The insulating material over the structural steel pillars supporting balconies has degraded, exposing the steel pillars within. These appear to have severe water damage. It's advised to have structural engineer inspect these structural elements to ensure they perform as would be expected if exposed to fire.
Priority	Advisory
Status	Identified
Owner	Customer Homes
Due Date	7 January 2023



Task 4

Source Version	3
Category	Fire Fighting
Sub Category	Fire Service Access & Facilities
Action Required	The firefighter lift override facility should be tested.
Priority	Medium
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	18 May 2022

Risk Score

Risk Score

Tolerable Risk

Next Assessment Due

4 September 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.