



Quinquennial Inspections Ltd

Ecclesiastical • Almshouses • Heritage Buildings

Quinquennial Inspection Report

Larksfield,
Windmill Lane,
Smethwick B66 3ET



28th August 2024

Project number: 1253C-07

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Property Address

Larksfield, Windmill Lane, Smethwick, B66 3ET.

1.2 Client's Name and Address

Harborne Parish Lands Charity, 109 Court Oak Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 9AA

1.3 Buildings and structures included in the survey

Larksfield comprises 10 one-bedroom flats. No's. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 10 were surveyed internally.

Previously No's. 1, 4 & 9 were surveyed internally in 2018 and No's. 5, 6 & 7 were surveyed in 2012.

This means that No's 1 & 4 have been surveyed twice each.

The property was built in 1996 of traditional construction. There are communal corridors, WCs, lift, bin store, meter cupboard and electrical plant cupboard.

In this report the individual dwellings are referred to as "flats" and the building, as a whole, as the "property".

Where elements of the building have been identified in this report as 'left hand' or 'right hand', these areas are viewed as from the front of the building.

1.4 Date of Survey and weather conditions

The survey was carried out on 28th August 2024. Weather conditions at the time of the inspection were dry following a dry week.

1.5 Limitations of Inspection

External inspections were from ground floor level only with the use of binoculars and with a 3m ladder.

In carrying out the Survey the following assumptions have been made:

- a: That high alumina cement, concrete or calcium chloride additive or any other problematic materials or techniques were not used when the building was constructed, or in any subsequent alterations.
- b: That future inspections of any hidden parts of the structure which have not been inspected would not reveal material defects, or cause the surveyor to alter materially any indicative costings provided.

Woodwork or other parts of the structure which are not uncovered or exposed, or were inaccessible have not been inspected. It is, therefore, not possible to report that the property is free from defect. However, conclusions about the construction have been drawn from surface evidence visible at the time of the inspection.

1.6 The Site and Surrounding Areas

British Geological Survey records indicate that the property is built on:-

Bedrock Geology

Wildmoor Sandstone Member - Sandstone. Sedimentary bedrock formed between 252.2 and 247.1 million years ago during the Triassic period.

Superficial Deposits

Till, Devensian - Diamicton, sand and gravel. Sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 116 and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period.

1.7 Recommendations for Further opening up

None.

1.8 Recommendations for Further Specialist Advice

None.

1.9 Works undertaken since last inspection

The previous stock condition survey was done by Tim Richardson MCIAT MSAI MCIOB MRICS in April 2018. Since that time the following work has been undertaken:

- Replacement windows
- Repairs to brick retaining walls
- Clearing of moss from roofs
- Various internal repairs

1.10 Outstanding work from last inspection

- Possible provision of a lightning protection system

1.11 Summary of General Structural Condition

The property is in good condition with no major items of disrepair, some minor issues need addressing and some maintenance will be needed within the quinquennium. The flats are all 'decent' according to the Government's Decent Homes Standard.

1.12 Health & Safety Issues

A Legionella risk assessment is required for the flats' hot and cold water systems (section 5.6).

1.13 Description of Defects

Further details of the defects listed below are contained in the relevant sections of this report; costs for rectifying the items are included in Appendix 1.

2.0 ASSESSMENT OF PROPERTY CONDITION

In assessing the property the current statutory national housing standards have been considered; these are – The Decent Homes Standard and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. Cracks are categorised in accordance with BRE (building Research Establishment) Digest 251. Whilst these standards are not mandatory for Almshouses, the Almshouse Association recommends following them as best practice.

2.1 THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD

To be defined as 'decent', a home must meet each of the following criteria:

It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, which came into effect in April 2006; this is an evidence-based inspection, which considers the effect of 29 given hazards that might exist in a property. The system enables risks in dwellings arising from health and safety hazards to be assessed and then minimised or eliminated.

It is in a reasonable state of repair

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either:

- one or more of the key building components are “old” and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair; or
- two or more of the other building components are “old” and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair.

It has reasonably modern facilities and services

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following:

- a reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less);
- a kitchen with adequate space and layout;
- a reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less);
- an appropriately located bathroom and WC;

- adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem);
- adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

This means that the dwelling must have both effective insulation and efficient heating.

For a house heated by electricity there must be a minimum of 200mm thermal insulation in the roofspace.

2.2 THE HOUSING HEALTH AND SAFETY RATING SYSTEM

The property is inspected to ascertain whether there are any hazards. A full scoring exercise has not been carried out but hazards can be scored and categorized as serious (category 1 hazards) and other less serious (category 2 hazards). Other hazards may exist (category 3 hazards) but these are deemed to be an acceptable level of risk.

The 29 hazards that can be assessed are those associated with or arising from:

(A) Physiological Requirements

Damp and mould growth
Excess cold
Excess heat
Asbestos and Man Made Fibres (MMF)
Biocides
Carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products
Lead
Radiation
Uncombusted fuel gas
Volatile Organic Compounds

(B) Protection Against Infection

Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse
Food safety
Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage
Water supply for domestic purpose

(C) Protection Against Accidents

Falls associated with baths
Falling on level surfaces

Falling on stairs and steps
Falling between levels
Electrical hazards
Fire
Flames, hot surfaces
Collision and entrapment
Explosions
Position and operability of amenities
Structural collapse and failing elements

(D) Psychological Requirements

Crowding and space
Entry by intruders
Lighting
Noise

3.0 Exterior

3.1	Roof Coverings		
3.1.1	Structure	Factory made timber roof trusses. There is a timber framed porch structure to the front entrance.	
	Condition	Main roofs are in good condition with diagonal bracing present to the surveyed flat. The bottom of the post supporting the front canopy is rotten. It is capable of a splice repair however. 	
	Repair needs	Splice repair canopy post.	2

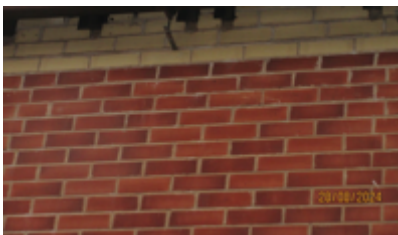
3.1.2	Covering	Machine made slates with mortar bedded angle ridges and hips and pointed verges, valleys are lead. There is a pyramidal roof to the lift tower with wood cored lead hips.	
	Condition      	Most slates have faded in colour, a very common phenomenon with this type and age of slate. There is some minor moss growth still present, mostly beneath the trees on the Suffrage Street elevation. The covering is deteriorating but will probably not need to be replaced for 5-10 years. A slate has slipped above No. 4, several slates to the Windmill Lane elevation have curled or slipped. There is evidence of birds nesting in the eaves above No. 10 rear elevation (see section 6.5.2). The cement mortar pointing to the front canopy verge is missing in places.	

			
	Repair needs	Clean moss growth. Attend to slipped slates. Repoint verges. Re-cover roof.	3 3 2 4
3.1.3	Fascias, soffits and bargeboards	Painted boards and exposed rafter feet.	
	Condition	Good. External decorations are considered in section 3.5.	
	Repair needs	None.	

3.2	Rainwater Goods	
3.2.1	Gutters and rainwater pipes	UPVC squareflow gutters with square rainwater pipes.
	Condition     	There is some leaf blockage to the binstore roof gutters. As with the slates, the gutters are nearing the end of their lives. Two sections of gutters above No.'s. 2, 4 and 5 are cracked, others are misaligned above No. 2 and 3. Some show evidence of overflowing (although this could be historic) – above the first floor corridor rear elevation. As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it is not possible to confirm if the rainwater goods are effective. Similar issues were noted in the previous quinquennial inspection. Gutters will probably need replacing before the roof covering but it would make economic sense to do both together as gutters (if replaced in UPVC) will inevitably break if the covering is subsequently replaced.

			
	Repair needs	Replace cracked section of gutter. Observe gutters during heavy rain. Clear gutters. Replace gutters.	2 2 2 4

3.2.2	Gullies	Gullies are clay with metal / plastic grids.	
	Condition     	Fair, a number of the grids are light plastic items and do not fit into the openings or are broken or missing, this allows debris into the below ground drainage installation.	
	Repair needs	Replace missing / damaged grids.	2

3.3	Walls		
3.3.1	Walls	Facing brickwork in stretcher bond with cement mortar pointing.	
	Condition    	There is cracking to the brickwork in places, particularly above lintels to the south elevation to Suffrage Lane and the north elevation to the garden. None of this is visible internally and it appears to be minor seasonal movement, although the excessively tall trees close to the building may be implicated as during hot, dry summers like in 2022 they will take large quantities of water out of the ground. One old boiler flue has been poorly filled with a plate and thick mortar, it looks unsightly and will crack and fall out.	
	Repair needs	Fill cracks. Build up old flue opening correctly using bricks and mortar.	3 3

3.3.2	Damp proof course	A flexible damp proof course is visible to most elevations.	
	Condition	Good, and it is a reasonable distance above the external ground level.	
	Repair needs	None.	
3.3.3	Airbricks	There are terracotta and plastics airbricks present.	
	Condition	Good, although one appears to have been reduced in size with a poorly positioned brick.	
			
	Repair needs	None.	
3.4	Doors, Windows, External Joinery and Metalwork		
3.4.1	Doors	External doors to the flats are UPVC and were fitted in 2018.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
3.4.2	Communal doors	Aluminium double glazed items.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	

3.4.3	Binstore and external meter cupboard door	Painted softwood matchboarded doors. External decorations are considered in section 3.5.	
	Condition      	Poor, there is rot to the bottom of the meter cupboard door and to a lesser extent above the mid-rail of the binstore door.	

	Repair needs	Repair rot or replace doors.	2
3.4.4	Windows	UPVC double glazed casement windows fitted in 2018.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
3.5	External Paintwork		
3.5.1	Description	Binstore and plant room doors, porches, fascias and rafter feet are painted softwood.	
	Condition	Generally good, a few areas are peeling. The paint finish to the handrail is chipped and missing. Fences are bare of decoration.	
	 		
	Repair needs	Decorate paintwork.	3

3.6	Paving, Paths, Steps, Ramps, Drives and Parking Areas		
3.6.1	Generally	There is a tarmac drive and parking area with concrete flag paving elsewhere.	
	Condition 	There are a few uneven areas of concrete flag paving, particularly to No. 1 but none is yet a particular trip hazard, paving should be regularly checked. A couple of flags are loose.	
	Repair needs	Take up and re-lay uneven flags.	3
3.6.3	Ramps	Gentle gradient concrete flag ramps.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
3.6.4	Drives	Tarmac drive with concrete kerb edgings.	
	Condition	Fair.	
	Repair needs	None.	
3.6.5	Car parking	Small format block paved parking area with spaced demarcated.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	

3.6.6	Drying area	Concrete flag paved area with traditional clothes lines.	
	Condition 	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
3.7	Site Features: Boundary Walls, Gates, Fences, etc.		
3.7.1	Walls	Boundaries consist of small brick retaining walls to the Windmill Lane and Suffrage Street elevations.	
	Condition 	Fair.	
	Repair needs	None.	

3.7.2	Gates	Wood gate to the front entrance.	
	Condition 	The gate latch is loose and not well fixed. External decorations are considered in section 3.5.	
	Repair needs	Repair gate and re-fix latch.	2
3.7.3	Railings	There is a metal handrail.	
	Condition	Good. External decorations are considered in section 3.5.	
	Repair needs	None.	

3.7.4	Fences	Various wood fences. External decorations are considered in section 3.5.	
	Condition    	The lower fence to Hume Street is leaning and the bottom of the post is rotten.	

	 		
	Repair needs	Replace rotten post or add concrete godfather to post.	2
3.7.5	Benches and street furniture	Wood items.	
	Condition 	Good. External decorations are considered in section 3.5.	
	Repair needs	None.	
3.8	Soft Landscaping		
3.8.1	Description	There are lawns with hedges, shrub planting, flowers and trees.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	

3.9	Trees that may have an influence on the building		
3.9.1	Description	There are some large trees around the site.	
	Condition    	These are closer than the recommended "safe" distance but given the age of the building it appears that most of the trees pre-date it and it is assumed that reasonable allowances were made in the design of the foundations in order to overcome any potential problems. Some trees have further increased in size, one tree fell into the road since the last inspection. Whilst providing some shade and privacy the larger trees are also badly overhang the building and are causing problems with the roof and rainwater drainage. Some are several times the height of the building and quite severe thinning/reduction work would be beneficial.	

	Repair needs	Reduce size of largest trees.	2
3.10	Monuments		
3.10.1	Description	None.	
	Condition	Not applicable.	
	Repair needs	Not applicable.	
3.11	Outbuildings		
3.11.1	Description	None.	
	Condition	Not applicable.	
	Repair needs	Not applicable.	
3.11.2	Binstores	Internal paladin store.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	

3.12	External signage		
3.12.1	Description	Various printed signs.	
	Condition 	Older signs show evidence of wear, screws are corroding.	
	Repair needs	Replace older signs.	3
3.13	External Lighting and Associated Cabling		
3.13.1	Description	There is building mounted lighting around the site.	
	Condition 	As the inspection was carried out during daylight it was not possible to check the efficacy of the lighting. Some of the globe fittings are showing signs of age.	
	Repair needs	Replace older fittings.	3

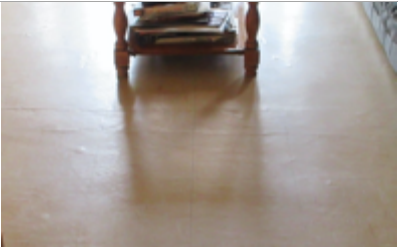
4.0 Interior

4.1	Roof Spaces (including access and insulation)		
4.1.1	Flats	There are loft hatches in each first flat.	
	Condition	Roofspaces are insulated with around 250mm fibreglass insulation.	
	Repair needs	None.	
4.1.2	Communal	There is no access to the communal roofspace.	
	Condition	Not applicable.	
	Repair needs	Consider providing an access hatch.	3
4.2	Ceilings (including exposed beams)		
4.2.1	Flats	Painted plasterboard.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
4.2.2	Communal	Painted plasterboard.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	

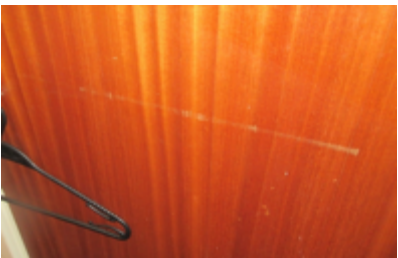
4.3	Walls and Partitions (including lintels)		
4.3.1	Flats	Painted masonry walls.	
	Condition   No. 4  No. 10	Cracking was noted to No. 4 (kitchen), this appears to be nothing more than normal shrinkage. There is staining to the walls in No. 10 (hall), this is from a previous leak and all areas are now dry.	
	Repair needs	Fill cracks. Stainblock and redecorate water stained areas.	3 3

4.3.2	Communal	Painted masonry walls.	
	Condition 	Cracking was noted to the front elevation, this is category 0 cracking, this appears to be nothing more than normal shrinkage.	
	Repair needs	Fill cracks.	3
4.4	Fireplaces and Chimney Breasts		
4.4.1	Description	None.	
	Condition 	The electric panel heater is dented slightly.	
	Repair needs	Replace cover or heater as necessary.	4

4.5	Floors	
4.5.1	Flats	Floors are solid, coverings include carpet and vinyl.
	Condition      No. 1	The floor tiles in No. 1 (hall) are split and one area has been screeded over. The floor in the bathroom is dirty and marked). There is minor cracking to the floor tiles in No. 2 (hall). The vinyl tiles in the living room are cracked, some are chipped and one area is uneven. The vinyl tiles in the bedroom are marked. Note that these tiles are of a type that sometimes contained asbestos. The floor to the bathroom in No. 4 is slightly discoloured.

	     No. 2		
	Repair needs  No. 4	Replace cracked tiles. Replace vinyl.	2 3

4.5.2	Communal	Solid floors with a carpet finish.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
4.6	Internal Joinery (including doors and ironmongery)		
4.6.1	Flats	Painted flush doors.	
	Condition     No. 2	The veneer is damaged to the door in No. 2 (hall and bathroom). The door handle is loose to the bathroom. There is a scratch to the laminate on the flush door in No. 3 (hall).	

	  No. 3		
	Repair needs	Replace ironmongery/doors and make good damage.	2
4.6.2	Communal	Painted flush doors, some with glazed apertures.	
	Condition   	There are markings to the kickplates.	
	Repair needs	None.	

4.7	Staircases		
4.7.1	Communal	Concrete staircase with a carpet finish.	
	Condition	Good.	
			
	Repair needs	None.	
4.8	Fittings (including coats of arms)		
4.8.1	Description	None.	
	Condition	Not applicable.	
	Repair needs	Not applicable.	
4.9	Decorations		
4.9.1	Flats	Walls and ceilings are painted, some are papered.	
	Condition	Apart from any stained and cracked areas noted earlier, most decorations are good.	
	Repair needs	None.	

4.9.2	Communal	Walls are painted and/or papered, ceilings are painted, joinery is gloss.	
	Condition	Apart from any stained and cracked areas noted earlier, most decorations are good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
4.10	Built-in Cupboards, Kitchen Units and Bathroom Fittings		
4.10.1	Flat Kitchens	Kitchens are fitted with a good number of cupboards.	
	Condition    No. 3  No. 4	All kitchens are in reasonable condition although a few show signs of wear. The units in No. 3 are marked and some doors are uneven and misaligned. One of the drawer fronts in No. 4 is slightly misaligned. There is minor wear to the unit doors in No. 10. Kitchens do not yet warrant replacement.	

	 No. 10		
	Repair needs	Repair/replace doors and drawers.	2
4.10.2	Flat Bath/shower rooms	All flats have shower trays with screens or curtains, WC, and washbasin. Disabled access flats have level access showers	
	Condition	Fair.	
	Repair needs	None.	
4.11	Signage		
4.11.1	Description	Engraved metal informational signage.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	

5.0 Services and Installations

5.1	Electricity Supply (up to meter)		
5.1.1	Description	Supplies run to each flat. There are communal meter cupboards.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
5.2	Electrical Installation (including Safety Assessment)		
5.2.1	Fixed wiring installation	Each flat has its own consumer unit; these are fitted with MCB's and RCD's.	
	Condition	Some of the units are plastic, which is not in accordance with the latest regulations, although this is not specifically a defect. The electrical installations are regularly inspected and tested. We were informed that the date of the last Electrical Installation Condition Report was September 2020, and it is assumed that all of the installations were "Satisfactory" at the time of testing. Electrical Safety First and the Almshouse Association recommend that periodic inspection and testing is carried out at least every 5 years or on the change of occupancy. The numbers of sockets are below current recommendations and multiple adaptors are in use in places.	
	Repair needs	Consider increasing number of socket outlets.	4

5.2.2	Lighting	Lighting is a mixture of low energy fluorescent, and LED lights with only a few older, less efficient, incandescent lights remaining.	
	Condition	The number and location of lighting outlets appears to be adequate. Incandescent light bulbs started to be banned from 2009 onwards under energy efficiency regulations. Further bans include all Halogen lights from the 1st September 2021 and high energy fluorescent tubes from the 1st September 2023.	
	Repair needs	Consider replacement with more modern and energy efficient LED lights as the opportunity arises.	3
5.2.3	Portable appliances	Residents provide their own white goods.	
	Condition	Electrical items within the flats belonging to the residents are not subject to HPLC's Electrical Equipment Testing (EET) formerly PAT. Electrical items within the flats belonging to HPLC e.g. fridge-freezers, ovens, cookers & cooker hoods are inspected and tested by HPLC. Electrical items within the flats belonging to the residents are not subject to HPLC's Electrical Equipment Testing (EET). The current guidance from the Almshouse Association states: "There is always the risk that residents' personal items in common use such as electric irons or vacuum cleaners develop frayed leads. Similarly the microwave oven, with the build-up of food debris on the ceiling panel can arc across the wave generator causing	

		not only over heating but an apparent explosion. Trustees can safeguard themselves from criticism (by families, friends, relatives or the press) by ensuring that Portable Appliance Testing is carried out regularly”. It would be sensible to PAT test appliances at the same time as inspecting and testing the fixed electrical wiring installation. The cost of this needs to be considered but is relatively low and may possibly be recovered through service charges.	
	Repair needs	Consider testing all portable electrical appliances.	3
5.2.4	Television reception	There is a communal system to the flats.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
5.2.5	Emergency call system	There is hard wired warden call system present.	
	Condition	This was not tested in any way but no concerns were reported	
	Repair needs	None.	
5.2.6	Telephone system	There appear to be landline telephone connections to each flat.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	

5.3	Gas Supply		
5.3.1	Description	There is a gas supply to each flat.	
	Condition	The systems are regularly safety checked.	
	Repair needs	None.	
5.4	Gas Installation (including safety assessment)		
5.4.1	Description	Gas serves boilers in the kitchens, with Magna Clean units fitted.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
5.5	Oil Installation		
5.5.1	Description	There is no oil installation to the property.	
	Condition	Not applicable.	
	Repair needs	Not applicable.	

5.6	Water Supply and Plumbing		
5.6.1	Description	Each flat has its own water supply.	
	Condition	The last Risk Assessment was carried out on 9th September 2020. The communal areas and flats 4 and 5 were inspected. Recent HSE guidance has clarified the need for all water supplies within buildings to be regularly risk assessed and not just areas with stored water. This means that domestic installations will need to be assessed as well. There is further advice and guidance available on the HSE website. This also states "This is especially important in residential buildings, where vulnerable people may be at risk, where the accommodation is provided specifically for a group who may be susceptible to legionellosis." There is regular monitoring of water temperatures.	
	Repair needs	Carry out Legionella Risk Assessments for all flats.	1

5.7	Hot Water and Heating Installation		
5.7.1	Hot water	There are gas boilers in the kitchens providing hot water. There are thermostatic showers.	
	Condition  No. 4	All appear to be in good condition. There is a programme of regular testing and certification in place. Latest guidance from the HSE has confirmed that Legionella Risk Assessments are now needed for all non-residential premises whether or not they have stored water. See also Appendix 2. The flap to the boiler in No. 4 is loose.	
	Repair needs	Replace loose boiler flap.	3
5.7.2	Primary heating	Flats are fitted with radiators; there are room thermostats and thermostatic radiator valves fitted.	
	Condition 	The valves are missing off the radiator in No. 4 (bathroom).	
	Repair needs	Replace missing valves.	2
5.7.3	Secondary heating	Some electric fires are present.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	

5.8	Above Ground Drainage (including sanitary goods)		
5.8.1	Description	WC's, washbasins and sinks all drain to external gullies or internal soil stacks.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
5.9	Below Ground Drainage and Disposal System		
5.9.1	Description	There is a line of manhole covers to the rear of the property and a heavy duty manhole cover in the drive.	
	Condition	One manhole cover to the Windmill Lane elevation is completely seized and could not be lifted. The manhole to the front of No. 5 has previously been blocked. Note that from the 1st October 2011, most sewers (drains shared with two or more properties) are now the responsibility of Severn Trent Water, this includes responsibility for clearing blockages.	
	  		

			
	Repair needs	Manhole covers should be lifted, the channels cleaned out and covers set in grease. Jet manhole.	2 2
5.10	Lightning Conductor Installations		
5.10.1	Description	None.	
	Condition	There is no lightning protection system for the building. The current British Standard BS EN 62305:2011 includes a risk assessment procedure for determining the degree of need for a lightning protection system. This will probably suggest that one should be installed for a building of this size with sleeping accommodation for potentially vulnerable occupants but note that most insurers <i>will not</i> require a system is installed. Similarly the standard procedure for Fire Risk Assessments (PAS 79:2012) includes an assessment of the lightning protection arrangements in place although in practice this is often ignored.	
	Repair needs	Consider whether it is appropriate to fit a lightning protection system.	4

5.11	Bells and Bell Frames		
5.11.1	Description	None.	
	Condition	Not Applicable.	
	Repair needs	Not Applicable.	
5.12	Security Installations		
5.12.1	Description	Doors have multipoint locking systems, there is CCTV.	
	Condition	This is an above average level of security.	
	Repair needs	None.	
5.13	Lift Installation		
5.13.1	Description	Pennine lift installed in 1996.	
	Condition	The lift is serviced every two months. The last inspection was carried out on 21 st August 2024, the previous inspection was carried out on 28 th June 2024.	
	Repair needs	None.	

6.0 Environmental And Other Issues

6.1	Environmental/Humidity Control		
6.1.1	Insulation	There is insulation in the roofspace.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	
6.1.2	Ventilation of structure (roofs and floors)	There are airbricks to ventilate timber floors, there are vents to pitched roofspaces.	
	Condition	This type of roofing felt does hinder the ability of the roof to 'breathe', current practice is to provide ventilation to this type of roof to avoid condensation within the roofspace. Note that this type of felt was often made with asbestos. The timbers in the roof void have an average moisture content of 12%, which is dry.	
	Repair needs	None.	
6.1.3	Ventilation of rooms (kitchens, shower and bathrooms, habitable rooms)	Kitchens and shower rooms are fitted with extractor fans, there are cooker hoods in the kitchens.	
	Condition	Good.	
	Repair needs	None.	

6.2	Hazardous and Deleterious Materials		
6.2.1	Description	There are several potential asbestos containing materials as noted elsewhere in this report.	
	Condition	Current legislation (The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012) requires that any asbestos in common areas of properties is recorded and managed. Asbestos fibres were included in many different types of building materials, and may be released when these materials are damaged, disturbed or otherwise exposed. These fibres can cause a hazard to health when inhaled. There is a risk that any work activity that intrudes beyond the surface finish of this building may expose or disturb asbestos fibres and thereby create a potential health hazard. An asbestos survey was carried out and register produced on the 02/07/2013 and is annually reviewed.	
	Repair needs	Continue to review asbestos register.	3

6.3	Fire Safety Installations (including emergency escape)		
6.3.1	General	Flats are fitted with smoke detectors; means of escape are reasonable with all rooms leading to a hallway with an external door. Common areas are fitted with alarm and emergency lighting systems and there is portable firefighting equipment present.	
	Condition 	The last fire alarm service was on 22nd July 2024 and the last emergency lighting test was carried out on 18th January 2024. Functional testing of the alarm system on site is carried out weekly. Emergency lighting is subject to a 20-minute test every month. Portable firefighting equipment in common areas is becoming less common as some authorities recommend its removal unless residents are trained in its use.	
	Repair needs	None.	
6.3.2	Fire risk assessment	A fire risk assessment is needed for the common parts of the building.	
	Condition	A Fire Risk Assessment was last carried out on 29 th April 2023.	
	Repair needs	None.	
6.4	Other Health and Safety Concerns (noise, trips and falls, radon etc.)		
6.4.1	Description	The property is not in a Radon affected area.	
	Condition	Not applicable.	
	Repair needs	Not applicable.	

6.5	Wildlife	
6.5.1	Bats and other protected species	No evidence of bats, or bat droppings was seen in the building at the time of the inspection.
	Condition	Not applicable.
	Repair needs	None.
6.5.2	Pests	Nothing noted.
	Condition	Not applicable.
		
	Repair needs	None.

7.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Repair items and approximate costs are included in the spreadsheet in Appendix 1

The following headings are used:

Priority 1: Very urgent work requiring immediate action including health and safety issues.

Priority 2: Urgent work not requiring immediate action, but should be addressed and completed in year 1.

Priority 3: Work to be completed within the Quinquennium (5 years).

Priority 4: Likely major repairs beyond the Quinquennium (5 years).

7.1 Areas Requiring to be Monitored

None.

7.2 Suggested Improvements of the Buildings

A programme of electrical inspection and testing is in place. Best practice is to provide a sticker copy of the current certificate adjacent to the consumer unit or boiler.

Testing of the residents' own electrical appliances could also be put into place (see Appendix 3).

7.3 Suggested Improvements in Routine Maintenance

Reactive maintenance appears to be well covered but planned and cyclical maintenance procedures could be improved:

- Rainwater goods should be checked and cleaned out annually in the autumn after leaf fall.
- Gas servicing is annual but it is suggested that a duplicate record be kept on site as well. Best practice in this respect is to provide a copy of the current gas and electrical tests as a sticker at the consumer unit and gas meter.

An excellent maintenance plan is available from the Almshouse Association in Annexe F of "Standards of Almshouse Management" also available on their website. This is in Word format and can be adapted to suit the particular needs of the property.

7.4 Brief Recommendations for Improving Energy Efficiency

See separate report.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of Approximate Costs

APPENDIX 2

HSE GUIDANCE ON LEGIONELLA 2014

Health and Safety
Executive

Shared premises and residential accommodation: Landlords

Residential accommodation: Landlords

2.138 Landlords who provide residential accommodation, as the person in control of the premises or responsible for the water systems in their premises, have a legal duty to ensure that the risk of exposure of tenants to legionella is properly assessed and controlled. This duty extends to residents, guests, tenants and customers. They can carry out a risk assessment themselves if they are competent, or employ somebody who is.

2.139 Where a managing (or letting) agent is used, the management contract should clearly specify who has responsibility for maintenance and safety checks, including managing the risk from legionella. Where there is no contract or agreement in place or it does not specify who has responsibility, the duty is placed on whoever has control of the premises and the water system in it, and in most cases, this will be the landlord themselves.

2.140 All water systems require a risk assessment but not all systems require elaborate control measures. A *simple* risk assessment may show that there are no real risks from legionella, but if there are, implementing appropriate measures will prevent or control these risks. The law requires simple, proportionate and practical actions to be taken, including identifying and assessing sources of risk, managing the risk, preventing or controlling the risk; and periodically checking that any control measures are effective.

2.141 For most residential settings, the risk assessment may show the risks are low, in which case no further action may be necessary, eg housing units with small domestic-type water systems where water turnover is high. If the assessment shows the risks are insignificant and are being properly managed to comply with the law, no further action may be required, but it is important to review the assessment periodically in case anything changes in the system. However, the frequency of inspection and maintenance will depend on the system and the risks it presents.

2.142 Simple control measures can help manage the risk of exposure to legionella and should be maintained, such as:

- flushing out the system before letting the property;
- avoiding debris getting into the system (eg ensure the cold water tanks, where fitted, have a tight-fitting lid);
- setting control parameters (eg setting the temperature of the calorifier to ensure water is stored at 60 °C);
- making sure any redundant pipework identified is removed;
- advising tenants to regularly clean and disinfect showerheads.

2.143 Landlords should inform tenants of the potential risk of exposure to legionella and its consequences and advise on any actions arising from the findings of the risk assessment, where appropriate. Tenants should be advised to inform the landlord if the hot water is not heating properly or if there are any other problems with the system, so that appropriate action can be taken.

2.144 The risk may increase where the property is unoccupied for a short period. It is important that water is not allowed to stagnate within the water system and so

dwellings that are vacant for extended periods should be managed carefully. As a general principle, outlets on hot and cold water systems should be used at least once a week to maintain a degree of water flow and minimise the chances of stagnation. To manage the risks during non-occupancy, consider implementing a suitable flushing regime or other measures, such as draining the system if the dwelling is to remain vacant for long periods.

2.145 Where there are difficulties gaining access to occupied housing units, appropriate checks can be made by carrying out inspections of the water system, eg when undertaking mandatory visits such as gas safety checks or routine maintenance visits.

2.146 It may be impractical to risk assess every individual residential unit, eg where there are a significant number of units under the control of the landlord, such as Housing Associations or Councils. In such cases, a representative proportion of the premises for which they have responsibility should initially be assessed, on the basis of similar design, size, age and water supply, with the entire estate eventually assessed on a rolling programme of work.

APPENDIX 3

Almshouse Association Guidance on Portable Appliance Testing (PAT testing).

The testing of portable appliances or portable equipment needs careful consideration by Trustees.

In meeting their "Duty of Care" towards residents, Trustees have an ill-defined, rather vague responsibility for the overall safety of those beneficiaries of the charity who dwell within the almshouses in their trust. "More generally, legal precedent and good practice means that the duty of care should be considered as applying to all aspects of Trustees' work in making decisions about their charity." (Charity Commission Pamphlet CC3 "The Essential Trustee. What you need to know")

Trustees can safeguard themselves from criticism (by families, friends, relatives, the press!) or from self blame, in the case of a fatal accident, by ensuring Portable Appliance Testing is carried out.

The Risk: There is always the risk that items in common use such as electric irons or vacuum cleaners develop frayed leads with regular usage. These are a real danger since the user very often does not notice the gradual fraying or deterioration in a cable until it has become very dangerous indeed. Similarly the microwave, with the build up of food debris on the ceiling panel, quite apart from the micro-biological hazard, can arc across the wave generator and cause overheating or an apparent explosion. The "once a year" Christmas tree lights are another considerable danger – and one often overlooked or forgotten. These should all be checked once a year by a professional electrician.

Possible Procedures Start as you mean to go on! Several almshouse charities have commended the following as best practice. As part of the interview process, potential future residents will be briefed on the factors of size and storage associated with the dwelling in which they hope to live. It is an opportunity to mention that within a few weeks of taking up residence, all the "new" resident's personal, portable electrical appliances will be checked by the charity's NICEIC Qualified Electrician and safety certificates lodged with the Clerk/Secretary/Warden/Scheme Manager on completion. This is, it would be explained, a requirement of occupancy (covered in the Letter of Appointment) and would be at the new resident's expense. Thus, as part of the discipline of moving into an almshouse, with possibly less general space and storage space, individuals would be more discerning about throwing away old, perhaps unsafe, electrical equipment.

There are obvious benefits. The new resident feels that their safety is very high on the priority list and family members are reassured. The sweetening of the pill is, of course, the later

disclosure that the charity will fund the exercise annually thereafter (with costs subsumed in WMC generally).

If any of the resident's appliances are found to be defective, under the NICEIC Rulings, the electrical engineer must make the appliance unusable. This is usually achieved by cutting off the lead in close proximity to the equipment or appliance (historically they were only required to cut off the plug!). The Clerk/Trustees will very soon get to know of the difficulty! If necessarily, acting charitably, Trustees can very quickly arrange to buy and provide a new toaster or electric blanket out of the charity's funds and once again maintain the very special relationship that exists between the Trustees and the residents.