

Our Ref: 12125BB

Robert Hunt The Mayor and Burgesses of the London Borough of Croydon Bernard Weatherill House 8 Mint Walk Croydon CRo 1EA

30<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Dear Robert,

## EWS1 Services – Croydon high rise residential buildings

I would like to take this opportunity for appointing BB7 to undertake EWS1 services for 15 of your high-rise residential buildings with cladding. Enclosed within this pack of information is an EWS1 form for each of the buildings listed below with a B2 designation, an assessment report for each of the buildings, and a single cover letter which is intended to validate that it is indeed BB7 who have carried out the works and confirmation of my qualifications as signatory. The buildings related to this letter are:

- Sevenoaks House, 50 Penge Road, Croydon, SE25 4ET.
- Tonbridge House, 50 Penge Road, Croydon, SE25 4EU
- 1-87, Regina Road, Croydon, SE25 4TW
- 2-56A, Regina Road, Croydon, SE25 4TW
- 58-108A, Regina Road, Croydon, SE25 4TT
- 1-44, Grosvenor Road, Croydon, SE25 5AW
- 1-44, Bellgrave Road, Croydon, SE25 5AL
- 1-44, Violet Lane, Croydon, CRo 4HH
- 1-44, Bramley Hill, Croydon, CR2 6LW
- 1-44, Messer Court, Croydon, CRo 4AX
- 1-44, Keeling Court, Croydon, CRo 4AY
- 133–176, Gordon Crescent, Croydon, CRo 6NX
- 50-89, Bridge Place, Croydon, CRo 2BB
- 463-549, Lodge Lane, Croydon, CRo oSA
- 551-637, Lodge Lane, Croydon, CRo oSA

Each of the buildings have been given a B2 designation which is noted on the EWS1 form as:

"I have concluded that an adequate standard of safety is not achieved, and I have identified to the client organization the remedial and interim measures required (documented separately)"

As noted in each of the reports BB7 do not consider the risk to life safety to be high, in the interim the risk is tolerable. The recommendations have been made to enhance the level of life safety to the occupants considering the occupancy type, building height and single stair core nature. The recommendations made are generally repetitive across the 15 buildings and typically consist of the following:



- At ground/lower ground floor level on a number of the buildings an insulated render system is present, the insulant present varies from PIR to EPS, both of which are Euroclass E combustible materials. On that basis, and as agreed previously, we recommend that the system is replaced for a non-combustible alternative.
- Most of the buildings have combustible infill panels present on the building which span the full height of the building and are situated below windows, they are typically present on walls which form part of the stair lobby or to bin stores. Due to the geometry of the building, presence of sprinklers and other active fire measures present it is unlikely that fire would reach the panels, however, due to the panels containing a combustible insulant we'd recommend that the panels are replaced for non-combustible alternatives.
- All blocks are provided with a refuse chute which is provided with a fusible link damper to inhibit fire and smoke spread into the chute in the event of a bin store fire. There are instances where the damper is visibly damaged and the link is missing. BB7 recommend regular servicing of the dampers to ensure operation when required. The dampers play an important role in terms of preventing a fire from attacking elements of the façade, hence their relevance in this case.
- Most blocks have a recent Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) which has been provided to BB7. All points raised on the Fire Risk Assessments should be actioned as soon as is reasonably practicable. Where fire risk assessments are not current we'd recommend that one is carried out given the findings and recommendations made for the other buildings.
- In terms of the main Aluminium cladding system present on all buildings, the findings were very mixed on the buildings surveyed. Generally, cavity barriers are present at compartment floor levels and in line with compartment walls between flats (although this does vary). The barriers are mineral wool reinforced with wire, this was a standard product at the time of re-clad and is considered to be an acceptable solution. No cavity barriers are provided around the openings which was acceptable under the Building Regulations at the time of re-clad works. To work properly the barriers, need to be folded such that they are under compression between the mineral wool insulation and the rear of the Aluminium panel, in a lot of instances it was found that the barriers had not been folded. The cladding panels are "Cassette" panels which mean they have an approximately 50mm recess which the barrier would need to fill. Where the barrier is not under compression there is a path for fire and smoke to bypass. Having reviewed the information gathered at the end of the survey works, I have made the decision to recommend that these barriers are folded to ensure compression, and to be installed where they are missing which has an impact on almost every building. Whilst in a lot of cases most barriers surveyed were installed correctly, there were enough instances of incorrect installation on each building to trigger this recommendation where necessary.
- Refuse chute rooms and lobbies where access to the refuse chute is via a lobby the construction of these spaces appears to be much newer than where the chute is accessed directly from the stair lobby. In most cases cavity barriers were not found and we'd recommend their replacement.

Please note that the above list is not exhaustive, and each building has their own recommendations, but they are the typical headline items.

Although there are deficiencies noted in the reports, BB7 have not recommended that the evacuation strategy needs to change for any of the buildings. As noted in the reports a risk assessment has been undertaken considering the buildings layout, active fire protection systems (sprinklers feature heavily here), fire service access, material properties, etc. Based on our findings we consider that there is not an immediate risk to life safety, primarily on the basis of the non-combustible materials used for the main cladding system and sprinklers being present.

I trust the above is clear, I look forward to discussing the reports with you once you have had time to digest the information. Considering our involvement to date we are well placed to assist in terms of a remedial works scope and monitoring of the works as they progress, we'd certainly be happy to help.

Feel free to get in touch should you need anything in the interim.



Yours sincerely

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James Groves MEng (Hons) CEng MIFireE Associate Fire Engineer