Fire Risk Assessment

Birchcroft



Windmill Lane,
Smethwick, B66 3LN

Date of Inspection: 13th August 2026

Next Review: August 2027

Officer: Adrian Jones **Building Safety Manager**

Verified By: A. Froggatt **Building Safety Manager**

Current Risk Rating = Tolerable

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Subsequent reviews

Review date	Officer	Comments

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Section 0

Introduction, Scope & References

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RR(FS)O) places a legal duty on landlords to complete a fire risk assessment (FRA).

Specifically, RR(FS)O article *9. — (1) "The responsible person must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to which relevant persons are exposed for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions he needs to take to comply with the requirements and prohibitions imposed on him by or under this Order*".

This document has been written in accordance with BS 9792:2025 with reference to relevant UK fire safety legislation, statutory guidance, and applicable British Standards relevant at the time of the assessment.

The purpose of this FRA report is to provide an assessment of the risk to life from fire in these premises, and, where appropriate, to make recommendations to ensure compliance with appliable fire safety legislation; see "Applicable fire safety legislation."

The FRA considers all relevant factors necessary to form a balanced and informed judgement of fire risk within the premises. This includes consideration of the nature of the building, its use, and the profile of both current and potential occupants, including any available person centred fire risk assessments (PCFRA) & residential personal emergency evacuation plans (RPEEPS). It also considers identified fire hazards and the measures in place to eliminate or control them, alongside the existing fire protection systems and the arrangements for their inspection, testing, and maintenance.

Relevant aspects of fire safety management, such as staffing arrangements and day to day operational practices, have been reviewed. Where available, the building's fire strategy has been considered, particularly where it forms part of a fire engineered solution or alternative approach to regulatory compliance.

In addition, the content of any previous fire risk assessments or external wall appraisals has been considered to ensure continuity and awareness of historical findings.

This FRA has been completed as a:

Select appropriate box.

- ☒ Type 1 – Common parts only (non-intrusive)
- ☐ Type 2 – Common parts only (Intrusive)
- ☐ Type 3 – Common Parts & Dwellings (Non-Intrusive)
- ☐ Type 4 – Common Parts & Dwellings (Intrusive)

The assessment included consideration of:

- External wall construction and associated attachments.
- Flat entrance doors viewed from the common areas.
- Means of escape and evacuation provisions.
- Fire-resisting compartmentation and passive fire protection measures.
- Fire detection, warning and other active fire protection systems.
- Service risers, shafts and suspended ceilings where accessible.
- Roof voids and other accessible concealed spaces.
- Firefighting facilities and Fire and Rescue Service access provisions.
- Fire safety management, maintenance and housekeeping arrangements within the common parts.

The fire risk assessment has been undertaken based on visual observations made at the time of inspection, together with a review of relevant documentation made available. In line with the principles of the Golden Thread, all information relied upon should be accurate, up to date, and appropriately recorded to ensure transparency, accountability, and ongoing building safety management.

Where elements of the premise have not been accessed, limitations are recorded within the report. Further intrusive investigation or specialist external wall assessment will be recommended where appropriate.

This FRA does **not** constitute a compliance audit, an access audit for disabled persons, or any form of investigation intended to identify latent construction defects or deficiencies in fire compartmentation. Furthermore, the FRA does not verify, test, or provide an engineering judgement on the fire resistance of structural elements, nor does it determine the potential for structural collapse in the event of fire.

Also, it does not include a fire risk appraisal of external wall systems or cladding, nor does it provide a documented fire strategy for the building.

Additionally, this assessment is not intended as a snagging inspection for new construction, nor does it serve as a general guide to fire safety or a guide to legislative duties for the responsible person.

The findings are therefore limited to observable conditions and information made available at the time of inspection.

The FRA does not address the risk to property or business continuity from fire.

This FRA complies with the above legislation which is enforced locally by West Midlands Fire Service.

If required, complaints can be made to them by telephone on 0121 380 7500 or electronically on https://www.wmfs.net/our-services/fire-safety/#reportfiresafety.

In the first instance however, we would be grateful if you could contact us directly via https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/contact/log-complaint or by phone on 0121 569 7867.

The date of the fire risk assessment is on the front page, followed by any subsequent reviews. A recurring time frame is not set in legislation, but SMBC will as a minimum review:-

- High Risk Residential Buildings annually.
- Commercial buildings annually.
- Emergency Housing Schemes annually.
- Sheltered schemes annually.
- Other Buildings every 3 years.

The council has procedures and policies in place that will trigger a review of the fire risk assessment. This outcome will then be recorded on the fire risk assessment.

If the review suggests the fire risk assessment is not currently suitable and sufficient, then a new fire risk assessment will be undertaken and published.

The Building Safety Case will be updated to reflect the latest detail/information of latest fire risk assessment.

References

This Fire Risk Assessment has been undertaken with reference to relevant UK fire safety legislation, statutory guidance, and applicable British Standards current at the time of assessment. For example: -

Applicable Legislation

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO): The primary law governing fire safety in the common parts of flats, including stairways, corridors, and entrance doors.
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022: Introduced under the FSO, it mandates high-rise residents (>11m) to have fire doors checked quarterly and provides safety information.
- Building Safety Act 2022: Imposes strict management requirements on higher-risk buildings.
- Housing Act 2004: Empowers local authorities to enforce safety standards within individual residential units.

Key Guidance Documents

- Fire Safety in Purpose-Built Blocks of Flats (Local Government Association): Considered the definitive guidance, often known as the "LGA guide," for purpose-built blocks.
- Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Sleeping Accommodation (GOV.UK): Guidance on managing risks in communal areas.
- Making Your Small Block of Flats Safe from Fire (GOV.UK): Specific guidance for small, 3-storey blocks.
- BS 9792:2025: New British Standard for conducting fire risk assessments in housing.
- NFCC publication “Fire safety in specialised housing.”

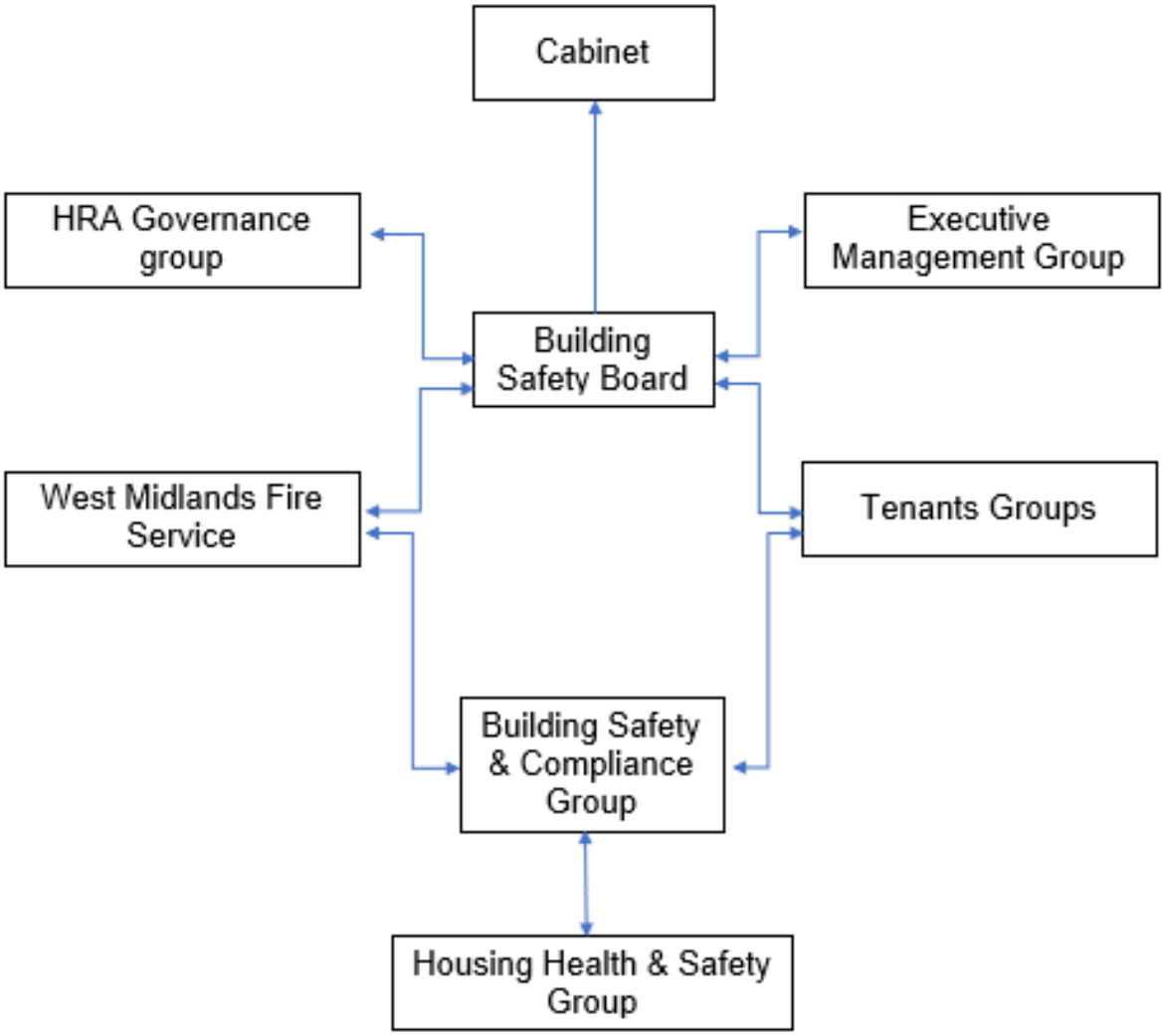
The following diagrams illustrate those procedures and persons that support the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring, and review of the preventive and protective measures. This information is provided as required under the RR(FS)O.



The above processes and procedures are overseen by the Fire Safety, Manager who reports to the Head of Building Safety

These managers attend the Building Safety and Compliance Group for scrutiny which is part of the governance structure below.

Governance Structure



To summarise the fire risk assessment, in this scenario the RR(FS)O requires the prescribed information to be recorded. The prescribed information is the significant findings of the fire risk assessment and those groups or persons especially at risk from fire.

This is recorded here in section 1. Also required to be recorded under article 11, are the fire safety arrangements for the planning, organisation, control, monitoring, and review of the preventative and protective measures. The information shown above is part of this requirement.

Section 1

Executive Summary

The executive summary of the fire risk assessment includes those measures that have been or will be undertaken by the responsible person in order to comply with the RR(FS)O 2005.

Groups of people especially at risk of fire include such people as remote or lone workers, at risk due to layout of the building, visitors, and contractors unfamiliar with the building layout as well as those with physical, sensory or mental health issues.

A third requirement that under the order must be recorded is the fire safety arrangements. This is the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures. These are shown in the introduction.

Significant findings

Include a brief summary of protective and preventative measures where relevant along with any issues found.

The escape strategy is **'Stay Put Unless'.** This means in the event of a fire in your flat you should evacuate. If there is a fire elsewhere in the building you should stay put unless you are affected by fire, smoke or you have been advised by the emergency services to leave.

Section number	Section Area	Individual Risk Level
Section 6	**External Envelope** Ibstock Rockshield brick slips (Fire Classification A1) with expanded polystyrene insulation (Fire Classification E) - ground to first floor. Although the masonry-based outer layer (brick slip) offers some protection to the underlying insulation. Above 1st floor mixture of insulated Wetherby mineral wool render (Fire Classification A1) and high-density Rock panel board panels (Fire Classification A2-s1, d0).	Trivial
Section 7	**Means of Escape from Fire** There is one protected staircase that provides a suitable means of escape. All communal doors along the means of escape are self-closing FD30s fire doors with combined intumescent strips / cold smoke seals & vision panels. There are 2 final exit doors from the common area. Newly plastered walls were noted within in the building. These walls should be covered with a Euro Class B-s3, d2 rated paint system.	Tolerable
Section 8	**Fire Detection and Alarm Systems** Fire detection within flats is installed to LD1 and LD2 standard. Automatic opening vents are installed to the stairwell on floor 14. A deluge system is provided to the bin store.	Tolerable

Section 9	**Emergency Lighting** The premise has sufficient emergency/ escape lighting system in accordance with BS 5266. Emergency lighting units are provided for the communal landings, stairs, lift motor room, CCTV/server room, and bin store.	Trivial
Section 10	**Compartmentation** The building is designed to provide as a minimum 1-hour vertical fire resistance and 1-hour horizontal fire resistance. All doors are minimum FD30s fire doors with intumescent strips & cold smoke seals, including those in 1-hour rated walls. Fire stopping required to the internal rainwater pipes. Fire stopping actions have been raised. There are areas where additional fire stopping work is required. This work is required in the lift motor room, the plant room and to the means of escape staircase in the roof space.	Tolerable
Section 11	**Fire Fighting Access & Equipment** The dry riser inlet is located within the ground floor main entrance lobby. Outlets are on all floors above. Maintenance contracts are in place to service the valves twice per year. Portable fire extinguishers are located within the lift motor room, the solar PV (photovoltaic) system control room and CCTV/server room. They are serviced annually. The bin store is fitted with a fire suppression system.	Trivial

Section 12	**Fire Signage** Appropriate mandatory and safety signage is in place. No CO2 signage in lift motor room.	Tolerable
Section 13	**Employee Training** All staff receive basic fire safety awareness training.	Trivial
Section 14	**Sources of Ignition** The fixed electric tests should be done every 5 years. Last EICR dated 01/08/23, recorded as satisfactory. There are no service records available for the servicing and maintenance of solar PV equipment provided for this building. A service contract is being put in place for this equipment. There is evidence of surreptitious smoking in the Roof space. Instruction should be sent out to all contractors and SMBC staff that smoking is strictly prohibited in within any SMBC building. There are a number of combustibles in the roof space, these should be cleared at the earliest opportunity.	Tolerable
Section 15	**Waste Control** Regular checks by Caretakers minimise risk of waste accumulation. Refuse containers are secured within the bin store.	Trivial
Section 16	**Control and Supervision of Contractors and Visitors** Contractors are controlled centrally, and hot works permits are required where necessary.	Trivial

Section 17	**Arson Prevention** A door entry system prevents unauthorised access & perimeter lighting is in place. CCTV is installed.	Trivial
Section 18	**Storage Arrangements** Residents instructed not to bring L.P.G cylinders into block. There are no storage facilities available for residents within the communal areas.	Trivial

Risk Level Indicator

The following simple risk level estimator is based on commonly used risk level estimator:

Likelihood of fire	Potential consequences of fire		
	Slight harm	Moderate harm	Extreme harm
Low	Trivial risk	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk
Medium	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk	Substantial risk
High	Moderate risk	Substantial risk	Intolerable risk

Considering 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 Risk: ☒ Medium Risk: ☐ High Risk:

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

Low Unusually low likelihood of fire because 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.

Considering 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 ☐ Tolerable ☒ Moderate ☐ Substantial ☐ Intolerable ☐

Intolerable (Very High Risk)	The situation is intolerable. All or part of the building is unsafe for occupation. Significant effort and/or expenditure might be required to rectify the situation.
Substantial (High Risk)	Significant improvements are required. Urgent and/or substantial rectification work to at least normalize the risk.
Moderate (Normal Risk)	Improvements are necessary to reduce the risk to a tolerable level.
Tolerable **(**Low Risk)	While some very minor improvements might be required, the existing controls only require maintenance.
Trivial (Very Low Risk)	The risk to life is exceptionally low. No action is needed.

(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.)

Comments

In conclusion, the likelihood of a fire is at a medium level of risk prior to the implementation of the action plan because of the hazards that have been highlighted within the risk assessment. Some of which have been identified below: -

There are no service records available for the servicing and maintenance of solar PV equipment provided for this building. It is recognised that a robust servicing and maintenance programme will take time to procure, therefore as an interim measure, an approved contractor should be appointed to service and inspect the equipment in the short term.

Issues with compartmentation have been identified in the roof space, plant room and lift motor room. These have been discussed with the management team and work will begin in the coming weeks, it is not known at this time whether the work will be carried out by an inhouse team or an external contractor.

After considering the use of the premise and the occupants within the block, the consequences for life safety in the event of a fire would be slight harm. This is due to there being sufficient compartmentation (apart from the actions raised in Section 10) to include FD30s rated fire doors to flat entrances, FD30s communal fire doors, combined with suitable smoke detection to LD1 / LD2 standard within flats, automatic smoke ventilation system to the stairwell and a Stay Put – Unless policy.

Overall, the level of risk at the time of this FRA is tolerable, this will be lowered to trivial once recommended actions have been completed.

A suitable risk-based control plan should involve effort and urgency that is proportional to risk. The following risk- based control plan is based on one that has been advocated for general health and safety risks:

Section 2 People at Significant Risk of Fire

Sandwell Council takes the health, safety and wellbeing of residents and leaseholders seriously. It is our policy to exceed, where possible, the minimum health and safety requirements of the law.

The Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025 aim to improve the fire safety and evacuation of residents in specified residential buildings in England who would have difficulties evacuating a building by themselves in the event of a fire (relevant residents).

This may be due to a physical mobility issue, some other disability such as having a sight or hearing impairment, or a cognitive condition. The Regulations also mandate building emergency evacuation plans in these buildings.

A resident is a 'relevant resident' for the purposes of these Regulations if the domestic premises in which they reside (which must be in scope of the Regulations) is their only or principal residence; and their ability to evacuate the building without assistance in the event of a fire is compromised as a result of a cognitive or physical impairment or condition.

Resident consent

Resident consent is required throughout every stage of Residential PEEP & PCFRA's. For instance:

- The decision as to whether to participate in Residential PEEP & PCFRA's lie with the resident and they cannot be compelled to participate.
- The decision as to whether to agree an emergency evacuation statement lies with the resident.
- The decision as to whether the prescribed information can be shared with WMFS lies with the resident; sharing requires the resident's explicit consent.

The Residential PEEPs process includes a suite of measures: -

- The responsible person (typically the building owner or manager) identifying residents who need Residential PEEPs.
- A person-centred fire risk assessment – a conversation between the responsible person and the resident, if one is requested by the resident – to understand their particular risks and identify how their fire safety and evacuation can be improved.
- An emergency evacuation statement of what the resident should do in the event of a fire, (if agreed between the responsible person and the resident).
- Information for WMFS to help inform any operational response and in case they need to undertake evacuation, (but only if the resident explicitly agrees to that information being shared).
- An ongoing duty to review the person-centred fire risk assessment / emergency evacuation statement, and the building emergency evacuation plan.

These measures are set out as duties in these Regulations that the Responsible Person under fire safety legislation is legally required to meet.

With the consent of the resident, SMBC will make a referral for West Midlands Fire Service to conduct a Safe and Well visit.

Building Safety Managers, Resident Engagement Officers (Fire) or Fire Risk Assessors with support from a Housing Officer will conduct a PCFRA and where necessary an RPEEP following any referral or request from residents within SMBC residential properties.

When an RPEEP is in place, the relevant information will be retained in the secure Premise Information Box (High Rise Buildings only), which is set up to help WMFS in an emergency. The data is classified as level 1, which means it complies with the General Data Protection Regulations.

There are 3 Amber RPEEP's/PCFRA's that have been recorded in this building. These will be reviewed at least annually or more frequently if individual circumstances dictate.

Section 3 Contact Details

The Chief Executive of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council has ultimate responsibility for the site as the responsible person identified by the RR(FS)O 2005.

The Chief Executive has put a structure in place to support the management of the site. This includes the role of Building Safety Manager who has duties as defined within the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The contact names to support the management of the site are as follows:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Chief Executive
Shokat Lal</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Executive Director Asset Manager & Improvement
Alan Lunt</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Assistant Director Asset Management & Improvement
Sarah Agar</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Head of Building Safety & Compliance
Jon Hemming</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Building & Fire Safety Team Manager
Tony Thompson</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Team Lead Fire Safety
Jason Blewitt</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Team Lead Building Safety
Anthony Smith</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Housing Office Manager
Lisa Ellis</td></tr>
<tr><td>Building Safety Managers
Adrian Jones
Andrew Froggatt
Carl Hill
Craig Hudson
Louis Conway</td><td>Fire Risk Assessors
Mohammed Zafeer
Stuart Henley</td><td>Resident Engagement Officers – Fire Safety
Abdulmonim Khan
Ethan Somaiya
Hannah Russon</td></tr>
</table>

Please note, the above details are correct at the time of the production of the risk assessment and may be subject to change.

Section 4

Description of Premises

Birchcroft
Windmill Lane
Smethwick
B66 3LN

Description of the Property

This type 1 fire risk assessment encompasses the building known as Birchcroft.

This high-rise building was constructed in 1966; The height of the block is 37.6 metres. For clarity, this is from the lowest adjoining ground level to the highest habitable floor level. The building consists of 15 stories (including ground floor). Each of the floors contain six dwellings.







In 2016 a comprehensive refurbishment was undertaken, upgrading the external wall system across all elevations. Additionally, a new pitched roof with an aluminium standing seam PIR core covering and a solar PV system installed. Other improvements included replacement windows and balcony doors, glazed balcony enclosures, new front entrance porches, landscaping enhancements, and additional parking provisions.



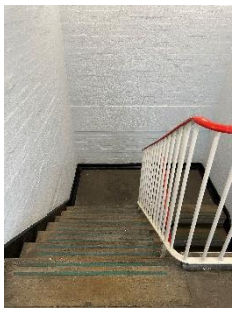


The block has a main entrance to the front elevation, and a further entrance / exit located to the rear. The main entrance has a door entry system; both entrances have a fob reader and a firefighters drop key box installed.

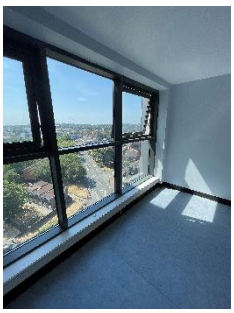




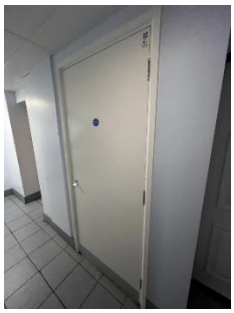

There is a single staircase which provides a sufficient means of escape. The stairwell is ventilated by AOV vents at the top of the stairwell and has openable windows on some floors.


The communal corridors have natural ventilation by openable windows (the smaller left-hand flat lobbies have no ventilation). The bin chute area on each floor has natural ventilation by means of a louvered vent.




There are service cupboards on all floors for electrics, water and communications, locked with a suited 54 key.



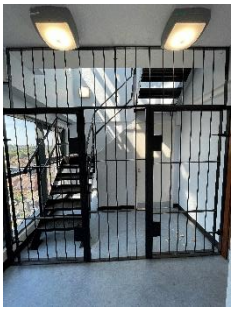

There are two lift cars that serve alternate floors, the capacity for each lift is 8 people or 630kg. The lifts have a firefighter control facility.

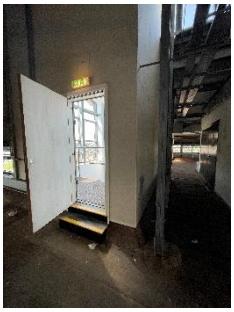


There are two rooms located on the roof, these are:

- Lift motor room
- Plant Room

Access to the roof is via a steel gate secured with a suited 54 lock. Then utilise the metal stairs leading from the 14th floor, then through a full height door (secured with suited 54 locks) into roof space.





The lift motor room is a detached brick-built unit located in the roof void; The door is locked shut with a standard 054 key.






The plant room (walls & ceiling) has been constructed from aluminum studding and plaster board. It is thought that the 70mm aluminum metal C stud/framework has been clad with plywood and overlaid with nominal plasterboard. The door to access the plant room is an FD60s fire door.





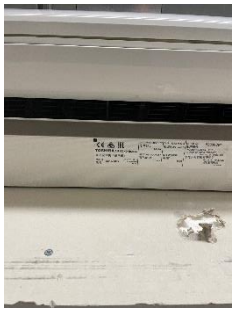
The plant room houses the solar photovoltaic system and associated switchgear.







The plant room also has the emergency lighting central fed battery supply unit installed. There are two air conditioning units fitted within the plant room, it is understood the rationale for this is to keep the battery units & room cool.

The ground floor of the building contains a CCTV/server room which is accessed from the main entrance lobby. Access is gained to the room via the firefighters drop key or by contacting the concierge. The server room has its own fire alarm panel / system.





The Firefighters white box is located on the front elevation right-hand side of the main block.



The bin store is in a small lower ground room, accessed from the rear of the block, down a ramp. This compartment contains the bin room, the control panel for the bin store deluge system and the water pumps.






There is a Secure Information Box (SIB) located on the ground floor in the front entrance lobby. It is a Gerda box that utilise a standard WMFS suited key held on each fire appliance. The SIB contains floor plans, vertical plans, orientation plans, information for WMFS and a plan to indicate the location of those with vulnerabilities who may require additional consideration if there is a fire incident (RPEEP).




The nearest fire hydrant is on the main path, adjacent to the main entrance.



The dry riser inlet is located within the ground floor lobby, inside a cupboard secured with a budget lock.



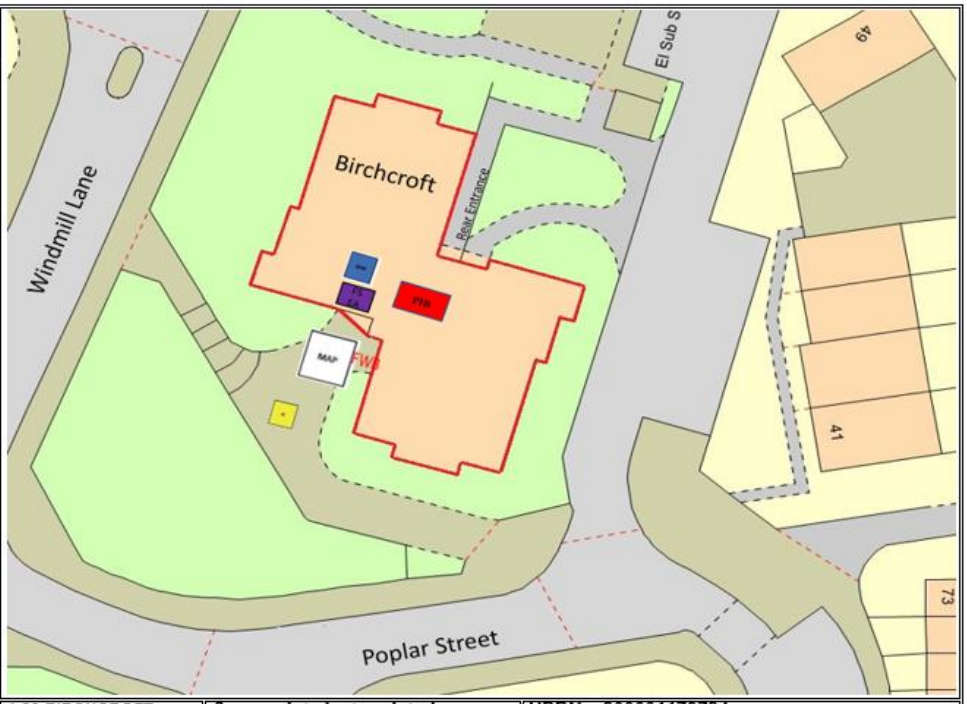

The dry riser outlets are in the smaller left-hand flat lobbies.



The communal, any workplace areas and the external envelope of the building are subject to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 as confirmed by the Fire Safety Act 2021.

The enforcing authority is West Midlands Fire Service.

On arrival Information (for WMFS)

Symbols			
fire hydrant Dry Riser Inlet Main access point Premise Information Box Firefighters white box Fire Alarm Panel			
Orientation Plan	1-90 BIRCHCROFT, WINDMILL LANE, SMETHWICK, B66 3LN	Survey date last updated: 18/04/2023	UPRN – 200001173724 BSR Registration Number - HRB04496V9R7

Address: 1-90 BIRCHCROFT, WINDMILL LANE, SMETHWICK, B66 3LN	Survey date: 19/08/2026	ON ARRIVAL INFORMATION

BUILDING LAYOUT

Size: Width, breadth and height	Height 37.6m; For clarity, this is from the lowest adjoining ground level to the highest habitable floor level.
Construction	This detached high-rise block was designed & constructed in approximately 1965 by Wates Ltd The typical structure is constructed as a reinforced concrete frame which was cast in-situ with an RC slab supported off cast in-situ RC walls/columns which stack vertically throughout.
External Wall System	Brick to 1st floor level – Ibstock Rockshield brick slips (Fire Classification A1) with expanded polystyrene insulation (Fire Classification E) Above 1st floor Insulated Wetherby mineral wool render (Fire Classification A1) High-Density Rock Panel (Fire Classification A2-s1,d0)
Number of floors	15 including ground floor.
Layout	The block consists of 15 storeys (inclusive of the ground floor) Each of the floors contains 6 number dwellings with a roof space accessed via steel stairs. The ground floor consists of an entrance lobby, lift lobby , 6 flatted accommodation. There is also a comms/server room on the ground floor secured behind two FD30s doors. The block has 2 entrance/exits. Main access point at the front elevation and a further access point at the rear of the block. Both access points have a drop latch system granting entry to the building. 2 lifts and 1 staircase that serve the building. The lifts serve alternate floors, and the staircase serves all floors Stairwell is protected with good compartmentation, openable windows for ventilation and AOVs on the 14th floor. The block is split in the middle via the lift lobby areas with 3 flats to the left and right-hand sides of the lobby compartmented via a FD30S timber door.
Roof Space - Access to roof/service rooms.	Access to the roof space and Lift motor room via metal stairs leading from 14th floor then through a full height door into roof space. There is a sky light in the roof space that provides access out on to the roof. The emergency lighting battery system is situated in the roof void. A Central Battery System emergency lighting is a backup lighting solution that powers up in the event that mains power supply is unable to function correctly in an emergency, such as a fire or power cut.
Lifts	2 lifts that serve alternate floors. Both lifts can be accessed from the ground floor lift lobby. Lift override switch located on the ground floor. The lift motor room can be accessed on the roof, access from the 14th floor.
Types of entrance doors	Flat entrance doors are a combination of FD30s Timber Flush doors & Permadoor construction.
Rubbish chutes/ bin rooms	Yes, secured behind FD30s timber doors and with natural ventilation coming by means of louver vents.
Common voids	No
PV Systems	The building is fitted with a solar photovoltaic system on the roof. The roof also houses the PV system electrical switchgear.
Occupants	Approx. 180 based on an average of 2 occupants per flats (90 flats).
Evacuation strategy	Stay Put Unless- The escape strategy is 'Stay Put Unless'. This means in the event of a fire in your flat you should evacuate. If there is a fire elsewhere in the building, you should stay put unless you are affected by fire or smoke.
Fire alarm/ evacuation alarm	Fire alarm system covering the lift shaft There is a fire alarm panel located within the main entrance foyer that provides detection to the lift shaft area, rest of the building consisting of Early warning limited to hard wire or battery smoke alarms within each of the resident's flats.
Caretaker/ concierge	Caretaking/cleaning service that conducts regular checks of the building.

FIREFIGHTING SYSTEMS

Water supplies	Fire hydrant is located at the entry/ exit to the building, fire hydrant / water isolation points located on the orientation plan, there is a dry riser that serves the building outlet located on the floor plans provided.
Fire mains	The dry riser inlet (twin valve) is located on the ground floor of the block and can be located on the floor plans.
Firefighting shafts	There are no firefighting lifts or shafts.
Smoke control vents	The smoke vent master reset control is located adjacent to the repeater panel in the ground floor lobby. There is also another key switch located at the top of the stairs on 14th floor Automatic smoke ventilation is employed, installed to the two windows at the head of the staircase on 14th floor. Each chute room contains louver vents to provide natural ventilation.
Sprinkler system	A drenching system is provided to the refuse chute bin store.

DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES

Location, type, and quantity.	LIFT MOTOR ROOM ROOF – BITUMEN - SEALED CEILINGS TO ALL COMMUNAL LANDINGS - TEXTURED COATING - PAINT SEALED – PRESUMED – CHRYSOTILE Ceilings have been over-boarded FRONT ENTRANCE ROOF – ASPHALT BALCONY SURFACE – ASPHALT

SERVICES

Electricity	The communal electricity supply can be isolated from the ground floor electric room adjacent to the entrance.
Gas	The gas risers have been de-commissioned by Cadent, so there is no live gas supply in block

High/Low Rise	High-Rise
Number of Floors	15
Height	37.6m
Approximate floor area	Approx. 655m^2
Date of Construction	1966
Construction Type	Wates
Last Refurbished	2016
External Cladding	Brick to 1st floor level– Ibstock Rockshield brick slips. Above 1st floor mixture of insulated Wetherby mineral wool render (Fire Classification A1) and high density Rockpanel panels (Fire Classification A2-s1, d0)
Number of Lifts	2
Number of Staircases	1
Automatic Smoke Ventilation to communal area	Yes, stairwell.
Fire Alarm System	Yes, for CCTV room, detection for AOV system.
Refuse Chute	1
Access to Roof	Access to motor room via metal stairs leading from 14th floor then through a full height door into roof space.
Equipment on roof (e.g., mobile phone station etc)	Photovoltaic panels.
WMFS Audit	None
Enforcement action	N/A.
Fire strategy	Yes

Persons at Risk

Residents / Occupants of 90 number of flats.
Visitors,
Sandwell MBC employees,
Contractors,
Service providers (e.g., meter readers, delivery people etc)
Statutory bodies (e.g., W.M.F.S, Police, and Ambulance)

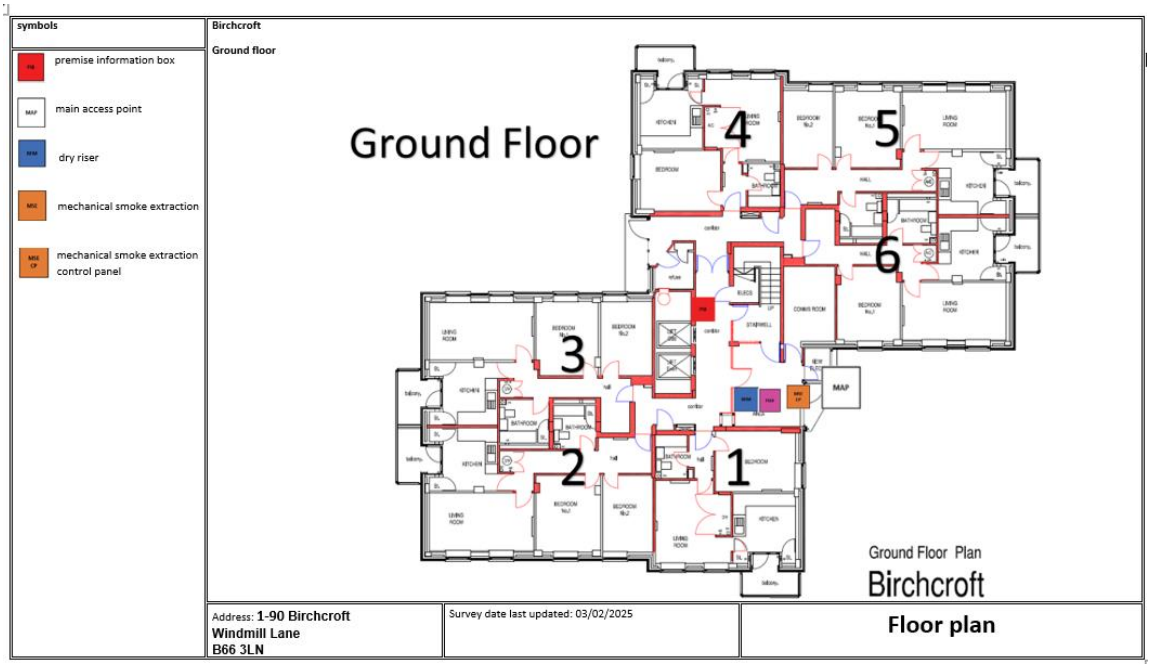
Section 5

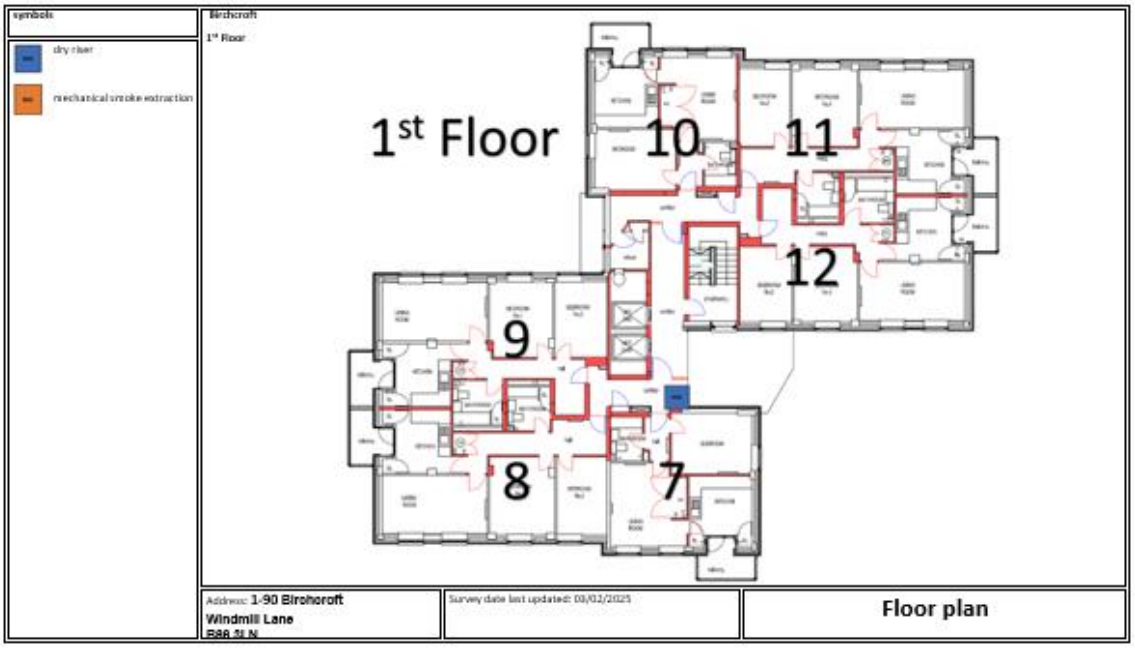
Building Plan

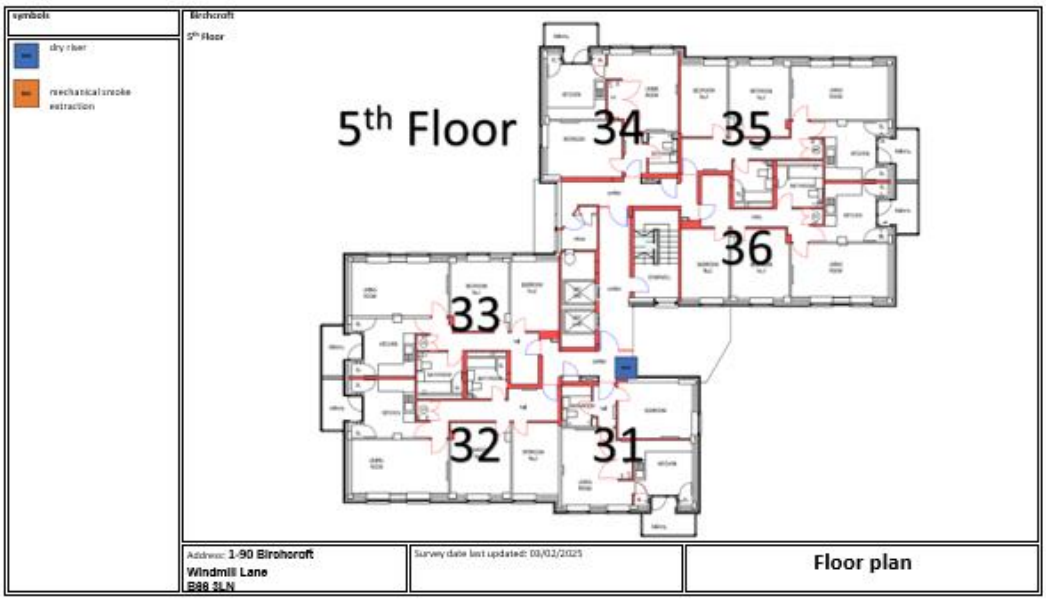
A typical floor layout showing horizontal lines of compartmentation, emergency lighting, fire detection is attached and AOVs etc.

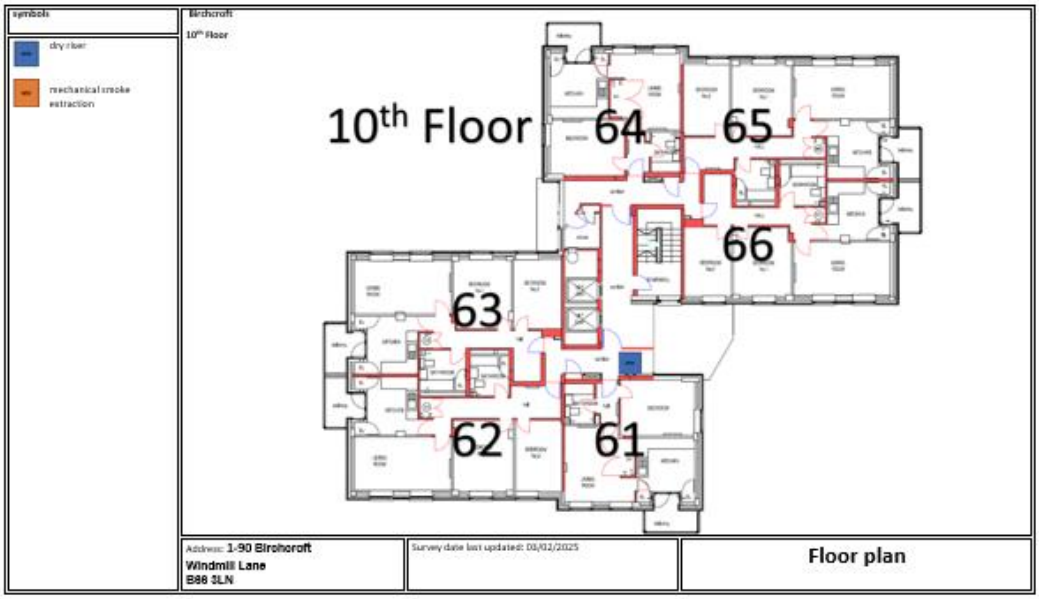
The plans have been shared with WMFS electronically via their portal.

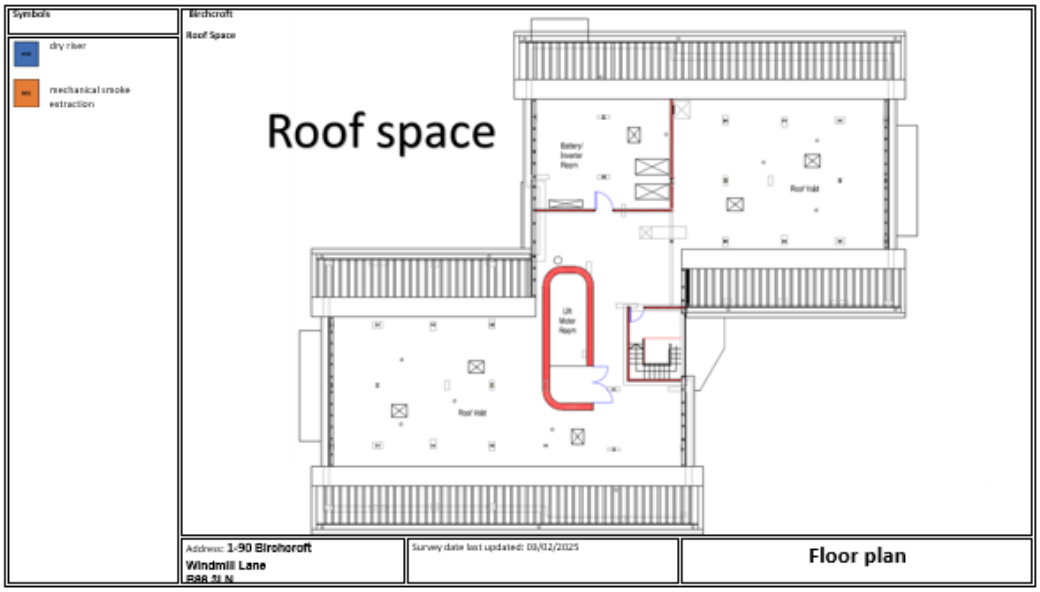
Ground Floor






symbols
dry riser
mechanical smoke extraction
Birchcroft
5th Floor
5th Floor
34
35
36
33
32
31
Address: 1-90 Birchcroft
Windmill Lane
B88 3LN
Survey date last updated: 03/02/2025
Floor plan


symbols
dry riser
mechanical smoke extraction
Birchcroft
10th Floor
10th Floor
64
65
66
63
62
61
Address: 1-90 Birchcroft
Windmill Lane
B88 3LN
Survey date last updated: 03/02/2025
Floor plan


Symbols
dry riser
mechanical smoke extraction
Birchcroft
Roof Space
Roof space
Address: 1-90 Birchcroft
Windmill Lane
B88 3LN
Survey date last updated: 03/02/2025
Floor plan

Section 6

External envelope

Following the introduction of the Fire Safety Act 2021, consideration needs to be given to the external envelope of the building for any fire risk. This means the external wall construction including any insulation filler. It also includes balconies and any other fixtures as well as doors and windows.

Details of the known external wall construction have been provided to the fire service via the WMFS portal in line with fire safety regulations 2022.

An appraisal of the external wall construction including balconies, windows and doors has been undertaken in accordance with the flow chart detailed in PAS 9980:2022 – Fire Risk Appraisals of External Walls (FRAEW) for existing multi-story, multi-occupied residential buildings. This FRAEW was undertaken by Firntec Building Compliance in November 2024 and the outcomes recorded as a low risk. A review date has been recommended for November 2029.

In addition to the previous external wall survey, further inspections have taken place. During inspections, some latent defects were identified, which are believed to comprise cracking to a few cladding panels, primarily at the corners of the panels.

These defects have not adversely affected the integrity, stability or security of the cladding system. However, plans are currently being developed to undertake further investigative surveys to establish the extent and cause of the cracking, with a view to determining and implementing any necessary remedial works.

Below is a breakdown of the materials used within the external envelope and, as part of the external wall system. This is based on the information available at the time of this FRA, and with limited onsite resources.



It is deemed that the combination and application of these materials present an acceptable level of fire risk.

1) Birchcroft has 4 separate areas of cladding consisting of:

- Ibstock Rockshield brick slips (Fire Classification A1) with expanded polystyrene insulation (Fire Classification E) - ground to first floor. Although the masonry-based outer layer (brick slip) offers some protection to the underlying insulation, the overall reaction-to-fire performance of the system cannot be verified without system-specific test data.

  Recent FRAEW reports have detailed the wall system as medium risk, see below.

External Wall Systems and Attachments on the Building

8 areas were inspected to gain data about the building's wall constructions. See the Inspections section of this report for full inspection details.

The table below outlines the ratings of the various wall systems and constructions to the property. Each element is explained in more detail further within this report.

6 Items	Effect	Risk
Wall Construction Wall Type 1 - Stonewall over mineral wool (9BPRK3)	Positive	Low
Wall Construction Wall Type 2 - render over mineral wool (F8A27P)	Positive	Low
Wall Construction Wall Type 3 - brick slips over XPS insulation (343NAN)	Neutral	Medium
Penetration Ventilation (LVK93P)		
External Window Top, Mid, Side Hung Casements (FSRVBN)	Positive	Low
External Door Single Leaf Entrance Doors (DFNWUV)	Positive	Low

In accordance with the PAS 9980 Guidance, any items of construction which are considered as "Medium Risk" should be subject to periodic review, to ensure that conditions do not change, such that the risk may be upgraded to high, prompting the requirement for remediation.

The overall risk to the building was noted as low, see below:

Overall Building Risk Rating

Low

Our professional opinion is that overall this Building represents a Positive PAS9980:2022 Outcome.

Recommended Remediations

No recommended remediations identified.

Recommended Interim Measures

No recommended interim measures identified.

- Wetherby Mineral Wool Render (Fire Classification A1)



- High-density Rock Panel (Fire Classification A2-s1,d0)



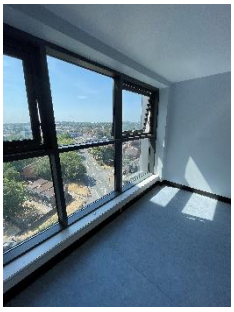
- KAW NEER AA100 50mm Curtain Wall system with spandrel Panels



2) Each flat within the block has access to an individual winter garden balcony. These are cantilevered concrete floors with an aluminium and glass construction.



3) Windows on the common landings are aluminium framed double glazed units, openable windows.

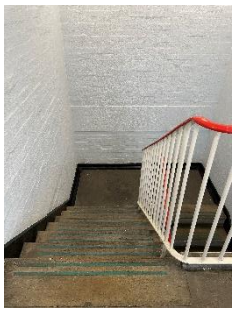


4) Windows on the staircase are timber framed windows with double glazed units, externally they have an aluminium clip on face, so externally, they appear the same throughout the building. These windows are openable and can be used for Ventilation purposes.



Section 7 Means of Escape from Fire

1) The site has a single staircase that provides a means of escape and is 1050mm in width.




2) All corridors are of adequate width (at least 1050mm) and will be maintained clear to that width as a minimum.

3) The means of escape from flats are dead ends, travel distances in the un- ventilated corridors are less than 4.5 metres.

4) The means of escape are protected to prevent the spread of fire and smoke.

5) The communal landing / staircases are protected by use of self-closing FD30s fire doors with vision panels & intumescent strips / cold smoke seals.

6) All communal doors are fitted with automatic closing devices that are checked on a regular basis by Caretaking Teams as part of their checks. Defective closing devices are replaced either by the Caretaking Team(s) or the in-house repairs team(s).

7) All communal fire doors are subject to a 12-week check by the Fire Safety Rapid Response Team.

8) The final exit doors have door entry systems installed. These systems are designed to fail safe i.e. door unlocked in the event of a power failure. This prevents residents being locked in or out of the building.

9) Automatic smoke ventilation is installed to the two windows at the head of the staircase on the 14th floor. The controls and repeater panel are in the ground floor lobby. A further reset switch is located at the top of the stairs on the 14th floor.

10) Automatic smoke ventilation is employed. These are tested, inspected and maintained by a competent, procured contractor in accordance with BS7346. The frequency for the maintenance checks is twice per year (April and October) of each calendar year.

11) The chute room doors on each floor are FD30s fire doors with combined intumescent strips & cold smoke seals and overhead self-closing devices. The chute room on each floor has louvres to provide natural ventilation.

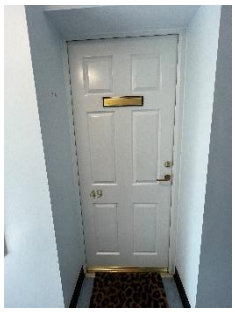
12) Communal windows can only be opened with the use of a key or by operating the automatic smoke vents. The timber windows to the staircase do not require a key.

13) Communal areas are kept free of flammable items. The communal areas are checked on a regular basis by Caretaking / Cleaning teams 365 days per year, and all items of rubbish are immediately removed. There is also an out of hour's service that allows combustible items of furniture / rubbish to be removed.

14) Emergency lighting is provided to communal landings and stairs. Checks are done monthly by Sandwell MBC in house electrical team or approved contractor.

15) Individual floor mats were noted outside some flats. Fire rating of the mats is unknown but deemed to be of low risk.





16) Electrical service cupboard doors in flat lobbies are FD60s rated doors, secured with a suited cylinder lock.

17) The surface coatings to the communal areas are Euro Class B-s3, d2 rated.

18) It was noted that several areas within the building need re painting following newly plastered walls. A Euro Class B-s3, d2 rated system is required. Areas identified were: -

3rd floor staircase
11th floor outside lift car
9th floor outside flat 59
3rd floor outside flat 23






19) The building has sufficient passive controls that provide effective compartmentation to support a Stay Put-Unless Policy. Therefore, residents are advised to remain in their flat unless the fire directly affects them.

20) Flat front door inspections were not carried out by the fire risk assessor as the SMBC Fire rapid response team now undertake annual surveys of flat entrance doors in all SMBC's High Risk Buildings.






Records are recorded electronically by SMBC. Access to individual flats was not sought for the purpose of fire door inspection, this is due to the Fire Rapid Response Team undertaking full non-invasive Fire Door Inspection (FDI) of all SMBC High Rise Building stock.

Accordingly, no internal assessment of flat entrance doors was completed during this FRA. However, the external leaf of each flat entrance door was visually reviewed to identify any obvious signs of damage or defect.

21) From a visual inspection of flat entrance doors during the assessment there were several doors identified that needed a repair or maintenance. Defects identified have been recorded by the Fire Rapid Response team.





Good housekeeping is fundamental to reducing risk in blocks of flats. Controlling the presence of combustible materials and ignition sources not only reduces the potential for accidental fires to start and develop in the common parts, it also significantly reduces the scope for deliberate fires. It also ensures escape routes are free of obstructions that might hinder the evacuation of people from the building and access for fire-fighters.

Section 8 Fire Detection and Alarm Systems

1) Early warning is limited to hard wired or battery smoke alarms within each of the resident's flats and the community room. The equipment is subjected to a cyclical test.

2) Access was not gained to resident's flats to sample smoke detection. Based on information collated from in house systems, (JM) the smoke alarms within resident's flats are installed to a minimum of an LD3 Standard.

For information
LD1 all rooms except wet rooms
LD2 all-risk rooms e.g. Living Room, Kitchens and Hallway.
LD3 Hallway only

3) There is no effective means for detecting an outbreak of fire to the residential communal areas. The reason for this is:

I. Such systems may get vandalised.
II. False alarms would occur.
III. A Stay Put - Unless policy is in place.

4) There is no effective means for detecting an outbreak of fire to the remaining communal areas. Automatic fire alarm systems are not normally required in the common areas of residential blocks as this can compromise the 'Stay Put' evacuation policy.

5) Smoke detectors linked to the Automatic Opening Vents have been installed. The vents will automatically open when smoke has been detected.

6) A deluge system is provided to the refuse chute bin store. The control panel is located within the lower ground floor. There is a warning beacon on the outside of the building, monitored by CCTV.

An approved contractor maintains the system. The frequency for the maintenance checks is twice per year. (April and October).

7) **There is an automatic fire alarm panel in the ground floor entrance foyer. This panel is showing two zones but has no zone plan present. This still remains an issue following the previous FRA.**

Emails have been previously sent to the electrical department to investigate and resolve this point.

The panel is believed to serve the AOV detectors only present in the stairwell and lift shaft, and that following the refurbishment of the block the panel was labelled as such.

8) The CCTV/server room is equipped with an automatic fire alarm system. The system protects the server room only and incorporates smoke detection and a break glass call point.
There is no zone map for the AFA panel in the CCTV/server room is of a temporary nature.

9) The roof space houses significant electrical equipment consideration should be given to providing suitable smoke detection and a red strobe warning light on the outside wall of the plant room.

BS 5839: 6 does not mandate routine smoke detection in empty roof voids. Detection is required only where a credible ignition source is present, including:

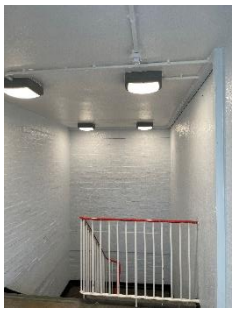
Electrical equipment (solar PV inverters, battery storage, ventilation units, boilers, smart tech equipment) installed in lofts. Wiring or cabling that may be subject to damage (e.g., pests), creating a fire risk.

See Observations on page 66.

Section 9

Emergency Lighting

1) The premises have a sufficient emergency / escape lighting system in accordance with BS 5266:2025 and test points have been strategically located.




2) The emergency lighting units are provided to the communal landings, stairs and lift motor room, server room and some service cupboards on the ground floor.

3) The emergency lighting battery system is situated in the roof space. The Emergency Lighting Central Battery System is a backup lighting solution that powers up in the event that mains power supply is unable to function correctly in an emergency, such as a fire or power cut.




4) All installed equipment is checked and tested in accordance with BS 5266:2025 by Sandwell MBC in house electrical team or an approved contractor.

Section 10

Compartmentation

A visual inspection of the accessible areas was undertaken as part of the assessment, but areas with restricted access, i.e., false ceilings and void areas, were only inspected where readily accessible. The survey undertaken as part of this risk assessment should not be construed as a full compartmentation survey of the building. From a visual inspection carried out at the time of the inspection, there were no breaches in compartmentation evident between the communal areas and the residential accommodation.

1) The building is designed to provide as a minimum 1-hour vertical fire resistance and 1-hour horizontal fire resistance around flats stairwells and lift shafts. All doors are 30-minute fire resistant with cold smoke seals, including those in 1-hour rated walls.

2) Following the comprehensive refurbishment in 2016 the staircase was extended upwards into the newly pitched roof void. Nominal gypsum plasterboard has been used in this process; This serves as part of the means of escape for Contractors working in this area, as such it has been deemed as inadequate. Several holes around penetrations were also identified.

    a) **Following discussions with the management team this will be upgraded to ensure the staircase compartment wall provides a minimum of 60 mins fire resistance.**





b) Exposed penetrations will be suitably fire stopped.



3. The plant room (walls & ceiling) has been constructed from aluminium studding and gypsum plasterboard. It is thought that the 70mm Aluminium Metal C stud/framework has been clad with plywood and overlaid with nominal plasterboard. Currently this system does not provide a min of 60 mins fire resistance. The door to access the plant room is an FD60 fire door.

4. **It has been agreed with the management team that the wall & roof linings of the plant room will be upgraded with a suitable cement board that provides 60 mins fire resistance.**





5. **The Lift motor room has several areas that require remedial fire stopping work to be carried out. Notable expanding foam has been used to fire stop apertures. Foam should be removed and appropriate FR materials used.**




6. The premise has sufficient compartmentation to limit the travel and effect of smoke and flame in event of a fire. Apart from the raised actions, and observations regarding the breach of compartmentation evident where the plastic rainwater pipe penetrates the winter garden compartment on all floors. Whilst the existing fire stopping is fit for purpose, there is a cyclical programme to ensure fire stopping as not been compromised by third parties and where applicable enhance the fire stopping.

7. A variety of methods / materials have been used to achieve fire-stopping including Rockwool and intumescent pillows.

8. **Service access panels are fixed to masonry in the ceilings and walls of corridors. The service access panels near the following flats have gaps and appear to be loosely fitted. These panels require securing and resealing.**

- 14th floor ceiling panel outside flat 89.
- 13th floor ceiling panel outside flat 80.
- 13th floor ceiling panel outside flat 83.
- 12th floor ceiling panel outside flat 77.
- 10th floor ceiling panel outside flat 62.
- 9th floor ceiling panel outside flat 56.
- 8th floor ceiling panel outside flat 50.
- 7th floor ceiling panel outside flat 47.
- 6th floor ceiling panel outside flat 41.
- 6th floor ceiling panel outside flat 38.
- 5th floor ceiling panel outside flat 32.
- 5th floor ceiling panel outside flat 35.
- 4th floor ceiling panel outside flat 29.
- 4th floor ceiling panel outside flat 26.
- 3rd floor ceiling panel outside flat 20.





9. **Also, the vertical wall mounted inspection panels require securing and resealing in these areas:**

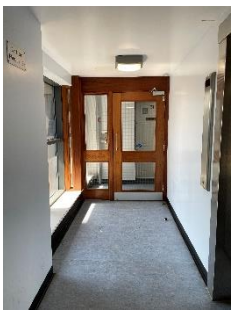
- 6th floor outside flat 37.
- 6th floor outside flat 40.
- 5th floor outside flat 31.



10. **On the 14th floor in an electrical cupboard, in the chute room, there is a hole approx. 30mm in diameter, this requires filling with appropriate FR materials.**



11. All communal doors are fitted with automatic closing devices that are checked on a regular basis by Caretaking Teams as part of their checks. Defective closing devices are replaced either by the Caretaking Team(s) or the in-house repairs team(s).



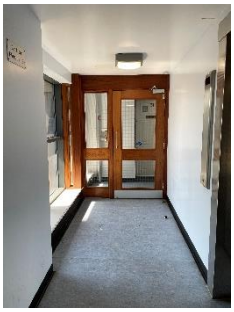


12. Electrical service cupboards have FD60s rated doors, secured with a suited lock.



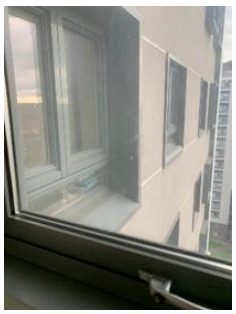
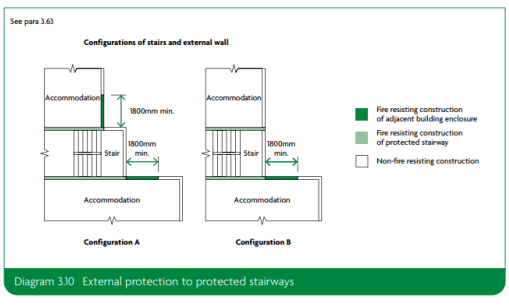
13. Individual flat doors are nominal FD30s timber doors or FD30s rated composite doors sets manufactured by: Permadoor or IG.

14. The corridors / staircases are protected by use of self-closing FD30s fire doors with combined intumescent strips / cold smoke seals and vision panels consisting of Georgian wired glazing.





15. Glazing between the flatted accommodation and the staircase is in close proximity, within 1.8 mtrs. This is outside recommendations set out in Approved Document B, volume 1 Dwellings. This can be found in Diagram 3.10 External Protection to protected stairways.

16. Should any refurbishment of the building take place, compensatory measures should be considered such as a sprinkler system fitted to all flats.

Section 11

Fire Fighting Access & Equipment

1) Access to the building for firefighting appliances can be gained via Poplar Street & Cuin Road, both roads are a tarmac surface.

2) The location of the nearest Hydrant is adjacent to the main access door; this is easily accessible and approx. one hose length away from any fire appliance pump.

3) The dry riser inlet is located within the ground floor lobby, inside a cupboard secured with a budget lock.

4) There is a dry riser that serves the building. The outlets are exposed and located on the communal lobby of each floor. Each exposed valve is secured with a cable tie. The caretakers check the cable tie is intact as part of their weekday inspections.

5) The dry riser is checked regularly as part of the Caretakers duties.

6) Maintenance contracts in place to service the valves twice per year (April and October) with a hydraulic test undertaken annually (October) to comply with the requirements of BS9990.

7) Smoke control switches are located in the ground floor foyer adjacent to the entrance. There is another smoke control switch on the access corridor to the roof space.

8) Maintenance contracts in place for maintenance of the extinguishers. The frequency for the maintenance checks is once (October) of each calendar year. Portable fire extinguishers are provided as follows.

    - CO2 to the lift motor room.
    - CO2 in the PV system control room.
    - CO2 in CCTV server room.

9) A fire suppression system is fitted in the bin room.

Section 12

Fire Signage

1) Fire doors display “Fire Door Keep Shut” where appropriate.



2) No smoking (Smoke Free England) signage is displayed at the front entrance to the premises.

3) It was noted that C02 extinguishers in the lift motor room and the plant room did not display “ID” or “How to use signage”.



4) Yellow LPG warning signs are displayed within the lift cars.

5) The fire escape routes use directional fire signage.

6) Fire Action Notices are displayed throughout the building. These signs are dated and should be updated when the block undergoes future refurbishment.



7) Signage illustrating the floor location of each flat is fitted to the ground floor lobby wall.



8) Photoluminescent wayfinding signage depicting floor level and flat numbers are fitted to the walls on all floors and to the wall of each landing on the communal staircase. Signage that meets the requirement of ADB and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.

9) Warning signage for PV Systems should be displayed on the plant room door. Example below.



10) Warning signage for the Central Battery System should be displayed on the plant room door



Section 13

Employee & Resident Training/Provision of Information

1) All Caretaking / Cleaning Employees have undertaken fire safety training. This includes use of bespoke ‘Fire Safety in High / Low Rise Flatted Accommodation’ Video.

2) All employees are encouraged to complete ‘In the line of fire’ training on an annual basis.

3) Caretaking Teams are not currently trained in the effective use of fire extinguishers. The only extinguishers are located within the lift motor room. Caretaking Teams are not expected to tackle fires in this area.

4) Building safety and evacuation notices are displayed in communal areas and lift cars.



5) Staff undertaking fire risk assessments on High Rise buildings are qualified to a minimum of Level 4 Diploma in Fire Risk Assessment.

6) Fire safety information has been provided as part of tenancy pack; this includes information on Fire Doors.



7) Information regarding use of fire doors is provided to residents.



8) Information regarding the Stay Put Unless fire evacuation strategy is provided to residents.



9) The Resident Engagement Team surveyed residents of Birchcroft during May 2025 and visited every flat on Monday 28th May 2025. Residents who were not available also had the option to complete the survey online or postal return.

- 22% (20) of households have given us their feedback. Of those responses.
- 80% (16) of households agreed that they feel safe in their own home. 55% (11) of households agreed that they feel safe within the communal areas of the block.
- 85% (17) of households who responded confirmed they are happy with how often the smoke alarms are checked by Sandwell Council.

10) SMBC will use a range of methods to communicate with the residents of Birchcroft about building safety. This may include:

- At the start of a tenancy
- Homecheck visits
- A change in leaseholder
- Sandwell Council website
- MySandwell portal/APP
- Notice boards
- Text
- Email
- Letter
- Face to Face visits
- Pop-up sessions to talk about building safety Video Workshops

11) The Resident Engagement Strategy for Birchcroft will be reviewed in 12 months to include current details and any emerging topics.

12) There have been no reported fire incidents at Birchcroft in the previous 12 months.

Section 14 Sources of Ignition

1) Smoking is prohibited within any communal parts of the building in line with Smoke Free England legislation.

2) There is evidence of surreptitious smoking in the Roof space. This should be stopped immediately. Instruction should be sent out to all contractors and SMBC staff that smoking is strictly prohibited in within any SMBC building.

3) There are no service records available for the servicing and maintenance of Solar PV Equipment provided for this building. This is currently being discussed with various contractors through Mark Paynter and his team. It will not be recorded as an action.

4) This testing falls under several British Standards. For example: -

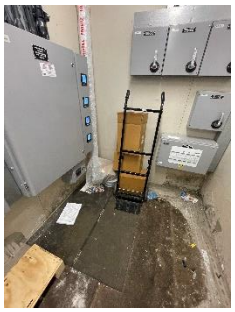
BS 7671 - This standard provides the overall framework for electrical installations in the UK and includes guidance on solar panel installations.

BS EN IEC 62446-2 - This standard specifically addresses the maintenance, testing, and documentation of grid-connected solar PV systems, including inspections and testing.

IEC 61215 - This standard is used by the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) to validate the performance and quality of solar modules. Please note these are not inclusive.

5) Combustible items in the roof void and plant room should be removed as soon as possible.





6) Hot works are not normally conducted. If essential maintenance requires the use of hot work processes, then corporate policies and procedures are to be followed.

7) The fixed electrical installation shall be tested every 5 years. Last EICR dated 01/08/23 and marked as Satisfactory.

8) Electrical service cupboards have FD30s rated doors, secured with a suited cylinder lock.

9) There is a lightning protection system installed to the building. Maintenance contracts are in place for lightning conductor testing in accordance with BS 6651.

10) Portable heaters are not allowed in any common parts of the premises.

11) There is no gas supply to the block. The gas supply has been isolated and is no longer in use, though pipework remains.

12. There are no parking bays allocated for the charging or parking of Electric vehicles.

13. At the time of the assessment there was no evidence of Battery-powered mobility scooters, e-scooters or e-bikes stored/charged in communal areas of the building.

Section 15

Waste Control

1) There is a regular Cleaning Service to the premises.

2) Refuse & recycling containers are emptied regularly. Refuse containers are in the bin store which is underneath the ground floor. The Bin store is accessed at the rear of the building. Access is via a motorised roller shutter; key is stored in the firefighter's white box.

3) Regular checks by Caretakers minimise risk of waste accumulation.

4) 'Out of Hours' service is in place to remove bulk items.

section 16

Control and Supervision of Contractors and Visitors

1) Responsive Repairs service delivered by Sandwell MBC necessitates the production of an order via the computerised repairs system. Details of any known risks are documented on the repair order.

2) Hot works are not permitted unless authorisation is given via the approved officer. The hot works procedure is to be followed.

3) Utility companies are not allowed to access any service cupboard or secure area. They must request and collect maintenance keys from the Investments office @ Roway Lane. This allows scrutiny of what is the scope of any works such as installation of tenant's broadband / phone line etc.

4) Where contractors are appointed to undertake major refurbishment works, Sandwell MBC Urban Design team will put control measures in place. Such Measures include: -

    a) Pre-Contract Meetings – where contractor is made aware of all working arrangements and safe systems of work to be adopted. Issues covered in this meeting will include:

        - Health and Safety.
        - Site Security.
        - Safety of working and impact on children/school business.
        - Fire risk, if any.
            - Site Emergency Plan.

    b) Monthly Site Meetings – in order to monitor, review and share any new information including any new risks.

    c) Site monitored daily whilst work is in progress by Clerk of Works / Health and Safety Officers.

    d) Final Contractor review on completion of works undertaken.

Section 17

Fire Precautions

1) Regular checks are undertaken by Caretakers / Cleaning Team(s) 365 days per year which helps reduce the risk of arson.

2) Restricted access to the premises by means of a door entry system.

3) There is no current evidence of arson.

4) The perimeter of the building is well illuminated.

5) CCTV has been installed. The system is monitored 365 days per year by the centralised CCTV control room located at the Sandwell MBC Operations and Development Centre, Roway Lane, Oldbury, B69 3ES.

6) There have been no reported fire incidents since the last FRA.

Section 18

Storage Arrangements

1) Residents instructed not to bring L.P.G cylinders into block.



2) The tenancy conditions, Section 7 – Condition 5.6 stipulates “If you live in a flat or maisonette, you, people living with you and any visitors to your property must not keep or use paraffin oil, petrol, bottled gas appliances or any other explosive, FLAMMABLE or dangerous material in the property. This restriction also applies to any storage facility situated in or attached to the block, which has been provided. For your use”.

3) No Flammable liquids stored on site by Caretakers / cleaners.

4) All store cupboards are kept locked.

5) There are no flammable liquids or gas cylinders stored on site.

Section 19

Additional Control Measures. Fire Risk Assessment - Action Plan

Significant Findings

Action Plan

It is considered that the following recommendations should be implemented to reduce fire risk to, or maintain it at, the following level:

Trivial: ☒ Tolerable: ☐

Definition of priorities (where applicable):

P1 Arrange and complete as urgent – Within 10 days

P2 Arrange and complete within 1-3 Months of assessment date

P3 Arrange and complete within 3-6 Months of assessment date

P4 Arrange and complete exceeding 6 months under programmed work

Fire Risk Assessment
Action Plan

Name of Premises or Location:	Birchcroft, Windmill Lane, Smethwick
Date of Action Plan:	24/08/2026
Review Date:	August 2027

Question/ Ref No	Required Action	Supporting photograph	Priority	Timescale and Person Responsible	Date Completed
07/18	As identified within section 7 of the FRA repaint newly plastered walls within in the building with a Euro Class B-s3, d2 rated system is required. These are located:		P3	3-6 Months Repairs	

	3rd floor staircase. 11th floor outside lift car. 9th floor outside flat 59. 3rd floor outside flat 23.				
8/07	There is an automatic fire alarm panel in the ground floor entrance foyer. This panel is showing two zones but has no zone map present. Provide a zone plan for this system.	N/A.	P3	3-6 Months Electrical	
8/08	The CCTV/server room is equipped with an automatic fire alarm system. Currently no zone plan/map has been provided.	N/A.	P3	3-6 Months Electrical.	
10/02	The staircase leading to the refurbished roof space should be upgraded to offer a min of 60 mins fire resistance.		P4	3-6 Months Head of Building Safety & Compliance.	

10/04	It has been agreed with the management team that the wall & roof linings of the plant room will be upgraded with a suitable cement board that provides 60 mins fire resistance.		P4	3-6 Months Head of Building Safety & Compliance.	
10/05	The Lift motor room has several areas that require remedial fire stopping work to be carried out. Notable expanding foam has been used to fire stop apertures. Foam should be removed and appropriate FR materials used.		P3	3-6 Months Fire Rapid Response Team	
10/08	The service access panels near the following flats have gaps and appear to be loosely fitted. These panels require securing and resealing. Exact locations		P3	3-6 Months Fire Rapid Response Team	

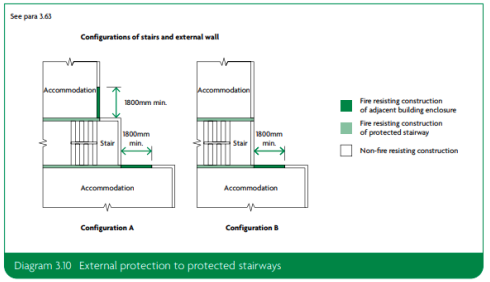
	to be sent to the Fire Rapid Response team.				
10/09	The vertical wall mounted inspection panels require securing and resealing with appropriate FR materials. These are located on the 6th floor outside flat 37. 6th floor outside flat 40. 5th floor outside flat 31.		P3	3-6 Months Fire Rapid Response Team	
10/10	On the 14th floor in an electrical cupboard, in the chute room, there is a hole approx. 30mm in diameter, this requires filling with appropriate FR materials.		P3	3-6 Months Fire Rapid Response Team	
12/03	It was noted that C02 extinguishers in the lift motor room and the plant room did not display “ID” or “How to use signage”.		P3	3-6 Months Fire Rapid Response Team	

12/09	Warning signage for PV Systems should be displayed on the plant room door.	 Example	P3	3-6 Months Fire Rapid Response Team	
12/10	Warning signage for the central battery systems should be displayed on the plant room door Example shown to the right.		P3	3-6 Months Fire Rapid Response Team	
14/02	There is evidence of smoking in the Roof space. This should be stopped immediately. Instruction should be sent out to all contractors and SMBC staff that smoking is strictly prohibited in within any SMBC building.	N/A.	P3	3-6 Months Asset Management	

14/05	Combustible items in the roof void and plant room should be removed as soon as possible.		P3	3-6 Months Caretakers	

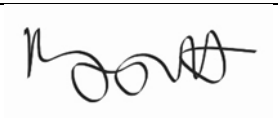
When undertaking future improvement program(s), it is advised that the observations listed below should be given consideration (noting that the safety of the residents is not jeopardised by these, and all steps to reduce any known risks have been taken).

Observations	
Ongoing Fire stopping required to the internal rainwater pipes at every compartment floor level to include within roof void. This has been captured under the scope of the refurbishment work. Capital Project Team.	
Fire separation between the lift doors and flat entrance doors at ground floor should be considered for any future works programme.	

As part of a future works programme a sprinkler installation to the flats should be considered due to proximity of flats glazing to the stairwell.	
If a protected stairway projects beyond or is in an internal angle of the adjoining external wall of the building, then the minimum distance between an unprotected area of the building enclosure and an unprotected area of the stair enclosure should be 1800mm.	 
The roof space houses significant electrical equipment consideration should be given to providing suitable smoke detection in the plant room & roof space. BS 5839 6 does not mandate routine smoke detection in empty roof voids. Detection is required only where a credible ignition source is present, including Electrical equipment (solar PV inverters, battery storage, ventilation units, boilers, smart tech equipment) installed in lofts. Wiring or cabling that may be subject to damage (e.g., pests), creating a fire risk.	N/A.

Therefore, should any future refurbishments of the building be undertaken, a suitable detection system and red neon light on the outside of the access door to the roof void should be installed.	

Officer:	Signed:	Contact Details:	Qualifications:	Date:
Adrian Jones		07776 551687	L4 Diploma in FRA	25/08/2026

Verified	Signed:	Contact Details:	Qualifications:	Date:
Andrew Froggatt		07393 238041	L4 Diploma in FRA	25/08/2026

FRA actions audited by:	Signed:	Contact Details:	Qualifications:	Date:

Appendix 1

Significant Hazards on Site and Information to be Provided for the Fire Service

Name of property: Birchcroft

Updated: 23/06/2025

Premise Manager: (Housing Officer or Scheme Manager)
Tel. No: 0121 569 2975

Hazard	Information/Comments
Asbestos	An asbestos survey has been undertaken of the communal areas. Survey held by Sandwell Housing Tel:- 0121 569 5077. *Include survey*

bradley ENVIRONMENTAL

Report No.: J420887
Nature of Work: Management Survey
Issue Date: 10/07/2025
Client Name: Sandwell MBC (formerly Homes)
Building Services, Direct 2 Trading Estate, Roway Lane, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3ES
UPRN: BL53500BI06 14
Site Address: 1-90 Birchcroft, Smethwick, B66 3LN



Order Placed By: Jon Hemming
Site Contact: Dean Harding
Date(s) of Work: 23/06/2025 to 25/06/2025
Technical Manager: D Ely CCP (Asbestos)
Assistant Surveyor(s): Not Applicable

Lead Surveyor:
Jack Baldwin
Asbestos Surveyor

Authorised Signatory:
Paul Walters
Technical Review Officer
10/07/2025

Non-accredited activities are present within this report.

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