

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT
THORNBOROUGH HOUSE (No's 1-7)
SPIRES LANE
BYKER
TYNE & WEAR

AUGUST 2017



STORM TEMPEST
PROPERTY CONSULTANCY

Reference: MH – 3293–07–17

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Client	Byker Community Trust.
Instruction	This Fire Risk Assessment was undertaken in accordance with an instruction received from Mr Ashley Gibson, Technical Services Manager, Byker Community Trust.
Responsible Person	Jill Haley, Chief Executive, Byker Community Trust.
The Property	1-7 Thornborough House, Spires Lane, Byker, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear, NE6 2NS.
The Surveyor	The Fire Risk Assessment was carried out by Mark Harrison, BSc (Hons) and Simon Scurfield MRICS.
Survey Date	23 rd August 2017
Scope and Purpose of the Pre-Occupation Fire Risk Assessment	<p>The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 [RR(FS)O] replaces the 40-year-old fire certification scheme. It is now the duty of the 'responsible person' for the premises to ensure the occupants are safe from the effects of fire as far as practicable. This does not imply a lesser responsibility for the safety of the occupant of the premises; it is almost certain that for premises which required a fire certificate prior to January 2006, similar measures will be required under the RR(FS)O.</p> <p>The RR(FS)O applies to all non-domestic premises, including any voluntary sector and self-employed people with premises separate from their homes.</p> <p>The RR(FS)O does not stipulate the required review period for a particular building, we recommend to review this type of building every year.</p> <p>A fire risk assessment is an organised and methodical look at your premises. The fire risk assessment procedure identifies the activities carried out at the premises and assesses the likelihood of a fire starting. The aim of a fire risk assessment is to:</p>

- Identify the hazards



- Reduce the risk of those hazards causing harm to as low as reasonably practicable.
- Decide what physical fire precautions and management policies are necessary to ensure the safety of people in your premises if a fire does start.

The fire risk assessment was carried out in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) 'sleeping accommodation' guidance document.

Limitations of the Fire Risk Assessment

The RR(FS)O places a burden of responsibility firmly on the head of a 'responsible person' with regard to the fire safety of the occupants of the premises to which they have been assigned. The responsible person is required to co-ordinate all fire safety related issues including the carrying out of a fire risk assessment and production of associated documentation. The responsible person may nominate a 'competent person' to assist in the implementation of any measures deemed necessary to ensure the fire safety of the occupants of the premises.

There are many factors that impact upon what may constitute adequate measures to assess the fire safety of the occupants. Storm Tempest Ltd are not the responsible person and are unable to determine, on behalf of the organisation, the steps it should or must take to comply with its duties under the RR(FS)O. The fire risk assessment will cover all of the areas within the property. We will also comment upon the areas surrounding the building.

This report is for the use of the party to whom it is addressed and should be used within the context of instruction under which it has been prepared.

No opening up of any part of the structure was carried out nor were any operational electrical or mechanical systems tested. All comments and recommendations are based on visual inspection only.



Prioritisation of Recommendations To assist in the development of a strategy and action plan for addressing recommendations in the fire risk assessment report, a priority rating is attached to each recommendation. The following is an explanation of each rating:

High Priority: Immediate action required to prevent risk to the health and safety of relevant persons.

Medium Priority: Planned action to improve fire safety within the premises.

Low Priority: Features that comply with current regulations but which the responsible person may consider upgrading.

Identified costs of Recommendations The report will give a budget costing for recommendations covered in the fire risk assessment for alterations or improvements to physical features to assist the client in developing an Action Plan and improvement programme.



2.0 THE BUILDING

2.1 The Building Thornborough House is a general needs housing scheme located within the Byker Estate.

The building contains a mixture of residential units to all floors of the building. The property is 3-storeys high with 2-storey houses to the ground floor and 1 bedroom flats above on the second floor. There a high level external walkway to the front elevation and single balconies to the rear of the second-floor flats. The building is of masonry cavity wall construction, with brickwork outer leaf, with a flat roof, metal framed double glazed windows and timber external doors, with glazed timber doors to the communal stairs main entrances.

The scheme contains 3 flats and 4 ground floor maisonettes. No's 1, 2, 3 and 4 are on the ground floor and are access directly from street level. Flats 5, 6 and 7 are on the second floor and accessed off the external concrete walkway, which is accessed from the communal staircase. There is one glazed timber door at street level, accessing the ground floor lobby of the communal staircase.

Within the communal staircase, there is a triangular shaped store room to the ground floor, opposite the front entrance door, which is currently empty. Below the stairs there is a locked cupboard, which was not accessed. On the first floor, the store room arrangement is the same, with no access to the smaller side cupboard. On the second floor, there is the triangular room, which houses the bin store for the 3 flats and a glazed timber door, leading to the external concrete walkway to the front doors to the flats.



3.0 FIRE HAZARDS

3.1 Sources of Fuel The building and means of escape provision have been designed on the assumption that the escape routes and fire exits remain clear as to not impede or obstruct the escape route in an emergency evacuation.

The sources of fuel within the communal area of the property were assessed as follows:

- Combustible household items stored in the first-floor store room.
- Combustible household items stored in the second-floor bin store.

The means of escape route via the communal stairs within the property is good, with no items stored in the stair landings or lobby which could have caused an obstruction in an emergency situation. The communal areas should remain a sterile environment to ensure the escape route remains clear. We recommend that the items within the first-floor store room are removed and that escape routes are kept clear and sources of fuel are stored suitably.

3.2 Sources of Ignition The sources of ignition within the communal areas of the property were assessed as follows:

- Landlord's electrical supply – distribution boards
- Lighting within the communal staircase.

Electrical distribution boards should be tested every five years by a registered NICEIC contractor to satisfy compliance with the requirements of the Electricity at Work Act 1989. It was not possible to view the notice on the distribution board within the electric meter cupboard due to the cupboard being locked shut. We recommend that the electrical system inspection is reviewed and tested every 5 years to satisfy compliance of the Electricity at Work Act 1989.



There were no gas appliances or portable electrical appliances in the property to inspect.

Byker Community Trust operate a no-smoking policy in the communal areas of the building, however there was no signage noted to the ground floor of the communal staircase. We recommend that signage is provided.

3.3 Sources of Oxygen

Natural airflow through doors and windows etc. We did not identify any chemicals with oxidising agents within the property at the time of our survey.

The Client should ensure the Fire and Rescue Service are informed, should the use and storage of medical oxygen be required by any resident in the future as an oxygen enriched environment is a potentially serious hazard to Firefighters in a fire situation.

3.4 People at Risk

The people at risk in this building are the residents, maintenance contractors and visitors to the building.



4.0 MEANS OF ESCAPE

4.1 Escape Routes The communal area comprises only of the staircase and the external walkway to the front and is therefore not a complex layout for users who are not familiar with the building. No's 1, 2, 3 and 4 are on the ground floor and are accessed directly from street level. Flats 5, 6 and 7 are on the second floor accessed off the external concrete walkway from the communal staircase at second floor level. At the ground floor of the communal stairs, there is a single exit to the front of the building.

The building has one vertical means of escape via the communal stairwell. The staircase is of appropriate width and design and complies with the requirements of the Building Regulations.

The escape routes were free from obstruction at the time of the inspection with exception to the various household goods stored within the store room off the first-floor landing. The escape routes should remain free from combustible items to reduce the risk of a fire starting in the communal areas and to ensure a clear escape route. The travel distances were assessed as being compliant with the Building Regulations Approved Document B.

Flat 6 is internally arranged so that the kitchen window is overlooking the external walkway fire escape. Under normal circumstances, it would be advised to upgrade the kitchen windows to provide 60-minute fire resistance. However, as these windows are aluminium framed, openable and are part of the Listed Building status, it would require a complete redesign of the windows and connecting to the fire alarm with an automatic closer fitted. We believe that it is not reasonably practicable to upgrade these windows.

4.2 Fire Doors The flat entrance doors accessed off the communal walkway are solid timber external doors in good condition.

The external doors to the top and bottom of the communal staircase are glazed timber fire doors, with Georgian wired glazing in reasonable condition, hung on 1½ pairs of hinges, an overhead door closer device, pull handles and a thumb turn to the internal face of the door. We recommend that the doors are upgraded with



intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, hinges, door lock with thumb turn, overhead door closer and fire resistant glazing, plus "Keep Fire Door Shut" signs. The client may wish to consider replacing the doors as part of a planned maintenance scheme.

The doors to the internal 4 nr store rooms accessed off the staircase landings and lobbies are timber fire doors in reasonable condition, hung on 1½ pairs of hinges, with handles and integrated Perko type door closer devices. We recommend that the internal store doors are upgraded with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, locks where necessary, hinges and overhead door closers, plus "Keep Fire Door Shut" signs. The client may wish to consider replacing the doors as part of a planned maintenance scheme.

4.3 Fire Compartmentation The means of escape route to the building is protected by walls which provide the necessary 60-minute fire protection.

The roof is flat, therefore there is no roof space area, or a loft hatch.

4.4 Fire Alarm and Detection System There is no fire detection within the communal staircase or to the store rooms accessed off the staircase.

4.5 Emergency Lighting The communal stairwell has maintained emergency light fittings with a battery backup. The lights have been appropriately positioned to the stairs and landings and final emergency exit points. The emergency lighting is required to be tested and maintained in accordance with BS5266 which requires monthly short duration tests and annual full discharge tests which should be detailed in a Fire Log Book. There were no records of testing and servicing of the emergency lighting system on site.

4.6 Fire Fighting Equipment Landlords are not required to provide such equipment in residential properties and some fire authorities discourage installing firefighting equipment as they would rather the residents leave the building than attempt to fight a fire with equipment they have not been trained to use. There is no portable firefighting equipment on site in the communal areas.



- 4.7 Signage The property has no provision of fire escape signage to the communal areas of the building, including directional signage or fire action signage to instruct building users of the procedure to follow in an emergency situation.
- Byker Community Trust operates a no smoking policy within the communal parts of the building and there is a 'no-smoking' sign to the ground floor lobby.
- 4.8 Disabled
Persons Egress At the time of the survey we were not made aware of any residents with limited mobility and further information on the residents is unknown.
- It is the Responsible Person's duty to ensure suitable provision is made for disabled persons within the property to ensure that they can escape in the event of a fire. Provision should be made for any hearing-impaired residents to ensure that they can be alerted in the event of the fire alarm being activated.
- The responsible person is required to ensure personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are put in place for disabled persons who may have difficulty in egressing the building in the event of a fire.
- 4.9 Arson The risk of an arson attack is considered medium. The main front entrance door was found to be locked at all times, which prevents unauthorised access.



5.0 MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

5.1 Fire Evacuation Procedures When residents are first inducted to the premises they are given a briefing on the fire evacuation within the building.

As previously mentioned, there are no Fire Action Notices provided within the communal area to remind residents or visitors of the procedure to follow if they discover a fire. We recommend that the fire signage provision is reassessed and the minimum of a Fire Action Notice is provided.

5.2 Fire Log Book There is no Fire Log Book held on site.

5.3 Training There are no staff members located on site that would require fire training.

Surveyor Mark Harrison, BSc (Hons)

Signed

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For Storm Tempest Ltd

Checked Simon Scurfield, BSc (Hons) MRICS

Signed

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For Storm Tempest Ltd



APPENDIX 1
FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT



FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

	<i>Potential consequences of fire</i>			
		<i>Slight Harm (1)</i>	<i>Moderate harm (2)</i>	<i>Extreme harm (3)</i>
<i>Likelihood of fire occurring</i>	<i>Low (1)</i>	Trivial Risk	Tolerable Risk	Moderate Risk
	<i>Medium (2)</i>	Tolerable Risk	Moderate Risk	Substantial Risk
	<i>High (3)</i>	Moderate Risk	Substantial Risk	Intolerable Risk

Taking into account the fire prevention measures observed at the time of this risk assessment, it is considered that the hazard from fire (likelihood of fire) at these premises is:

Low Medium High

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.

Taking into account the nature of the premises and the occupants, as well as the fire protection and procedural arrangements observed at the time of this fire risk assessment, it is considered that the consequences for life safety in the event of fire would be:

Slight harm Moderate harm Extreme harm

In this context, a definition of the above terms is as follows:

Slight harm: 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 harm: 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 harm: Significant potential for serious injury or death of one or more occupants.

Accordingly, it is considered that the risk to life from fire at these premises is:

Trivial Risk

(Note that, although the purpose of this section is to place the fire risk in context, the above approach to fire risk assessment is subjective and for guidance only. All hazards and deficiencies identified in this report should be addressed by implementing all recommendations contained in the following action plan. The fire risk assessment should be reviewed regularly.)



Risk level	Action and timescale
Trivial	No action is required and no detailed records need be kept.
Tolerable	No major additional fire precautions required. However, there might be a need or reasonably practicable improvements that involve minor or limited cost.
Moderate	<p>It is essential that efforts are made to reduce the risk. Risk reduction measures, which should take cost into account, should be implemented within a defined time period.</p> <p>Where moderate risk is associated with consequences that constitute extreme harm, further assessment might be required to establish more precisely the likelihood of harm as a basis for determining the priority for improved control measures.</p>
Substantial	Considerable resources might have to be allocated to reduce the risk. If the premises is unoccupied, it should not be occupied until the risk has been reduced. If the premises is occupied, urgent action should be taken.
Intolerable	Premises (or relevant area) should not be occupied until the risk is reduced.



APPENDIX 2
SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS



Fire Hazards

Medium	1		
	<p>Assessors Observations:</p> <p>Various household goods stored within the store room off the first-floor landing.</p>		
Date of FRA: 23/08/2017	Recommended Action:		
Action by: 1 Month	We recommend that the items are removed and that		
Action Actioned by:	escape routes are kept clear and sources of fuel are stored suitably.		
Date:			
Review: Reviewed by:			
Date:			



Means of Escape

Low	2	
	<p>Assessors Observations:</p> <p>The external doors to the top and bottom of the communal staircase are glazed timber fire doors, with Georgian wired glazing in reasonable condition, hung on 1½ pairs of hinges, an overhead door closer device, pull handles and a thumb turn to the internal face of the door.</p>	
Date of FRA: 23/08/2017	<p>Recommended Action:</p> <p>We recommend that the doors are upgraded with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, hinges, door lock with thumb turn, overhead door closer and fire resistant glazing.</p>	
Action by: 12 Months		
<p>Action</p> <p>Actioned by:</p> <p>Date:</p>		
<p>Review:</p> <p>Reviewed by:</p> <p>Date:</p>		



LOW		3
	Assessors Observations: The doors to the internal 4 nr store rooms accessed off the staircase landings and lobbies are timber fire doors in reasonable condition, hung on 1½ pairs of hinges, with handles and integrated Perko type door closer devices.	
Date of FRA: 23/08/2017	Recommended Action: We recommend that the internal store doors are upgraded with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, locks where necessary, hinges and overhead door closers.	
Action by: 12 Months		
Action Actioned by: Date:		
Review: Reviewed by: Date:		

MEDIUM		4
	Assessors Observations: Flat 6 is internally arranged so that the kitchen window is overlooking the external walkway fire escape.	
Date of FRA: 23/08/2017	Recommended Action: Under normal circumstances, it would be advised to upgrade the kitchen windows to provide 60-minute fire resistance. However, as these windows are aluminium framed, openable and are part of the Listed Building status, it would require a complete redesign of the windows and connecting to the fire alarm with an automatic closer fitted. We believe that it is not reasonably practicable to upgrade these windows.	
Action by: None		
Action Actioned by: Date:		
Review: Reviewed by: Date:		



APPENDIX 3
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



Summary of Findings

No	Deficiency/Rectification	Priority	Timescale to be Rectified	Date Rectified	Estimated Costs £
Fire Hazards					
1	We recommend that the items stored in the first-floor landing store room are removed and that escape routes are kept clear and sources of fuel are stored suitably.	Medium	1 Month		No Cost
Means of Escape					
2	We recommend that the external fire doors to the top and bottom of the stairs are upgraded with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, hinges, door lock with thumb turn, overhead door closer and fire resistant glazing.	Low	12 Months		£700
3	We recommend that the internal store doors are upgraded with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals, fire rated ironmongery, including handles, locks where necessary, hinges and overhead door closers.	Low	12 Months		£1400
TOTAL:					£2,100.00