

## LONDON FIRE BRIGADE visit LONDON CITY ISLAND

Four members of London Fire Brigade visited London City Island on 12<sup>th</sup> September to advise on fire safety.

Chair of the Residents Association, Sokari Higgwe and Secretary Mel Henson met with them. They inspected one of the flats, the stairwells, the Fire Control centre in Grantham House and the grounds.

### Individual flats at London City Island

They were very impressed with all the measures in place, including the quality of the fire doors in both the apartments and the stairwell, the smoke alarms, heat alarms and sprinklers as well as the dry risers in the stairwells. (One of the team said it was the first time that the sprinklers in a domestic building before).

They said everything was very high spec, "**really excellent**" and said that "**nothing more that could be done in terms of fire safety**".

Advice in case of fire was given as , '**If there is no smoke on the landing and stairwell, then try to get out. If there is smoke then stay in the apartment with the front door shut.**' The front door is a fire door. The edges expand in a fire to block smoke, and are designed to give at least half an hour protection from fire. The flats are well compartmentalized to help prevent fire spreading.

They confirmed that there is **no cladding** on the walls of the buildings at London City Island. Ballymore has provided the following information about the facades

*The London City facades are constructed from concrete, brick, aluminium and glass. The insulation used is extruded polystyrene insulation sandwiched between an inner and an outer concrete leaf and broken by fire barriers at each floor level and party wall junction. We can confirm that there is no aluminium composite panels used. The buildings have sprinklers fitted in all apartments, an automatic smoke clearance system to the corridors and fire detection throughout the building. Ballymore have undergone a rigorous process to satisfy both Building Control and NHBC to achieve full statutory certification*

### Fire Control Centre



The firefighters then met with Adrian from the Ballymore team and Alex from Ballymore sub-contractors NGBailey. Alex and Adrian answered many questions about procedures in the event of a fire and how often they were reviewed and equipment tested. They were very impressed with the Fire Control Centre, the regular weekly tests and all the procedures that are in place. The firefighters praised the thoroughness and said that "**it was very unusual to visit such a well managed site**".

The main area of weakness was that no-one knew where the Fire Hydrants are. Normally the locations would be on the Fire Brigade's database, but none were marked. This would be critical if there was a fire as they only carry a limited amount of water on the trucks.

One was eventually discovered one outside Hercules but it had been painted black (normally they are yellow) and there was no signage on the wall.

Dan Cross, (General Manager) has since advised that they have now located additional hydrants which are currently behind the hoarding lines in phase 2. The Ballymore team is currently drawing up plans in order for all staff to be familiar with the locations and be able to assist the fire brigade in the event of an emergency. London Fire Brigade will also book a return visit to make sure that all watches at the local station are aware of the development.

#### **Other advice**

Residents are advised to check their contents insurance to make sure that damage caused by sprinklers would be covered.



**MUSTER STATIONS** are in Kent House Arts Club or under the flyover

## **Below information about fire safety at London City Island, provided by Ballymore:**

### **Fire Strategy & Management**

- A global BAML Health & Safety Strategy – Last updated in 2017
- A development specific Fire Strategy (approved by the local authority)
- Annual Fire Risk Assessments – These have all been updated over the previous 8 months.
- A 'Fire Strategy Pack' – Compiled and updated by the estate management team.
- Comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Risk Assessment & Method Statements (RAMS) covering all fire safety systems and procedures.
- A Fire Control Centre (FCC) which is manned 24hrs with the role of monitoring all the life safety systems and coordinating any emergency action.
- A comprehensive health and safety training programme for staff incorporating annual fire safety and fire marshal training.
- A rigid Accident, Near Miss and Dangerous Occurrence reporting procedure allowing for the monitoring and investigation of incidents and the continual improvement of processes.
- Regular liaison between estate management teams and the emergency services (including representatives from the Fire Brigade).
- Support, advise and audit of the estate management operations provided by the Ballymore Facilities Department and external consultants.
- A documented inspection, service and maintenance regime for all life safety plant and systems which meets or exceeds that prescribed by legislation.
- A 2 hour emergency response (24/7) for any reactive or ad-hoc faults should these occur on critical life safety systems.
- An approved contractors process and use of an accreditation scheme to ensure the competence and suitability of our external suppliers and consultants.

### **Protection Against Fire Ignition**

- A hot works permit system in operation.
- Regular security patrols (with a particular focus on higher risk areas such as bin stores).
- Regular inspections by the BAML Property Manager for the development.
- Annual (PAT) testing of all landlord's portable electrical appliances.
- 5 yearly (IET) inspections of all landlord fixed electrical wiring installations.

### **Protection Against Fire Spread**

- Buildings designed with 30/60/120 minute (dependent on design and configuration) fire compartmentation by means of fire rated doors, walls, floor slabs and fire stopping.
- Fire rated internal linings (ie carpets, paint finishes and ceiling tiles).
- Regular inspection of fire doors in communal areas.
- A programme of periodic fire compartmentation surveys across the BAML portfolio.
- Principal mechanical and electrical assets linked to a Building Management System (BMS) allowing for isolation of air handling systems and gas solenoid valves in the event of local fire detection.

### **Fire Detection & Alert**

- A fire alarm system installed throughout all landlord and communal areas comprising of smoke and/or heat detection devices, manual call-points and sounders.
- The above incorporates a battery back-up should mains power fail.
- Weekly testing of the fire alarm system.
- Annual servicing of the fire alarm system.
- CCTV coverage throughout the estate and monitored 24/7 by the Fire Control Centre.
- Regular Security patrols

## **Fire Suppression**

- Provision of wet and/or dry risers systems, These are serviced annually.
- Provision of sprinkler systems, These are subject to a quarterly inspection and service regime.
- Provision of portable fire suppression appliances (fire extinguishers) in high risk areas such as plant rooms. These are serviced annually.
- Assigned fire-fighting lifts for use by the brigade.
- The provision of back-up power supplies and automatic transfer switches in order to power critical systems including sprinklers, smoke ventilation and fire-fighting lifts.

## **Fire Evacuation**

- 24 hour presence of Security teams to coordinate any evacuations should these occur.
- Assigned refuge points and alarms for residents with accessibility issues.
- Emergency lighting to ensure illumination of escape routes should mains power fail. This is tested monthly.
- Automatic Operating Vents (AOVs) to ventilation smoke from escape stairways and hallways.
- Passenger lifts triggered to return to a pre-set floor (usually ground) following a fire alarm being triggered.

Mel Henson

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