

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT
1 – 3 BRINKBURN CLOSE, BYKER,
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
NE6 2HW

JANUARY 2020



STORM TEMPEST
PROPERTY CONSULTANCY

Reference: 3660-01-19-IC

Prepared by:

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Version: 1

Prepared for:

Byker Community Trust (BCT)
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Newcastle Upon Tyne
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Client	Byker Community Trust (BCT)
Instruction	This Fire Risk Assessment was undertaken in accordance with an instruction received from Mark Mulhern, Support Services Team Leader, Karbon Solutions Ltd (KSL).
Responsible Person	Jill Haley, Chief Executive, BCT.
The Property	1-3 Brinkburn Close, Byker, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE6 2HW
The Surveyor	The Fire Risk Assessment was carried out by: Ian Cuskin GFireE.
Survey Date	10 th January 2020
Scope and Purpose of the Fire Risk Assessment	The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 [RR(FS)O] applies to all non-domestic premises, including any voluntary sector and self-employed people with premises separate from their homes.

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:

- 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 as well as the Local Government Group (LGG) document 'Fire safety in purpose built blocks of flats'.



This building has been audited to highlight to the Client, any non-compliant issues with regard to relevant aspects of UK fire safety legislation and best practice. The principal documents relevant to buildings being:

- The Building Regulations 2012 Approved Document B – Fire Safety
- BS9999 2008 Code of practice for fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings
- BS9991 2011 Fire safety in the design, management and use of residential buildings – Code of practice
- Local Government Group - Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats (hereafter referred to as the LGG Guide)
- LACORS – Housing – Fire Safety – Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing
- NFCC Guide for 'Fire Safety in Specialised Housing'

The RR(FS)O does not stipulate the required review period for a particular building; we recommend a review of this building every **three years or when a material change is made to the property.**

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 external construction materials of the building and the area 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.

A Type 3, Common Parts and Flats (non-invasive) Fire Risk Assessment (as detailed in LGG Guidance Document Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats) has been conducted in relation to this property.

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 The building is a grade II* listed building with Historic England and is constructed from concrete frame and external brickwork. Windows are timber framed double glazed and the roof is constructed of aluminium profiled sheeting. Internally, floors are concrete and walls are of solid masonry construction.

The block comprises of 3 maisonette style apartments located on the 1st and 2nd floors. The ground floor consists of an open plan store area, enclosed with mesh fencing and kept locked (undercroft).

Access to the apartments is via a communal steel and part glazed door which opens with the direction of travel in an evacuation. The door has a self-closing device and a secure magnetic lock entry system and is unlocked by a pre-programmed key fob. A push button release internally allows residents to leave the premises. This door gives access to the concrete stair to the first floor, and all three flat entrance doors off the common balcony walkway, which is semi-enclosed with a corrugated PVC roof.

There are three small external compartments beneath the stair, adjacent to the entrance door, which have been permanently secured in the closed position. Residents electrical meter cupboards are kept locked and are located within the undercroft.

2.2 Fire Loss Experience BCT have not made us aware of any fire related incidents at this housing scheme.



3.0 FIRE HAZARDS

3.1 Sources of Fuel

- Electrical PVC insulation throughout.
- Timber construction materials (in particular, within the roof space and balcony/walkway construction).
- Refuse stored within the wheeled bins adjacent to the entrance door.

It is accepted that there will be sources of fuel located within the individual apartments associated with domestic living such as; timber and foam furnishings, linen, bedding and household clothing and cooking oils and fats within the kitchens.

It was noted the external wheelie bins were being stored adjacent to the entrance door to the stair. Should these become accidentally or deliberately ignited, the resultant fire may compromise the exit door for the premises. We recommend the bins are relocated away from the building.

3.2 Sources of Ignition

The sources of ignition within the property were assessed as follows:

- Electrical supply and distribution system.
- Electrical meter cupboards in the undercroft.
- Sources of ignition located within individual apartments associated with domestic living such as electrical goods, cooking / heating appliances, and the possibility of smoking materials / candles.

There are five bulk head style light fittings installed to illuminate the common means of escape. We understand these are connected to a separate electrical supply for the building. We recommend the client confirms this electrical installation has been subject to a five-year fixed wiring inspection by a competent engineer, and if not, arrange for this to be carried out as soon as practicable.

The electrical distribution should be tested every five years by a registered NICEIC contractor to satisfy compliance with the



requirements of the Electricity at Work Act 1989 and the IET Wiring Regulations BS 7671:2018.

The electric meter cupboards for the residents are located within the undercroft on the ground floor. We were unable to access these three compartments; therefore, we recommend the client gains access to confirm there are no breaches of compartmentation within and no combustible or hazardous materials stored.

3.3 Sources of Oxygen Natural airflow / semi enclosed balcony.

3.4 People at Risk The residents within the building well as the potential for visitors, housing staff and trades persons.



4.0 MEANS OF ESCAPE

4.1 Escape Routes The means of escape routes within and external to the building are sterile apart from an occasional planter and/or fixed bench seating outside individual properties. These are low risk and due to the size, layout, available exit route and number of residents within the building, pose a minimal risk of impeding evacuation in the event of a fire. BCT are also aware of these and this is part of their “managed use” policy of the building to keep these to an acceptable level and at the same time encourage residents to have a sense of pride and value in their home environment.

All flat entrance doors exit onto the semi-enclosed communal balcony / walkway and onto a short flight of stairs to the final exit, which allows residents to leave by means of a single action mechanism. The final exit door opens with the direction of travel in an evacuation.

With the exception of the fixed benches and planters outside of residents’ property (previously mentioned), all access/egress routes were clear at the time of the inspection and are within the recommended travel distances for this type of premises as detailed with the Building Regulations Approved Document B and DCLG Fire Risk Assessment Guidance.

4.2 Fire Doors The flat entrance doors to the property are off the 1st floor semi enclosed balcony. We were able to gain access to apartment 2 in order to inspect the specification of its entrance door. The entrance doors are good quality timber doors with timber clad side panel, timber framed window, and open with the direction of travel in an evacuation. However, it was noted that the flat entrance doors do not appear to be fire doors. We recommend the flat entrance doors to the first two apartments (flat numbers 1+2) opening onto the common walkway /balcony should be FD30S doors with a self-closing device fitted. This will ensure residents can evacuate their apartments and be able to pass a fire within an adjoining flat and reach the stairway/final exit. (LGG Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats Sec 59.5).



- 4.3 Fire Compartmentation The means of escape routes within the building are protected by fire resistant walls, ceilings, and doors, which provide a minimum 60-minute fire protection. These include solid brick walls and concrete floors. No obvious breaches in compartmentation were found within apartment 2 when inspected.
- Windows opening onto the communal walkway are double glazed units set into timber frames and do not appear to be fire rated. These windows are also part of the listed status of the building. However, as these are a minimum 1.1m above the level of the balcony this is acceptable. (LGG Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats Sec 59.5).
- 4.4 Fire Alarm and Detection System There is no fire detection (or a requirement to do so) within the open communal balcony/walkway. We inspected the detection within apartment 2 and noted that the fire detection system is a category LD3 system covering the circulation spaces within the dwelling, which appear to conform to BS5839-6.
- 4.5 Emergency Lighting The communal stairwell and balcony are covered by five wall-mounted light units. Whilst these do not appear to be emergency lighting luminaires, there is adequate borrowed and street lighting available, therefore emergency lighting is not necessary.
- 4.6 Fire Fighting Equipment There is no portable firefighting equipment on site in the communal areas. 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.
- 4.7 Signage There is no directional signage fitted within the building nor is it necessary due to its very simple layout.
- It was noted there is no General Fire Action notice displayed to inform residents and visitors of the actions to undertake in the



event of a fire. We recommend the installation of one such notice adjacent to the entrance door at the foot of the stair.

4.8 Disabled
Persons Egress

The property is not suitable for persons with mobility issues as all apartments are accessed via stairs to the first floor. 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.

4.9 Arson

The risk of an arson attack is considered medium. The premises have secure access and entry is controlled. However, as previously mentioned, this risk would be mitigated if recommendations regarding the wheeled bins are adopted.

4.10 Access for
Fire appliances

Access to the buildings for fire appliances is good.



5.0 MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

5.1 Fire Evacuation Procedures There is a "Full Simultaneous" evacuation policy for this premises for all occupants in a fire situation. When residents are first inducted to the premises, they are given a briefing on what to do in the event of a fire within the building. As previously mentioned, this should be reinforced by the provision of a General Fire Action notice.

5.2 Fire Log Book There is no fire log book on site. BCT holds all records of all equipment tests carried out.

Surveyor Ian Cuskin GFireE

Signed

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On Behalf of Storm Tempest Ltd

Checked Dave Stilling BSc (Hons) MCIOB

Signed

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On Behalf of Storm Tempest Ltd

APPENDIX 1
FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

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

Tolerable 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 are unoccupied, it should not be occupied until the risk has been reduced. If the premises are occupied, urgent action should be taken.
Intolerable	Premises (or relevant area) should not be occupied until the risk is reduced.

APPENDIX 2
SCHEDULE OF OBSERVATIONS

Fire Hazards

MEDIUM		1			
		Assessors Observations:			
		<p>The external wheelie bins were being stored adjacent to the entrance door to the stair. Should these become accidentally or deliberately ignited, the resultant fire may compromise the exit door for the premises.</p>			
		Date First Identified:	10/01/20	Recommended Action:	
		Rectify Within: (months)	6	<p>We recommend the bins are relocated away from the building.</p>	
Budget Cost:	No Cost				

LOW		2			
		Assessors Observations:			
		<p>There are five bulk head style light fittings installed to illuminate the common means of escape. We understand these are connected to a separate electrical supply for the building.</p>			
		Date First Identified:	10/01/20	Recommended Action:	
		Rectify Within: (months)	12	<p>We recommend the client confirms this electrical installation has been subject to a five-year fixed wiring inspection by a competent engineer, and if not, arrange for this to be carried out as soon as practicable.</p>	
Budget Cost:	No Cost				

LOW		3		
No Photo		Assessors Observations:		
		The electric meter cupboards for the residents are located within the undercroft on the ground floor.		
		Date First Identified:	10/01/20	Recommended Action:
		Rectify Within: (months)	12	We were unable to access these three compartments; therefore, we recommend the client gains access to confirm there are no breaches of compartmentation within and no combustible or hazardous materials stored.
Budget Cost:	No Cost			

Fire Doors

MEDIUM		4		
		Assessors Observations:		
		The flat entrance doors do not appear to be fire doors.		
		Date First Identified:	10/01/20	Recommended Action:
		Rectify Within: (months)	6	We recommend the flat entrance doors to the first two apartments (flat numbers 1+2) opening onto the common walkway /balcony should be FD30S doors with a self-closing device fitted. This will ensure residents can evacuate their apartments and be able to pass a fire within an adjoining flat and reach the stairway/final exit. (LGG Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats Sec 59.5).
Budget Cost:	£2,000			

Signage

LOW	5	
No Photo		Assessors Observations:
		There is no General Fire Action notice displayed to inform residents and visitors of the actions to undertake in the event of a fire.
Date First Identified:	10/01/20	Recommended Action:
Rectify Within: (months)	12	We recommend the installation of one such notice adjacent to the entrance door at the foot of the stair.
Budget Cost:	£10	