

**FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT  
THORNBOROUGH HOUSE, BYKER,  
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE  
NE6 2NS**

**28 FEBRUARY 2020**



**STORM TEMPEST**  
PROPERTY CONSULTANCY

**Reference:** 3660-01-19-IR

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**Version:** 2

**Prepared for:**

Byker Community Trust (BCT)  
17 Raby Cross  
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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	Thornborough House, Byker, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE6 2NS
The Surveyor	The Fire Risk Assessment was carried out by: Ian Robertson BA(Hons) MSc CMIOSH MIFireE.
Survey Date	28 February 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 however; we recommend the review of this building **every 3 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, designed and constructed circa 1969 as part of the iconic Byker development. The building consists of a detached, three storey structure, arranged in a crescent standing central within the Byker development.

The building is constructed in semi-traditional style with external cavity brick load-bearing walls of up to 3 storeys in height with concrete floors and stairs a timber framed single pitch roof with a membrane and aluminium covering.

The means of escape walls are plain plaster and paint providing a class 0 finish.

The building accessed from the communal entrance leading into the hall and stairs and consists of 3 apartments which are accessed from a balcony on the second floor (apartments 5, 6 and 7).

Apartments 1, 2, 3 and 4 are accessed independently from the ground floor and do not form part of the communal access or this Fire Risk Assessment.

The second floor landing and balcony leads to the apartment front doors which is accessed through a fire door (apartment 7 was inspected).

The stairs and landings also give access to a number of communal cupboards which would appear to be protected by fire doors however; no access was available to these doors which are located upon the ground, first and second floor landings.

The balcony providing access to apartments 5, 6 and 7 is a dead end in construction and arrangement however; this is within the accepted travel distance to the protected stairs.

The building features decorative timber cladding affixed to the external parts of the balconies to both faces of the building. The building also benefits from aluminium double glazing which is



installed throughout and the property also benefits from a communal district central heating system which is generated remotely from the building.

Internally, the apartments are constructed of solid brick compartment walls with plaster skim and internal timber stud walls also with plaster skim.

The building benefits from emergency lighting throughout and has automatic fire detection within the private apartments only.

**Note;** Whilst it is accepted that the building is listed, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have issued guidance note 14 which states that; external cladding standards on existing buildings must meet EU A2 standard or above or have achieved a BR 135 Class via BS8414 tests.

It is recommended that evidence is provided as to the construction and fire resistance of the external timber balcony cladding.

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

- Electrical PVC insulation throughout.
- Timber construction materials (in particular, within the roof space, balconies and decorative timber facings).
- Refuse in communal wheelie bins located in the external gardens and remote from building.
- Mains gas supply to the building as some apartments retain legacy live gas supply pipe work (but no gas appliances) which BCT carry out annual inspections of until Northern Gas Network terminate the supply.

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, clothing and cooking oils and fats within the kitchens.

BCT are in the process of removing all historic and redundant gas supplies to properties in the Byker Estate in partnership with Northern Gas Networks.

3.2 Sources of Ignition

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

- Electrical supply and distribution system.
- Potential for arson, in particular, to the wheelie bins stored to the rear of the building within residents' gardens (away from the building).
- 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.

We have been informed that the mains electrical supply and distribution system was subject to a 5 year fixed wiring inspection



by a competent engineer, is compliant, and recorded within the records held by BCT.

All electrical installations are required to be tested regularly to the standards defined by the IET Wiring Regulations (BS 7671). The mains electrical supply and distribution installation and wiring (common areas and rented dwellings) should be tested at least every five years by a registered NICEIC contractor to satisfy compliance with the requirements of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 in addition to the IET Wiring Regulations BS7671:2018 18th edition.

The communal areas (stairs and landings) of the property are no smoking areas and are accompanied with the appropriate signage.

3.3 Sources of  
Oxygen

Natural airflow through doors and windows.

3.4 People at Risk

The residents within apartments and communal areas of the building in addition to the potential for visitors, housing staff and trades persons.



## 4.0 MEANS OF ESCAPE

4.1 Escape Routes The means of escape routes are simple in design and consist of a single protected stair case which gives access to the second floor balcony with directly access to all 3 apartments which open directly onto the balcony.

The means of escape are sterile and clear and the stairs terminate at the main entrance which is opened by a press to open facility (it should be confirmed that this fails safe to open in a fire situation).

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 Within the staircase all doors would appear to be fire doors complete with intumescent strips and smoke seals however; access was not gained to all cupboard and service doors from the landings.

4.3 Fire Compartmentation The means of escape routes within the building are protected by fire resistant walls, ceilings, and doors, which provide 30-minute fire protection. These include solid brick walls with a plaster finish, ceilings with plaster skim, and concrete floors. There were no obvious signs of breaches in compartmentation within the building.

Windows opening onto the communal stairs open for smoke control.

4.4 Fire Alarm and Detection System There is no fire detection within the communal staircase, which is an acceptable for this construction design. The apartments would appear to be fitted with automatic fire detection that appears to be an LD3 grade D system in compliance with BS5839-6.



- 4.5 Emergency Lighting  
The premises have a 3-hour non-maintained emergency lighting installed within the means of escape stairs. This was subject to an annual inspection and discharge test during 2019. In addition, a monthly function tests and inspection are undertaken by BCT staff with the last inspection recorded during January 2020. The emergency lighting is required to be tested and maintained in accordance with BS5266 which requires monthly short function tests and annual full discharge tests which should be detailed in a Fire Log Book.
- 4.6 Fire Fighting Equipment  
There is no portable firefighting equipment on site in the communal areas and no requirements for such equipment.
- 4.7 Signage  
There is adequate fire exit and directional signage fitted within the building conforming to BS5499. "No smoking" notices and general "Fire Action" notices are displayed throughout the means of escape in appropriate locations.
- There are no final exit signs fixed to the final exit doors however; as this is a simple layout with both ground floor doors leading the a place of ultimate safety and the residents being familiar with the layout, this is not considered as critical. However; in a fire situation confusion is still possible and therefore, fire exit signs should be fitted to the final exit doors.
- All signage should satisfy the requirements of BS 5499-5 and be installed in accordance with the recommendations of BS 5499-4.
- 4.8 Disabled Persons Egress  
The property is not suitable for disabled access having three floors and no lift access.
- 4.9 Arson  
The risk of an arson attack is considered low. The premises have secure access and entry is controlled.



4.10 Access for  
Fire appliances

Access to the buildings for fire appliances is via Conyers Road to the east via the arch but is tight however; it is in compliance with Building Regulations, Section 16.



## 5.0 MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

5.1 Fire Evacuation Procedures There is a “full simultaneous” fire and evacuation policy 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. This is reinforced by the provision of General Fire Action notices.

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

**Note:** The following rooms were not accessed due to any keys being available at the time of the Fire Risk Assessment; we recommend BCT seek to access these rooms in order to confirm the fire safety requirements in relation to fire doors, compartmentation, automatic fire detection and emergency lighting.

### **Internally:**

- **2 Ground floor lobby cupboards.**
- **2 First floor landing cupboards.**
- **The second floor refuse store.**

All would appear to be fire doors (FD30S) but this could not be confirmed.



**Surveyor** Ian Robertson BA(Hons) MSc CMIOSH MIFireE



**Signed**

.....  
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**



**(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
<b>Trivial</b>	No action is required and no detailed records need be kept.
<b>Tolerable</b>	No major additional fire precautions required. However, there might be a need or reasonably practicable improvements that involve minor or limited cost.
<b>Moderate</b>	<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>
<b>Substantial</b>	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.
<b>Intolerable</b>	Premises (or relevant area) should not be occupied until the risk is reduced.

**APPENDIX 2**  
**SCHEDULE OF OBSERVATIONS**

There are currently no significant findings in relation to this property however; it must be acknowledged that access was not gained to the lobby and landing cupboards.

Currently the premises and management are compliant in relation to fire safety guidance and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.