

Fire Risk Assessment

Willow Tree Court

Version 3

13 September 2023



Review Date: 13 September 2024

Score: Tolerable Risk

Assessor: Andy Harris

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Action Plan Summary

Task No.	Category	Sub Category	Action Required	Priority	Status	Action Taken	Date Completed
1	Detection & Warning	Automatic Fire Detection	Consider removal of the fire alarm (sounders only) from communal areas, as it conflicts with national guidance which recommends a stay-put policy for buildings of this type. 13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.	Advisory	Identified		
2	Fire Prevention	Housekeeping	The storage of combustible items in escape routes should be prohibited. Outside flat 4 Version 2 - This task is still outstanding. 13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.	High	Identified		
3	Escape Routes & Fire Spread	Ease of Use	Obstructions should be removed from the escape routes in the following locations: 1st floor landing Version 2 - This task is still outstanding. 13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.	High	Identified		

4	Fire Prevention	Smoking	No Smoking signage should be provided in the communal areas. Version 2 - This task is still outstanding. 13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.	Medium	Identified
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5	Fire Prevention	Housekeeping	Whilst beyond the scope of the Fire Safety Order, as a private balcony is not part of the common area, residents should be advised about the risks arising from the presence of combustible materials on balconies. They should make clear that smoking, the use of barbecues and storage of flammable property on balconies can increase that risk. Advice from fire and rescue authorities is also clear that barbecues should not be used on balconies. (MHCLG Advice Note on Balconies on Residential Buildings, 2019) 13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.	Advisory	Identified
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6	Escape Routes & Fire Spread	Smoke Ventilation	Clip up the electrical cables for the automatic smoke vent so they are out of the reach of residents. 13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.	Medium	Identified
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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 wall, floors and stairs in the common areas are of masonry/concrete construction.

Based on those sampled, it is reasonably assumed that all flats are provided with a BS 5839 Part 6 fire alarm system comprising of a mains powered (with integral battery backup) smoke alarm in the hallway, meeting an LD3 installation standard. This meets the minimum expectation for a flat in a purpose built, general needs, block of flats.

There is a BS5839-6 fire alarm provided in the common parts of this building. No documentation regarding the cause and effect of the system was available and it cannot be confirmed whether the fire alarm in the common areas is interlinked to those installed within flats. The provision of a common fire alarm system contradicts National Guidance for a building of this type (general needs, purpose built, self contained flats). A letter dated 6th January 2020 from QFSM Ltd to ISHA regarding the provision of fire alarms in common parts of blocks of flats offers guidance and recommendations on this matter and this letter should be referred to when considering whether this is a necessary provision, or if it is considered a necessary provision whether this fire alarm is of the Standard required.

It must be stressed that any smoke detection required for the actuation of the smoke ventilation should remain, it is only the fire alarm sounders which should be considered for removal.

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

This is the annual review of the fire risk assessment and, as well as identifying any new significant fire safety contraventions, is specifically checking whether any remedial tasks from the previous fire risk assessment have been completed.

There are still some outstanding remedial tasks from previous assessments and the amount of personal storage on the first floor is excessive and is causing a fire risk from malicious ignition as well as obstructing the fire escape route.

Two old (2014) fire extinguishers have been dumped in the ground floor electrical cupboard and should be removed.

This new version was created on 13/09/2023 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	Willow Tree Court
Town	Waltham Forest
Postcode	E17 6BF
FRA Type	Type 3 – Common parts and flats (non-destructive)
Description	<p>A Type 3 fire risk assessment includes the work involved in a Type 1 fire risk assessment, but goes beyond the scope of the FSO (though not the scope of the Housing Act). This risk assessment considers the arrangements for means of escape and fire detection (ie smoke alarms) within at least a sample of the flats. Within the flats, the inspection is non-destructive, but the fire resistance of doors to rooms is considered.</p> <p>Measures to prevent fire are not considered unless (eg in the case of maintenance of the electrical and heating installations) the measures are within the control of, for example, the landlord.</p> <p>A Type 3 fire risk assessment may sometimes be appropriate for rented flats if there is reason to suspect serious risk to residents in the event of a fire in their flats. (This might be, for example, because of the age of the block or reason for suspicion of widespread unauthorised material alterations). This type of fire risk assessment may not be possible in the case of long leasehold flats, as there is normally no right of access for freeholders.</p>
Client	ISHA
Use	Purpose-built, self-contained flats
Number of floors - ground and above	3
Number of floors - below ground	0
Number of flats	6
Number of stair cores	1

Approach to flats

- Direct from stair
- Entrance hallway

Approximate period of construction

2010-2020

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

No

Construction details

A building of three floors, of brick, concrete and steel construction containing six purpose built self contained flats. There are two flats per floor accessed direct from the staircase. There is a rear exit to a rear courtyard. There is a flat roof with a sloping front, with two balconies recessed into this slope at second floor level.

Front elevation external walls are part rendered over brick.

Rear elevation external walls are part rendered, with an unidentified external wall system over the second floor.

Attention is drawn to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Consolidated Advice Note for building owners of multi-storey, multi-occupied residential buildings, dated January 2020. The Advice Note recommends that building owners should consider the risk of external fire spread as part of the fire risk assessment for multi-occupied residential buildings. Consideration has been given to this matter within this fire risk assessment. The Advice Note further recommends the assessment of the fire risks of any external wall system, irrespective of the height of the building.



Rear elevation, part rendered, part clad (type not confirmed)



Private balcony recessed into building



Private balcony, recessed into the building



A timber cladding system surrounding 2nd floor balconies, front elevation



Photograph showing shape of roof



Side elevation

External wall details

FRONT ELEVATION: Brick external walls, part rendered. There is a timber cladding system surrounding 2nd floor balconies which are recessed into the pitched roof, front elevation

REAR ELEVATION: Part rendered (ground and first) with, the second floor clad with an external wall system (type not confirmed)

SIDE ELEVATION: Part brick (ground and first) with, the second floor clad with an external wall system (type not confirmed)

Are there any private balconies?

Yes

Private balcony details

There are two private balconies at the rear of the building which are recessed into the building without any protruding platform.

There are two private balcony/terraces recessed into the sloping roof on the second (top) floor.

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.



Evidence of testing of fixed electrical installations



Electrical sockets provided in common parts of the building

Gas

Are gas installations and appliances free from any obvious defect?

N/A

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

N/A

Comments

Gas meters are located externally and not in 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.

Housekeeping

Is accumulation of combustibles or waste avoided?

No

Are there appropriate storage facilities for combustible & hazardous materials?

N/A

Comments

Combustibles should not be stored within riser cupboards, or be present in the common escape routes.

Version 1 - There are two private balconies at the rear of the building which were noted as containing excessive amounts of combustible items. Whilst beyond the scope of the Fire Safety Order, as a private balcony is not part of the common area, residents should be advised about the risks arising from the presence of combustible materials on balconies. They should make clear that smoking, the use of barbecues and storage of flammable property on balconies can increase that risk. Advice from fire and rescue authorities is also clear that barbecues should not be used on balconies. (MHCLG Advice Note on Balconies on Residential Buildings, 2019)

Version 2 - There is a significant amount of personal storage on the first floor staircase landing.

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 should be provided in the communal areas.

Dangerous Substances

Are dangerous substances present, or liable to be present?

No

Lightning

Is a lightning protection system installed?

Not Known

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?

No

Are there reasonable measures for the evacuation of disabled people?

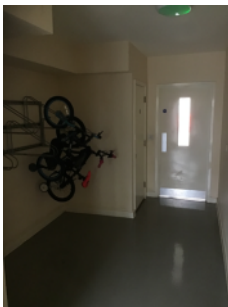
Yes

Comments

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.

Emergency exit devices are provided which were tested at the time of this inspection and functioned correctly.

Obstructions should be removed from the escape routes, 1st floor landing.



Bikes stored in bespoke rack so as not to obstruct the escape route



Emergency exit device

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
- Risers
- Staircases

Electrical Cupboard Doors

- FD30S

Flat Doors

- FD30S self-closing

Riser Doors

- FD30S

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?

No

Comments

It is 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.

As part of this Type 4 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 6 which has an entrance door fitted to FD30S SC standard, and the internal doors which open onto the entrance hallway are 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.

Many riser doors were found to be unlocked, with the locks difficult to use. The locks should be serviced and these doors kept locked shut when not in use.

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:

- Staircases

Staircase Glazing

- Georgian wired

Is glazing reasonable and free from any obvious defects?

Yes

Comments

It was not possible to access the roof space within the scope of this FRA. It should be confirmed there is adequate fire separation between flats, and between flats and the common parts in this area.



Good standard of fire stopping in the electrical cupboard



Good standard of fire stopping in the electrical cupboard



Good standard of fire stopping in the cleaners cupboard



Georgian wired glazing in staircase door



Good standard of fire stopping in riser cupboards.

Dampers, Ducts & Chutes

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

Yes

Comments

No Dampers, Ducts or Chutes evident.

Smoke Ventilation

Areas where smoke ventilation is expected:

- Staircases

Staircases

- Natural Vent - Automatic

Is smoke ventilation reasonable and free from any obvious defects?

Yes

Comments

It was not possible to test the operation of any smoke ventilation systems provided due to the availability of an appropriate key. The smoke ventilation system should be tested and serviced in accordance with the recommendations of BS 9999.



AOV cables need clipping up out of reach.

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?

Yes

Areas covered

- Communal areas

Communal Areas

System Category

- BS 5839 Pt6 Grade D Category L3

Cause & Effect

- Not confirmed
- Operates smoke ventilation

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 Type 3 Fire Risk Assessment access was gained into a sample flat to assess the provision and suitability of fire alarms.

Access was gained into flat 6 which has a fire alarm provided to BS5839-6 LD2 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.

There is a BS5839-6 fire alarm provided in the common parts of this building. This may be provided due to concerns over compartmentation within the building. No documentation regarding the cause and effect of the system was available and it cannot be confirmed whether the fire alarm in the common areas is interlinked to those installed within flats. The provision of a common fire alarm system contradicts National Guidance for a building of this type (general needs, purpose built, self contained flats). A letter dated 6th January 2020 from QFSM Ltd to ISHA regarding the provision of fire alarms in common parts of blocks of flats offers guidance and recommendations on this matter and this letter should be referred to when considering whether this is a necessary provision, or if it is considered a necessary provision whether this fire alarm is of the Standard required. It must be noted that if any detection is provided for the actuation of the smoke ventilation then this should remain, it is only the sounders that should be removed.



Part-6 detection in entrance hallway.

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?

Yes

Predominant types of fire extinguisher:

- Carbon dioxide - 2kg
- Water - 6L

Last test date of extinguishers:

November 2014

Are fire extinguishers readily accessible?

No

Is the provision of fire extinguishers reasonable?

No

Comments

Fire extinguishers are not required or desirable in the common areas of a purpose built, general needs block of flats as flat occupants would not necessarily be trained in their use and limitations. Furthermore there is no expectation that flat occupants would leave a fire in their flat to retrieve an extinguisher and then return to fight the fire, since it is likely to have developed significantly in their absence.

Version 2 - Two old fire extinguishers have been placed in the ground floor electrical cupboard. These are not required and have not been tested since 2014. They should be removed.



Extinguishers in electrical cupboard

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

- Smoke ventilation
- Entrance door override

Is provision of fire service facilities reasonable?

Yes

Comments

The fire service override device was tested and found to function correctly.

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:

- Maintained emergency lighting (local)

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?

Yes

Is provision of escape route signage suitable?

Yes

Fire Doors

Is there signage suitable for self-closing fire doors?

Yes

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

Fire Safety Management

Procedures & Arrangements

Current evacuation policy	Stay Put
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?	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 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.

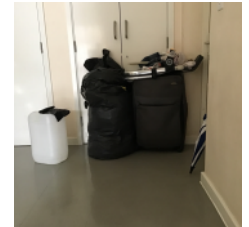
Tasks

Task 1

Source Version	1
Category	Detection & Warning
Sub Category	Automatic Fire Detection
Action Required	Consider removal of the fire alarm (sounders only) from communal areas, as it conflicts with national guidance which recommends a stay-put policy for buildings of this type.
	13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.
Priority	Advisory
Status	Identified
Owner	Customer Homes
Due Date	25 August 2022

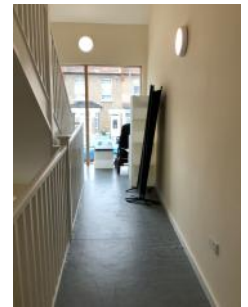
Task 2

Source Version	1
Category	Fire Prevention
Sub Category	Housekeeping
Action Required	The storage of combustible items in escape routes should be prohibited.
	Outside flat 4
	Version 2 - This task is still outstanding.
	13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.
Priority	High
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	23 November 2020



Task 3

Source Version	1
Category	Escape Routes & Fire Spread
Sub Category	Ease of Use
Action Required	Obstructions should be removed from the escape routes in the following locations: 1st floor landing Version 2 - This task is still outstanding. 13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.
Priority	High
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	23 November 2020



Task 4

Source Version	1
Category	Fire Prevention
Sub Category	Smoking
Action Required	No Smoking signage should be provided in the communal areas. Version 2 - This task is still outstanding. 13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.
Priority	Medium
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	23 February 2021



Task 5

Source Version	1
Category	Fire Prevention
Sub Category	Housekeeping
Action Required	Whilst beyond the scope of the Fire Safety Order, as a private balcony is not part of the common area, residents should be advised about the risks arising from the presence of combustibile materials on balconies. They should make clear that smoking, the use of barbecues and storage of flammable property on balconies can increase that risk. Advice from fire and rescue authorities is also clear that barbecues should not be used on balconies. (MHCLG Advice Note on Balconies on Residential Buildings, 2019)
	13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.
Priority	Advisory
Status	Identified
Owner	Neighbourhood Services
Due Date	25 August 2022



Task 6

Source Version	2
Category	Escape Routes & Fire Spread
Sub Category	Smoke Ventilation
Action Required	Clip up the electrical cables for the automatic smoke vent so they are out of the reach of residents.
	13/09/2023 This task is still outstanding.
Priority	Medium
Status	Identified
Owner	Customer Homes
Due Date	11 May 2022



Risk Score

Risk Score

Tolerable Risk

Next Assessment Due

13 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.