



FIRNTEC
BUILDING COMPLIANCE

VISUAL STRUCTURAL APPRAISAL

1-90 Birchcroft

Windmill Lane
Smethwick
B66 3LW

11th November 2024

Document Issue

Revision	Date	Purpose of Issue
A	29.09.24	Issued for Review
B	09.10.24	Second Issue
C	11.11.24	Third Issue

Prepared By

Ruben Wood , Meng CEng MStructE

Dated: 11/11/2024

Reviewed by

Firntec Project Consultant

Dated: 11/12/2024

Competency Statement

Ruben has a thorough range of experience on projects both in the UK and globally, centered on the construction industry but also in public art installations and bespoke structures. His extensive experience in a wide range of projects afford him the contacts to bring together the right team for a job. Ruben has worked on a range of projects where he has developed the ability to perform conceptual and detailed designs, analysis of complex structures and element design. He has extensive experience in structural design and construction methods and has successfully completed projects with values in excess of £10m.

Ruben has also been engaged in structural appraisals of high rise residential structures across the UK and has been assisting Principal Accountable Persons in assessing their housing stocks and compiling information to be included in the golden thread as a requirement of the Building Safety Act.

QUALIFICATIONS, MEMBERSHIPS & TRAINING

First Class MEng Civil Engineering – University College London

Chartered Engineer and Member – Institute of Structural Engineers CEng MStructE

Knowledge of the Engineering Council's competency register for HRB's as set out in UK-SPEC for HRB

Continued professional and development through industry led courses and webinars on The Building Safety Act, fire in structural engineering and assessments of existing HRB's.

This document has been prepared by Firntec and is for the sole use of Firntecs client. Firntec does not accept any liability for any use of this document other than that by its client and only for the purposes intended. No professional liability or warranty is extended to other parties by Firntec unless prior written consent is given.

Contents

1.	Executive Summary	3
2.	Introduction	4
2.1.	Brief	4
2.2	Limitations	4
2.3	Survey Methodology	5
2.4	Potential Material Defects	6
3	Desk Top Study	9
3.2	Existing Information	9
3.3	Desktop Study: Ground Conditions	9
3.4	Desktop Study: Flood Zone	10
4	Structural Form	11
4.1	Description of Building.....	11
4.2	Structural Design Type.....	12
4.3.	Structural elements.....	13
4.4	Robustness and Consequence Class.....	15
5	Site Inspection	17
5.1	External Walls Elevations.....	17
5.2	Roof.....	18
5.3	Typical Floor Plan.....	18
5.4	Summary Key Elements.....	20
6	Conclusions and Recommendations.....	20
	Appendix A – Structural Elements Survey	21

1. Executive Summary

The building survey revealed that the overall structural integrity of the property is sound. No major structural issues were identified that pose an immediate threat to the occupants or the building's stability.

Is the Building Safe to Occupy?	Yes
---------------------------------	-----

However, some intrusive investigations are required to properly assess the building's health, condition and fire resistance. The actions for the building are:

Ref no	Observations	Risk Rating	Mitigation	Timescale
Birch 001/ 2024	Concrete material tests for strength, cover depth, carbonation, presence of chlorides and HAC	Medium	Engage a qualified specialist contractor to complete the investigations	within the next 24 months
Birch 002/2024	We have not been provided with construction details, product specifications and warranties on the building refurbishment in 2016.	Low / Medium	These should be sourced from the original contractors and kept on file by the Duty Holder as part of the Golden Thread for future reference. If floor plans are not available then a measured building survey should be commissioned.	Within next 24 months or sooner if the building is called in by the BSR
Birch 003/2024	Regular maintenance is crucial to preserving the property's condition and preventing future issues. The building is to be surveyed at regular 5 year intervals to inspect for signs of movement, structural decay and/or defects.	Low	Engage a qualified specialist contractor to complete the surveys	Every 5 years

2. Introduction

2.1. Brief

Firntec were appointed by Sandwell to perform a visual structural appraisal of the purpose built residential block known as 1-90 Birchcroft Court, B66 3LW. The instruction was to identify the key structural elements of the building and is prepared to be included as part of the Building Safety Case Report for the housing block. The inspection relates to the main building only and any external fences/walls, sheds and outbuildings/garages have been excluded from our scope. An inspection of the property was undertaken by Firntec on the 12th August 2024. The scope of the inspection included limited, visual observations of the interior and exterior of the structure. The inspection was limited to accessible areas which included the external elevations (viewed from the ground), communal areas, stair core, plant rooms and the roof.



Figure 1: Site location

2.2 Limitations

This report is based upon a visual inspection of the property, as described above. This report describes the findings and draws conclusions of a general nature and is not an intrusive survey of the building and no calculations were carried out with regards to load transfer and verification of structural members.

Whilst comments are made to satisfy the requirements of the brief, the report has, of necessity, not been exhaustive and cannot therefore constitute a warranty as to the soundness or otherwise of the property in areas hidden from visual inspection or not seen during the inspection.

No internal finishes were disturbed during our inspection, and no opening up works or invasive inspections were undertaken. We were not able to observe any structural elements where hidden under finishes.

This report has been prepared for the sole use of the client Sandwell.

Disassembly or removal of any portion of the structure, mechanical equipment, plumbing equipment, or electrical equipment is beyond the scope of this inspection. There is no warranty or guarantee, either expressed or implied, regarding future performance, life, insurability, merchantability, workmanship, and/or need for repair of any item inspected. Please note that any liabilities associated with Asbestos including surveys, identification and removal have been excluded.

The components of the property included in the scope of the inspection, if present and applicable, include: structural foundations, primary load-carrying framing members, roof surface, façade structure, and miscellaneous items related to the property. The scope of the inspection is specifically in relation to structural elements and hence general building defects which are not structurally significant may not be included.

2.3 Survey Methodology

Initially a desk top study was completed through research of online records and available archive information. The desk study considers site-specific historical, geological and environmental characteristics such as the expected soils condition and if the site is within a flood zone. It also includes a review of the existing available information provided by the client. From this we are able to determine the expected construction type and materials used and plan the survey accordingly.

Once the nature of the site and surrounding areas has been recorded the more detailed inspection of the building can take place. This includes an appraisal from the inside and outside of the building. A visual appraisal is completed on every level with a more detailed assessment completed at intermittent floors, always including roof level, top floor and ground floor.

If archive drawings are unavailable the structural form of the building is determined by searching for the areas where the underlying structure is visible such as plant rooms, bin stores or service cupboards.

The integrity of the building is assessed searching for signs of structural movement, material decay and inspecting the condition of the structural elements.

Below is a list of completed actions for each area inspected:

<u>ACTION</u>	<u>POINTS CONSIDERED</u>
INSPECT ROOF AREA	• Check for signs of cracking at junctions • Check levels • Check for obvious defects
CHECK FINISHES IN FLAT/COMMUNAL AREAS	• Review each area for damages to finishes which may be caused by structural movement
SEARCH FOR CRACKS IN STRUCTURE	• Search for cracks in structure, in particular at junctions between elements • Are cracks penetrating structure • Follow the trail of the crack to assess cause

CHECK FLOOR/CEILING LEVEL	Sagging ceiling or unlevel floors may indicate deficient design or overloaded floor plates
INSPECT CUPBOARDS	- Inside cupboards underlying structure often visible - Finishes may not have been updated and therefore provide insight into original features
ASSESS CLADDING FIXINGS	- Search for access to view cavity - Search for defects of failed wall ties such as bulging walls, cracking and separation of window reveals - Check for lifting/sagging of lintels
CHECK OPERATION OF DOORS/WINDOWS	Search for windows and doors which are out of square, binding, cracks in the architraves
SEARCH FOR MATERIAL DEFECTS	Identify materials used and known issues with material
INSPECT PLANT ROOMS AND SERVICE ROOMS	- Areas often without finishes revealing underlying structure - Often structural form and key elements visible
INSPECT EACH ELEVATION EXTERNALLY	Search for cracks and/or signs of structural movement
IDENTIFY OVERHANG STRUCTURES	- Search for overhang structures - Inspect for visible defects
ASSESS STAIR CORE	- Often shear core providing stability - Stair form (precast/in-situ)
INSPECT GROUND FLOOR	- Search for vents to determine if floor is ventilated / suspended - Check levels

Table 1: Site Survey Actions

Reference shall be made to Table A of BRE Digest 292 “Cracking in Buildings” 2nd Edition (2016)

Table A: Classification of damage and repair for different crack widths

Category of damage	Description of typical damage (Ease of repair in <i>italics</i>)	Approximate crack width
0	Hairline cracks of less than about 0.1 mm width are classed as negligible.	Up to 0.1 mm
1	Perhaps isolated slight fracturing in building. Cracks rarely visible in external brickwork. <i>Fine cracks of up to 1 mm width can be treated easily using normal decoration.</i>	Up to 1 mm
2	Cracks not necessarily visible externally. Cracks can be filled easily. <i>Redecoration probably required. Recurrent cracks can be masked by suitable linings.</i> Some distortion to doors and windows, which may stick slightly. <i>Some external repointing may be required to ensure weathertightness.</i>	Up to 5 mm
3	Doors and windows sticking. Service pipes may fracture. Weathertightness often impaired. <i>The cracks will require some opening up and can be patched by a mason. Repointing of external brickwork and possibly a small amount of brickwork to be replaced.</i>	5–15 mm or several, each up to 3 mm
4	Window and door frames distorted, floor sloping noticeably*. Walls leaning or bulging noticeably*. Some loss of bearing in beams. Service pipes disrupted. <i>Extensive repair work involving breaking-out and replacing sections of walls, especially over doors and windows.</i>	15–25 mm, depending on number
5	Beams losing bearing, walls leaning badly and requiring shoring. Windows broken with distortion. Danger of instability. <i>This requires a major repair, involving partial or complete rebuilding.</i>	Usually greater than 25 mm, depending on number

* Local deviation of slope, from the horizontal or vertical, of more than 1 in 100 will normally be clearly visible. Overall deviations in excess of 1 in 150 are undesirable.

Table 2 – BRE Digest 292 Table A

2.4 Potential Material Defects

Material defects in concrete and brickwork buildings can have various causes and can affect different components of the structure. Here's a list of common material defects in concrete and brickwork buildings:

Concrete Defects:

1. Honeycombing: Incomplete filling of the concrete mix, leading to voids or honeycomb-like structures within the concrete.
2. Cracks: These can occur due to various factors, such as shrinkage, settlement, overloading, temperature changes, or inadequate reinforcement.
3. Spalling: Concrete surface peeling or chipping off due to freeze-thaw cycles, corrosion of embedded reinforcement, or poor quality concrete.
4. Efflorescence: White, powdery deposits on the surface caused by the migration of soluble salts to the surface and their crystallization.
5. Alkali-Aggregate Reaction (AAR): Also known as "concrete cancer," it's a chemical reaction between alkaline cement paste and certain reactive aggregates, causing cracking and deterioration.
6. Corrosion of Reinforcement: Exposure to moisture and chloride ions can lead to corrosion of the steel reinforcement, weakening the structure.
7. Shrinkage Cracks: These cracks occur as the concrete dries and shrinks, especially if curing was not adequately done.
8. Carbonation: Carbon dioxide reacts with the alkaline compounds in concrete, lowering the pH and potentially affecting the passivation of steel reinforcement.
9. Presence of High Alumina Cement(HAC): HAC was widely used in the manufacture of structural pre-cast concrete in the 1960's as it accelerated curing. However HAC is found to be prone to a conversion process which could result in the concrete being reduced in strength.

Brickwork Defects:

1. Spalling: Similar to concrete, bricks can also spall or chip off due to freeze-thaw cycles, corrosion of embedded materials, or poor-quality bricks.
2. Efflorescence: As with concrete, bricks can also experience the migration of soluble salts to the surface, resulting in efflorescence.
3. Cracking: Bricks may crack due to structural movement, settling, or improper bonding.
4. Dampness: Bricks are porous, and excessive moisture penetration can lead to damp patches, staining, and deterioration.

5. Leaning or Bulging Walls: Improper construction, foundation issues, or lateral forces can cause brick walls to lean or bulge.

6. Mortar Joint Defects: Problems with the mortar used to bond bricks, such as inadequate strength, poor adhesion, or weathering.

It's important to note that these defects can vary in severity, and timely inspection, maintenance, and repairs are essential to ensure the safety and durability of concrete and brickwork buildings. As part of this survey we will inspecting for common signs of the above defects and in some cases may require further investigative works to determine their presence.

3 Desk Top Study

3.2 Existing Information

To date we have been provided with schematic floorplans for the building and a Fire Risk Assessment dated 3rd October 2023.

We have not been provided with any existing calculations for the property.

3.3 Desktop Study: Ground Conditions

Our scope of works did not include intrusive ground investigations or soil testing. In absence of such data, we have undertaken a desktop study to identify the likely founding strata of the property. The British Geological Survey (BGS) produces maps which highlight the general ground conditions around Britain.

The bedrock is the 'Wildmoor Sandstone'. Superficial deposits sit on the older deposits referred to as bedrock.

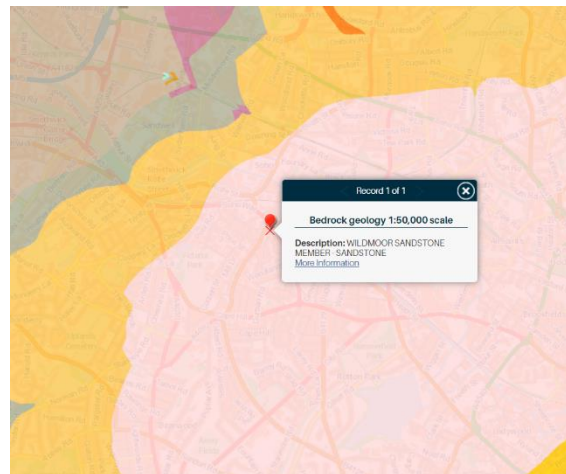


Figure 2. Bedrock Geology

For the site, the superficial deposits are an unspecified 'Till'.

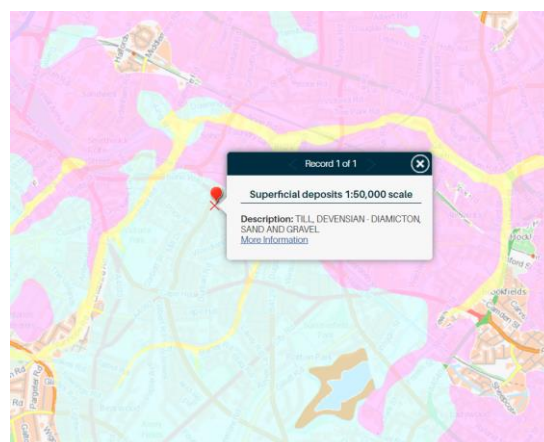


Figure 3. Superficial Geology

3.4 Desktop Study: Flood Zone .

Flood zones have been created by the Environment Agency (EA) as a starting point in determining how likely a location is to flood.

There are 3 flood zones as defined by the EA; Flood Zone 1, 2 and 3. The flood zones are based on the likelihood of an area subject to flooding, with Flood Zone 1 areas least likely to flood and Flood Zone 3 areas more likely to flood. The property is in Flood Zone 1 i.e. less than 0.1% chance of flooding from river or sea in any year.

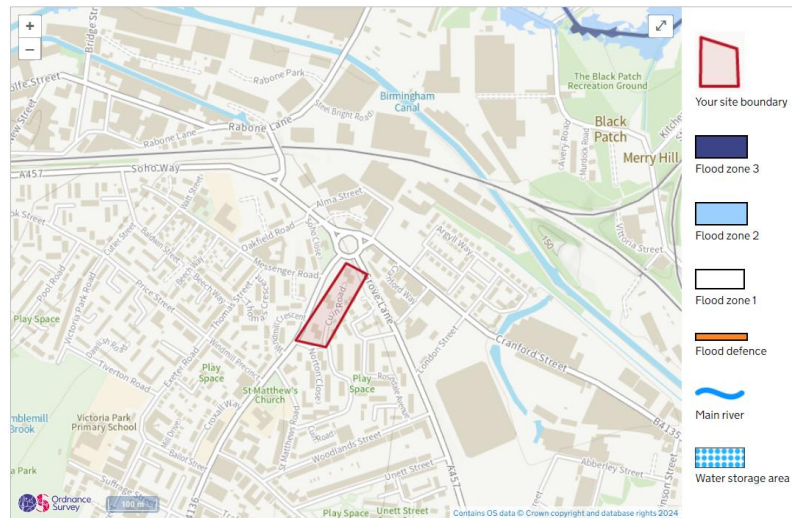


Figure 4. Flood Risk from Environmental Agency

4 Structural Form

4.1 Description of Building

The existing building is an 15 storey purpose built residential housing block containing 90 dwellings understood to be built in circa 1963 by contractor Five Oak for Smethwick County Borough Council. The typical structure is constructed as a reinforced concrete frame which was cast in-situ with a RC slab supported off cast in-situ RC walls/columns which stack vertically throughout. The concrete beams and columns are at regular centres, and distributed evenly across the building. The typical floor slab was measured at 160mm thick.

Given the scale of the existing structure we would expect that the main foundation system is either a series of reinforced concrete pile caps and ground beams or a reinforced concrete raft foundation. Both of these systems will have reinforced concrete piles extending into the bedrock to a significant depth.

The fire resistance of the structural frame is provided by the concrete cover of the steel reinforcement elements. The cover is unknown and requires confirmation with further investigations.

Vertically, the building is stabilised in two orthogonal directions by shear walls adjacent to the lift and stair cores. The in-situ floor slabs, which are effectively tied to the column heads, act as a diaphragm to provide horizontal stiffness.

The building had an original flat concrete roof which has been covered with a pitched waterproofing cover, constructed from a steel frame supporting pressed metal corrugated sheets. This was likely added at the last refurbishment in 2016.

The typical floor plan of each storey is formed of a rectangular block with the cores placed centrally to the footprint. The staircase is in-situ reinforced concrete supported at each landing level and half landing level. The internal partition walls are unknown but presumed blockwork with masonry at ground floor.

The gable end elevations were originally cavity walls with external leaf of stretcher bond masonry. The building was re-clad in 2016 and now has lbstock Rockshelf brickslips at ground floor, and above a mixture of insulated Wetherby mineral wool and high density Rockpanel boards panels. There is a partial basement to the building which houses the bin store.



Figure 5. Neighbouring Property before the buildings underwent the refurbishment in 2016

4.2 Structural Design Type

In order to comply with the Building Safety Act 2022 the block owner will need to register the structural type with the Building Safety Regulator. As part of the registration process the building material information is required which is indicated in Table 3.

Structure design type

Composite steel and concrete	
Concrete large panel system - 1960's	
Concrete large panel system - 1970's onwards	
Modular - concrete	
Concrete - other	X
Lightweight metal structure (aluminium)	
Masonry	
Modular - steel	
Steel frame	
Modular - other material	
Modular Timber	
Timber	
None of these	

Table 3: Structure Design Type

4.3. Structural elements

Figure 6 indicates the assumed structural layout for a typical upper floor level.

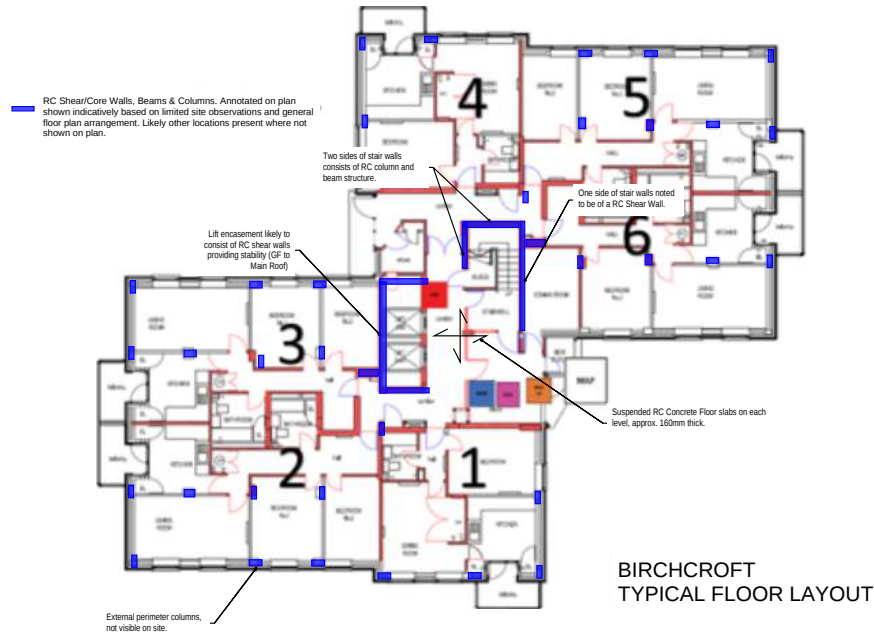


Figure 6: Diagram of typical floor plan

Table 4 Below is a summary table of the key structural elements

Item	Notes
Original and Current design intent	The building is purpose-built for residential use.
Key Materials (Are there any Precast Concrete Elements)	The main structural material is concrete, brickwork and cladding façade to elevations, internal block infill (non-load bearing walls).
Design Loading Parameters	We assume that the building was designed to the current British Standard Code of Practice of the time which was: British Standard Code of Practice 3, Chapter V 1952: Imposed Loading Residential Floors = 40lb/ sqft (equivalent to 1.92kN/sqm) Flat Roof with access = 30lb / sqft (equivalent to 1.44kN/sqm) Stairs and Landings = 60lb/sqft (equivalent to 2.88kN/sqm) British Standard Code of Practice 114 1957 The structural use of normal reinforced concrete in buildings
Have there been any refurbishments	Refurbishment works carried out in 2016 to façade/cladding and light weight frame constructed at roof level to support a pitched roof.
Primary Load Bearing System (Beams, columns, wall?)	Insitu Reinforced concrete frame construction consisting of RC concrete walls, beams and columns. The foundations were not exposed for the inspection, but are presumably deep piles.
Secondary Load Bearing System (floors)	Suspended in-situ reinforced concrete floor slabs. Floor thickness noted to be approx. 160mm (measured at service cupboard voids) and it is assumed for the remaining floor slabs to be of a similar thickness.
Stability System - Horizontal and Vertical	The vertical stability is achieved via a mixture of RC Walls, Beams and Columns transmitting loads from each level to the foundations. The horizontal stability is achieved from the shear core walls (lift/stair cores) with the concrete floors acting as a structural diaphragm.
Claddings and fixings	Brickwork and cladded façade.
Roof Build-Up	Roof consists of suspended insitu RC concrete slab with insulated PIR boards and roof coverings. A pitched roof with aluminium seam roof coverings supported by a light weight frame.
Description of any basements	Partial basement structure below, predominantly housing the bin store room.
Description of any cantilevered elements - Type (Juliet, cantilever, hung, stacked)	There are balconies at each floor.
Fixing method for cantilevered element	Balcony floors appear to be formed of the in-situ concrete floor which cantilevers out to form the balcony support.
Cantilevered element structural and decorative materials	Balcony faces encased within curtain walling/glazing.
Dimension Cantilevered element	Approx. 1m
Current Structural Condition (Poor, fair, good, excellent)	Fair
Signs of structure not performing correctly (movement or failure)	None observed
Finishes in flat	No access to apartments
Structural Cracks Visible?	None observed
Floors and Wall Levels	Fairly level
Condition of Elevations	Good

Table 4: Summary of Key Structural Elements

Figure 7 describes the load path for a RC framed building such as this. The loads distribute from the RC floor plates to the supporting load bearing RC walls/columns. The walls/columns are supported off the foundations which disperse the loads into the ground. The current foundation system is unknown but is presumed to be a reinforced concrete piled system.

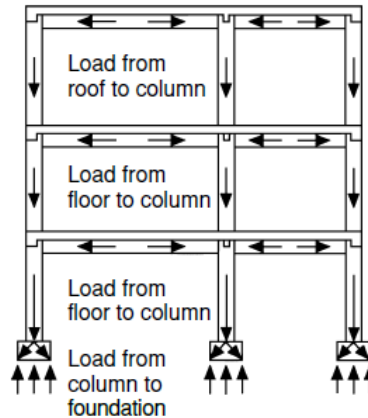


Figure 7 describes the vertical load path for the buildings

4.4 Robustness and Consequence Class

Avoiding disproportionate collapse is a critical concept for the design of new buildings and checking existing ones. It has to be accepted that explosions, usually gas, do occasionally occur and can cause severe damage to residential properties. Avoiding disproportionate collapse ensures that the structure of a building is designed or strengthened to ensure that damage is relatively limited.

The requirement was a consequence of the Ronan Point Large Panel System (LPS) building disaster of 1968. The Ronan Point enquiry produced recommendations (MHLG Circular 62/68) requiring all LPS blocks to be tied together. The initial recommendation referred to buildings with piped gas and required the structure to withstand a force of 34 kN/m^2 . Another MKHG circular followed a few months later (71/68) which required a similar approach to buildings where gas was not supplied or had been removed but the pressure which the structure had to withstand was 17 kN/m^2 .

The current building regulations (Part A – Structure) are regularly revised and include requirements for robustness to be included, specifically the horizontal tying requirement, to apply to all residential blocks, regardless of height. This emphasises the need when assessing existing buildings with regards to the building regulations, for judgement, research and experience to be applied. Regulation 8 of the regulations places a limit on all requirements such that they “shall not require anything to be done except for the purposes of securing a reasonable standard of health and safety for persons in and about the building”.

The requirements for buildings depend on its “consequence class” as described in Table 11 of Part A of the building regulations 2010.

Class	Building type and occupancy	Summary requirements
1	- House not exceeding 4 storeys. - Agricultural buildings. - Buildings into which people rarely go.	No additional measures are likely to be necessary.
2A	5 storey single-occupancy houses. - Hotels, apartments and other residential buildings not exceeding 4 storeys. - Offices not exceeding 4 storeys. - Industrial buildings not exceeding 3 storeys. - Retailing premises not exceeding 3 storeys of less than 2000 m² floor area in each storey. - Single-storey educational buildings. - All buildings not exceeding 2 storeys to which members of the public are admitted and which contain floor areas exceeding 2000 m² at each storey.	- Horizontal ties, - OR - Effective anchorage of floors to walls, as described in the codes of practice.
2B	- Hotels, apartments and other residential buildings exceeding 4 storeys, but not exceeding 15 storeys. - Educational buildings greater than 1 storey, but not exceeding 15 storeys. - Retail premises greater than 3 storeys but not exceeding 15 storeys. - Hospitals not exceeding 3 storeys. - Offices greater than 4 storeys but not exceeding 15 storeys. - All buildings to which members of the public are admitted and which contain floor areas exceeding 2000 m² but less than 5000 m² at each storey. - Car parking not exceeding 6 storeys.	- Horizontal ties and vertical ties as described in the codes of practice, - OR - Show that the removal of a wall or column will cause only limited damage, - OR - Design as 'key elements'.
3	- All buildings defined above as Class 2A and 2B that exceed the limits on area and/or number of storeys. - All buildings, containing hazardous substances and/or processes. - Grandstands accommodating more than 5000 spectators.	Systematic risk assessment.
Note Basement storeys may be excluded provided they meet Class 2B criteria		

Table 5: Building Type and Consequence Class

Birchcroft is classified as a Class 2B building. There are effectively three approaches to determining compliance.

1. Compliance with tying rules
2. That the removal of a wall or column will cause only limited damage
3. Showing that "key elements" and "non-removable" – i.e. can withstand the accidental loading requirements discussed above.

It is very complex to accurately model the behaviour of a building under explosive loadings but recognised techniques, combined with engineering judgment enable a reasonable assessment to be made. In this case, the form of construction predates mandated robustness requirements and relies on the tying between floors and beams which are inherent to this form of construction. In principle, if any column/wall were to be removed then the inherent capacity of the slabs would distribute the loads to effectively bridge the area affected. Therefore the removal of any such member would not result in anything more than that a localised collapse allowed in the code. However, extensive intrusive investigations and a detailed analysis would be required to confirm compliance.

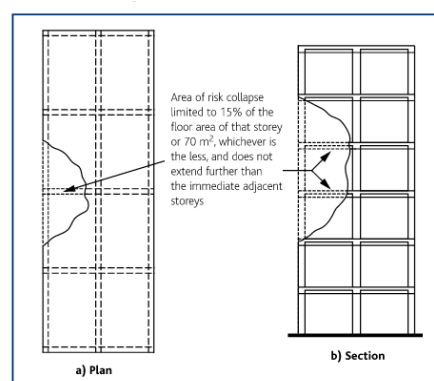


Figure 8: Requirements for Limited Damage approach

5 Site Inspection

The inspection took place on 02/09/24 and the findings have been recorded in this report. The scope of the inspection included limited, visual observations of the interior and exterior of the structure and was viewed from ground level. The report contains a limited amount of photographs taken during the inspection.

5.1 External Walls Elevations

The exterior elevations were generally in ok condition and no significant structural defects were noted to the cladding panels. There were no significant cracks or tell-tale signs of any significant structural movement noted at the time of our inspection.

The external cladding system was originally cavity walls with an external leaf of stretcher bond masonry. The building was re-clad in 2016 and now has Ibstock Rockshelf brickslips at ground floor, and above a mixture of insulated Wetherby mineral wool and high density Rockpanel boards panels. The fixing system is unknown however we presume it is a vertical steel railing system fixed back to the main RC frame. Detail should be requested from the contractor who completed the refurbishment.

The exterior panels were noted to be plumb with no signs of significant bowing, bulging or leaning noted to the panels indicating failed fixings however their presence and condition cannot be confirmed.

There are balconies at each level which are formed of cantilevered RC slabs tied into the main frame. During the 2016 refurbishment they were transformed into winter gardens by installing glazing around the perimeter of the balcony.



Figure 9 and 10: Building Elevations

5.2 Roof

The original roof is a reinforced concrete cast slab with perimeter RC parapet wall allowing safe access. There is an enclosure which partially covers the roof area comprising the lift plant. This structure is formed of solid masonry walls.

There were no tell-tale signs of any significant structural movement noted at the time of our inspection. The exterior walls were noted to be plumb with no signs of significant bowing, bulging or leaning noted to the masonry walls.

The roof has subsequently been covered with a new waterproofing covering formed of a steel frame installed to the existing roof which supports pitched corrugated sheets. This roof is not insulated and therefore acts purely as a weather barrier. The fire protection of the steel is unclear as the beams do not appear to be unprotected. Details of this frame should be requested from the contractor who completed the works in 2016.



Figure 11 and 12: Roof Level

5.3 Typical Floor Plan

The stair core and landing areas of every level were inspected with more detailed assessments made at third points over the height of the building. Refer to Appendix A for site records.

The floors in the communal landings were noted to be solid concrete floors. The floors were checked with a spirit level and were considered level and within tolerance. The doors and windows to the communal landings from the stair core all appeared to be level and opened and closed without difficulty. There were no signs of structural movement detected.

There were vertical concrete walls supporting the floor plates at every level.

The interior of the stair core walls were checked and were plumb and in line with observations made to the exterior – no significant signs of leaning or movement noted. The

concrete appeared in fair condition with few BRE category 1 cracks but no structurally significant defects were noted.

The stair stringer was noted to be 180mm thick which seems reasonable, albeit short of modern standards. A cover test is required to check the resistance of the concrete section in the event of a fire.



Figure 13 and 14: Stair stringer and concrete frame



Figure 15 and 16: RC Elements visible within basement level which covers partial footprint

5.4 Summary Key Elements

To assist in compiling the Building Safety Case Report a summary table of the key structural elements which may be included as suggested in the Building Safety Act 2022 has been compiled with highlighted cells indicating areas of missing information which require further investigations.

<u>ELEMENT</u>	<u>FINDING</u>
PRIMARY MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION	Reinforced Concrete – Intrusive investigations required
TYPE OF BUILDING	Concrete Frame
PRIMARY LOAD BEARING SYSTEM	Cast Concrete Floors on RC Frame
STABILITY SYSTEM	Shear Walls
CLADDING SUPPORT SYSTEM AND FIXINGS	Retrofit rendered panels and brickslip panels
ROOFING MATERIALS	Corrugated steel sheets over original flat RC Slab
FOUNDATIONS	Presumed Piled System but unknown
BALCONIES	Every level cast concrete
OTHER OVERHANG STRUCTURES	NA
BUILDING CONSEQUENCE CLASS	Class 2B as per Part A of Building Regulations

Table 6: Key Structural Element Summary

Refer to Appendix A for detailed photographic record of the salient structural elements recorded.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this report are that the existing structure is generally sound and appeared to be in a fair condition for its age. There were no tell-tale signs of any significant structural movement or cracks which fall in the BRE Category 3 or above.

We understand there is a high-density Rockpanel insulation panel between the external render and original façade. We have not been provided with construction details, product specifications and warranties on the building or re-cladding. We suggest these are sourced from the original contractors.

There are no signs of ground movement across the footprint of the building therefore although we can only assume the piled foundation type we do not deem it a pressing matter to perform the intrusive and costly trial pits which would be required to confirm their presence. These should be included in the scope at the next major structural intervention works to the building.

Due to the age of the building it is wise to perform periodical health checks to the concrete elements. This should include tests for concrete strength, cover depth, carbonation, chlorides and HAC. It would appear that these tests have never been performed to this building and therefore we recommend engaging a specialist contractor within the next 24 months who will be able to perform the tests and provide a interpretive report.

Regular maintenance is crucial to preserving the property's condition and preventing future issues. The building is to be surveyed at regular 5 year intervals to inspect for signs of movement, structural decay and/or defects.

Appendix A – Structural Elements Survey

Birchcroft

Firntec
02 Sep 2024

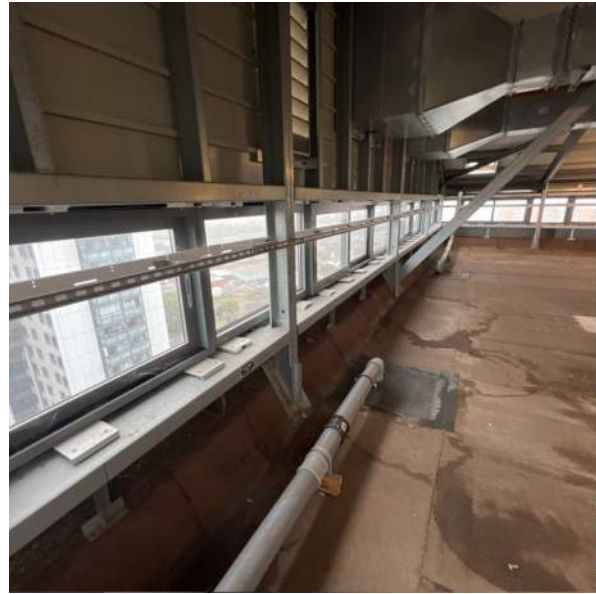
Project Details



Name: Birchcroft

Main Roof





Comments: Roof structure is formed of a concrete slab with a Lightweight SFS (appear to be cold rolled) frame with a pitched roof fixed on to main roof structure. Frame columns fixed to perimeter of roof.
Some historical staining to roof coverings noted, potential leaks in pitched roof coverings.

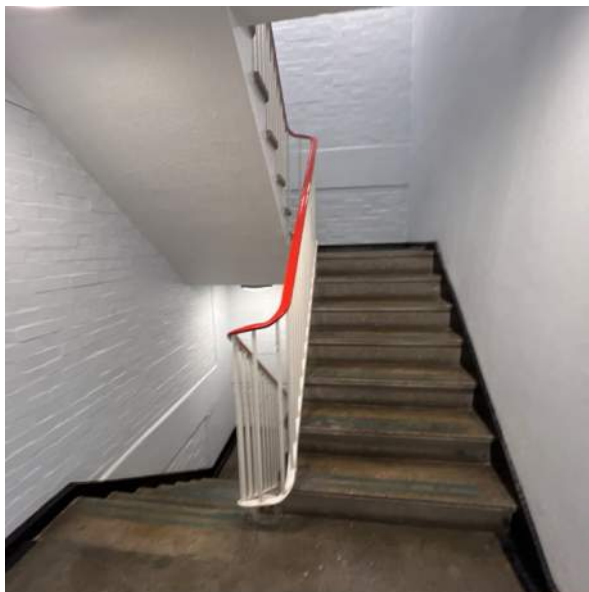
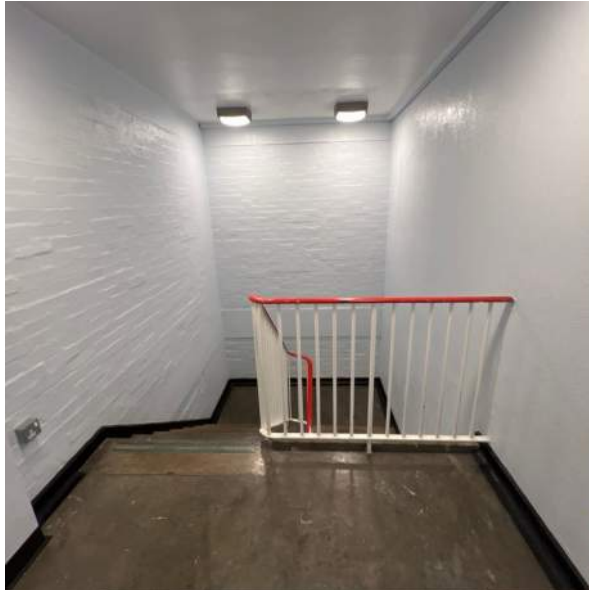
14th Floor Hallway

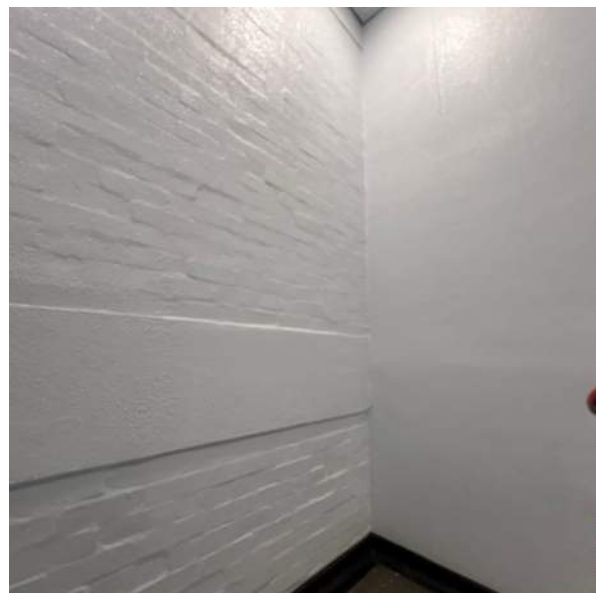
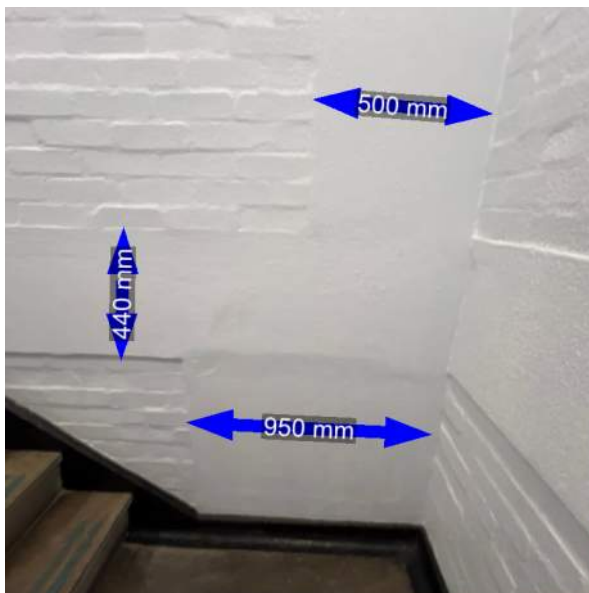




Comments: No jams or distortions noted to hallway doors to indicate any serviceability issues. Generally walls covered with finishes in hallway, likely to consist a mixture of concrete shear walls and embedded columns with internal partition walls. Riser cupboard shows infill masonry walls with partially exposed concrete elements which appears RC Columns.

14th Floor Staircase





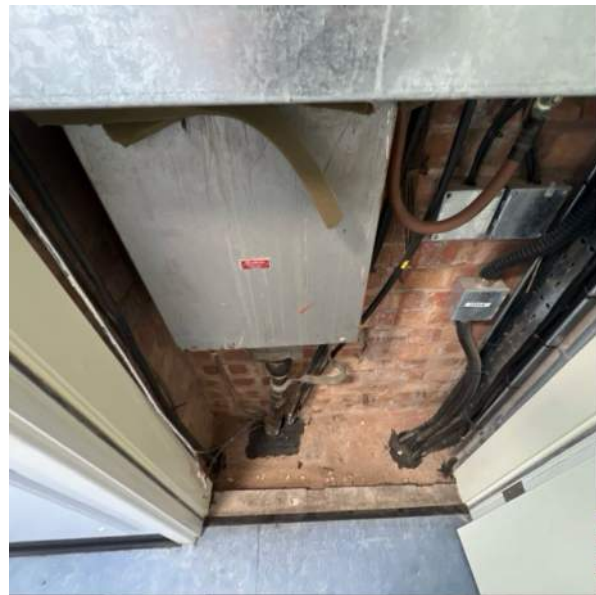
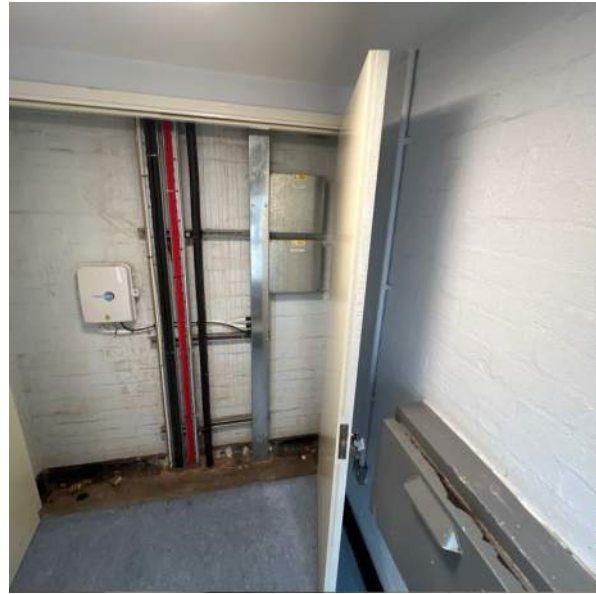
Comments:

Insitu concrete stairs with steel hand railing fixed to stairs. Walls and floors appear to be fairly level.

Stair walls partly exposed showing infill masonry walls (non-load bearing) and embedded RC Concrete beams and columns noted.

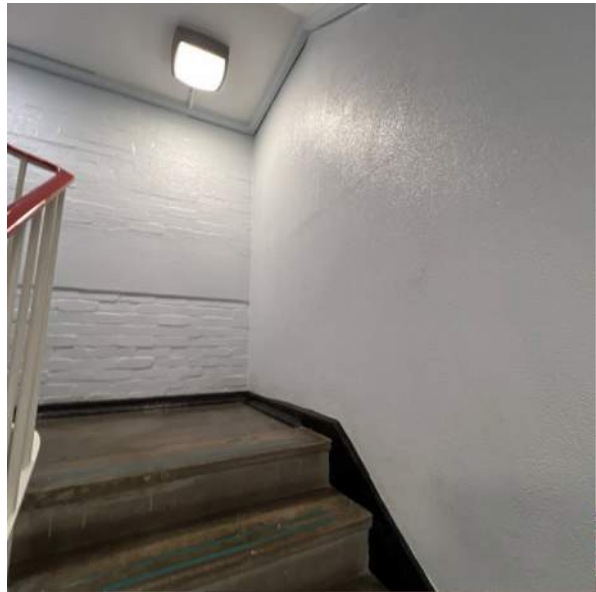
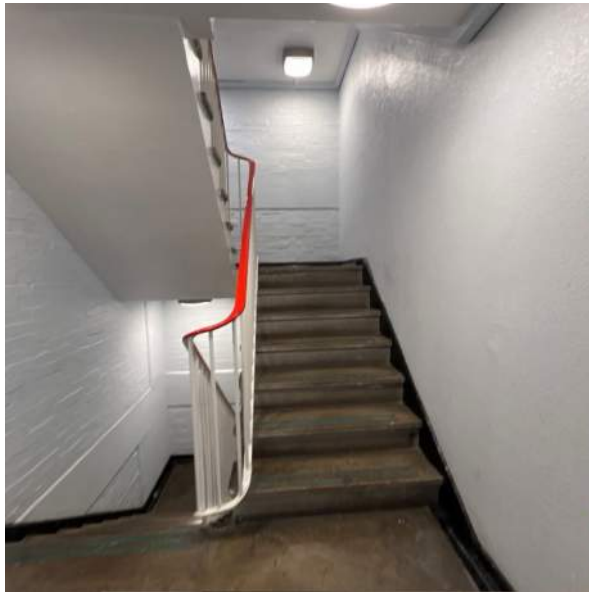
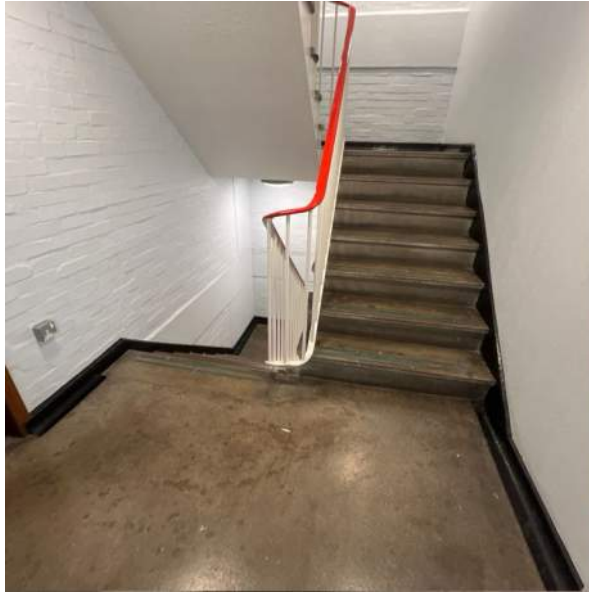
8th Floor Hallway

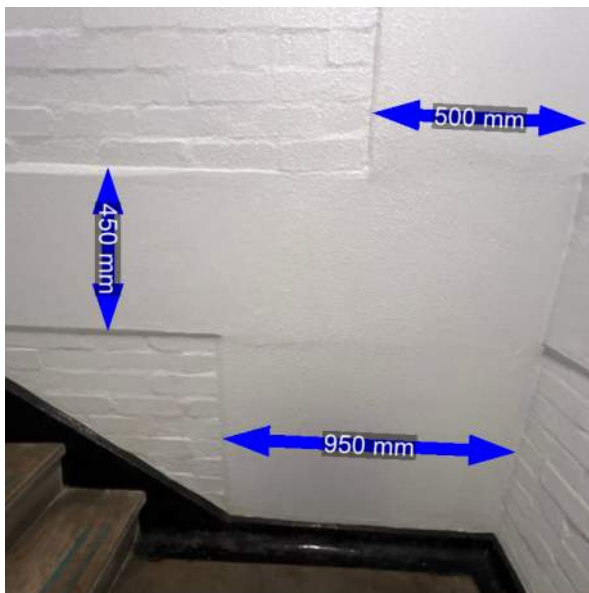




Comments: No jams or distortions noted to hallway doors to indicate any serviceability issues. Generally walls covered with finishes in hallway, likely to consist a mixture of concrete shear walls and embedded columns with internal partition walls. Riser cupboard shows infill masonry walls with partially exposed concrete elements appears to be RC Columns.

8th Floor Staircase





Comments:

Insitu concrete stairs with steel hand railing fixed to stairs. Walls and floors appear to be fairly level.

Stair walls partly exposed showing infill masonry walls (non-load bearing) and embedded RC Concrete beams and columns noted.

Ground Floor Hallway





Comments: 24 Jul 2024 at 12:27 PM
 No jams or distortions noted to hallway doors to indicate any serviceability issues.
 Generally walls covered with finishes in hallway, likely to consist a mixture of concrete shear walls and embedded columns with internal partition walls.
 Riser cupboard shows infill masonry walls with a partially exposed concrete element likely an RC Column.
 Storage room under ground floor staircase shows embedded RC concrete beam and column in infill masonry walls. One side of stair wall noted to be an RC concrete wall likely forming a shear core wall of the structure.

Bin Store





Comments:

Bin store located at basement level with a retaining wall leading up to bin store entrance. RC frame structure exposed forming of concrete beams, columns (230x600mm) and shear walls.
Floor slab measured from bin store entrance noted to be approx. 180mm dp.

Elevations

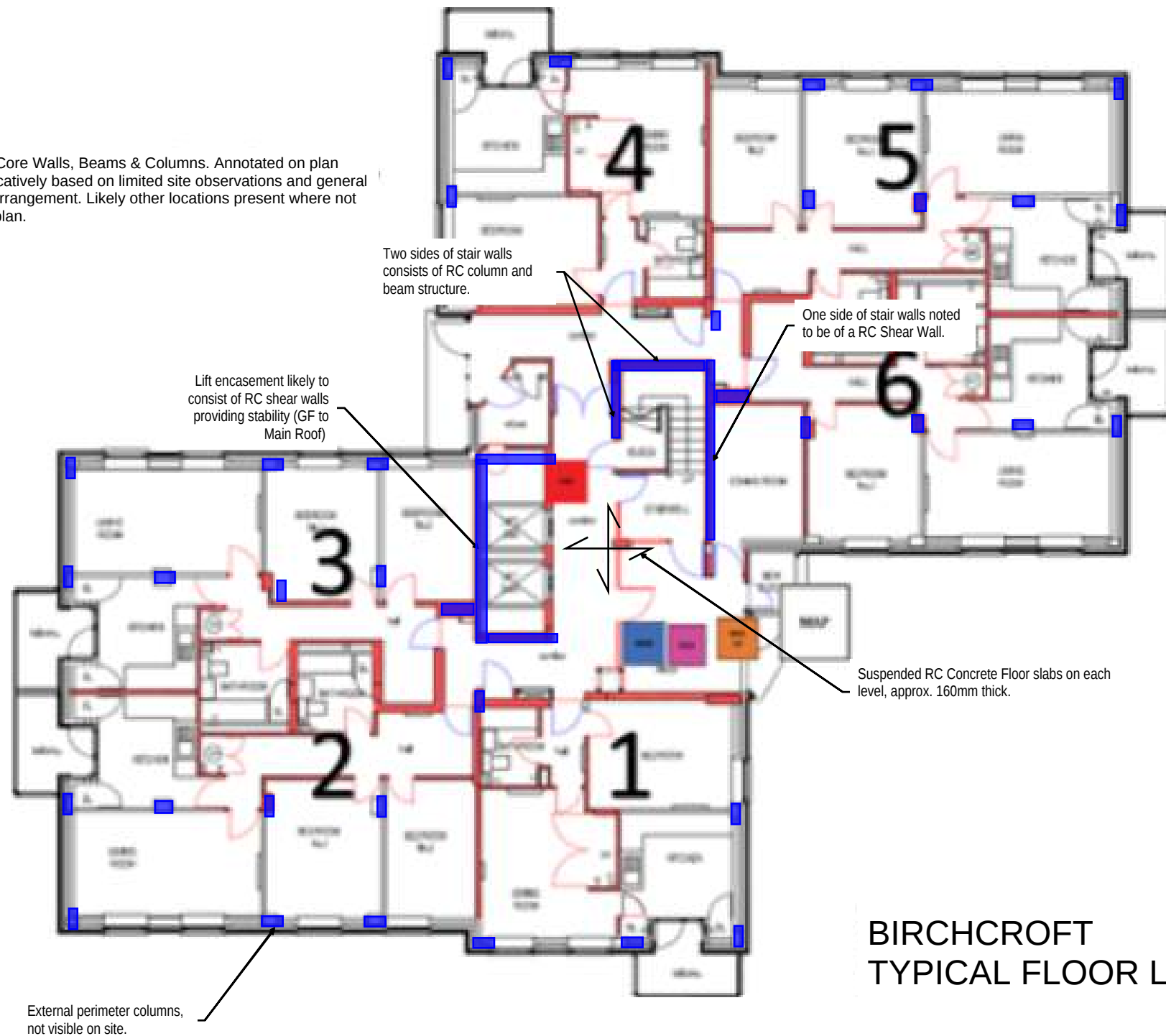




Comments:

External ground and first level consists of brick work.
Remaining floors noted to have a cladded facade to exterior.

— RC Shear/Core Walls, Beams & Columns. Annotated on plan shown indicatively based on limited site observations and general floor plan arrangement. Likely other locations present where not shown on plan.



BIRCHCROFT
TYPICAL FLOOR LAYOUT

