# Compartmentation survey

**Regarding**

Flats and Commercial Units at Lakeside
Watermead
Aylesbury
Bucks
HP19 0FX

**November 2025**

**BO/25/P24876**

**Prepared for:**
**Tapestart Limited**
c/o Compton Property Management
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Morriston
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SA6 8EX

**Prepared by:**

**Cladding Project Management**

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## 1. INSTRUCTIONS

1.1. Following recommendations in a fire risk assessment, Cladding Project Management were instructed to review and comment on the internal compartmentation at Lakeside, Watermead.

1.2. This report relates only to the internal compartmentation, and no liability will be accepted for failure to identify other defects in other parts of the property outside of this instruction.

1.3. The report has been formed using third party documentation provided by the client. Cladding Project Management have taken the information provided in the documents in good faith, and should we be informed of any changes to the information, we reserve the right to amend this report.

1.4. Where comments/advice have been provided relating to the combustibility of materials, and the material manufacturer cannot be confirmed, we have assumed the material to be similar to industry recognised equivalents and based our assessments on the known characteristics of these materials. Should the client wish to confirm the exact material performance, a sample of the material will need to be sent for further testing.

1.5. This report is private and confidential to you, and we accept no liability to any third party who may seek to rely on it, in whole or in part.

1.6. We have not been provided a fire strategy for the building; therefore, it is assumed the compartmentation was designed in accordance with Approved Document B.

1.7. Our inspection was limited to visual inspections of the service cupboards and a head and shoulders inspection of the loft. Our inspection did not cover the communal units which are situated on the ground floor.

1.8. The defects identified in this report are not exhaustive, and further surveys will be required in order to schedule the compartmentation defects for repair

1.9. If you have any questions or require further explanation of anything in the report, you should contact the surveyor who undertook the inspection.

## 2. COMPARTMENTATION SURVEY

| | |
|---|---|
| Responsible person (e.g. employer) or person having control of the premises: | Tapestart Limited<br>c/o Compton Property Management |
| Address of premises: | Flats and Commercial Units at Lakeside<br>Watermead<br>Aylesbury<br>Bucks<br>HP19 0FX |
| Person(s) consulted: | Lee Graham |
| Report Prepared by: | Ben O'Brien MRICS |
| Report checked by: | Harvey Cross MCIOB TIFireE AIFSM |
| Date of inspection: | 5th November 2025 |

## 3. GENERAL INFORMATION:

### 3.1. THE PREMISES:

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of blocks | 7 |
| Number of storeys at ground level and above | 3 storeys (ground to second) |
| Number of storeys entirely below ground level | None |
| Occupancy: | General needs |

### 3.2. CURRENT STRATEGY:

It is assumed the apartments to Lakeside were designed and constructed to operate a Stay Put evacuation policy.

A Stay Put policy relies on the compartmentation of the property to reduce the spread of fire and smoke throughout the building.

# 4. INSPECTION OF COMMUNAL AREAS

## 4.1. LEVEL OF INSPECTION

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires those with responsibilities for non-domestic premises carry out Fire Risk Assessments and ensure that reasonable measures are put in place to meet relevant fire safety standards. In terms of apartment buildings, non-domestic responsibilities relate to the common areas

We were instructed to undertake a compartmentation survey of the apartment communal areas and service cupboards. Our inspection covered the communal landings, roof space, staircases and service cupboards only; no inspection of the individual apartments or the commercial units was undertaken. Our survey did not include any elements of destructive sampling. This report is intended to supplement the Type 1 Fire Risk Assessment.

This report does not document every breach or issue and is intended to provide a general overview of the condition of the communal compartmentation. Where issues are described in this report, it is assumed they are consistent throughout the building.

This report does not specifically address the risk to property or business continuity from fire. However, some of the fire safety measures required to achieve acceptable standards of life safety in the workplace also have property protection and business continuity benefits.

Where recommendations are provided at the end of this report, it is the duty of the responsible person to ensure the appropriate action is undertaken.

The property is believed to have been constructed in the 1990’s and comprises 24 apartments set over a combination of two and three storeys, with seven communal blocks.

To assist with our review of the compartmentation, we have reviewed current Building Regulation requirements and associated design documentation such as Approved Document B.

## 4.2. BUILDING REGULATIONS

The Building Regulations 2010 require:

**Requirement**

| *Requirement* | *Limits on application* |
|---|---|
| **Internal fire spread (structure)** | |
| **B3.** (1) The building shall be designed and constructed so that, in the event of fire, its stability will be maintained for a reasonable period | |
| (2) A wall common to two or more buildings shall be designed and constructed so that it adequately resists the spread of fire between those buildings. For the purposes of this sub-paragraph a house in a terrace and a semi-detached house are each to be treated as a separate building. | |
| (3) Where reasonably necessary to inhibit the spread of fire within the building, measures shall be taken, to an extent appropriate to the size and intended use of the building, comprising either or both of the following— | Requirement B3(3) does not apply to material alterations to any prison provided under section 33 of the Prison Act 1952. |
| (a) sub-division of the building with fire-resisting construction; | |
| (b) installation of suitable automatic fire suppression systems. | |
| (4) The building shall be designed and constructed so that the unseen spread of fire and smoke within concealed spaces in its structure and fabric is inhibited. | |

With regard to the design of the compartmentation, in the context of our inspection locations, Approved Document B 2000 provides a guidance of the design requirement near to the time of construction and states the following:

**Construction of compartment walls and compartment floors**

***Provision of compartmentation***

**9.1** *The spread of fire within a building can be restricted by sub-dividing it into compartments separated from one another by walls and/or floors of fire-resisting construction. The object is twofold:*

*a. to prevent rapid fire spread which could trap occupants of the building; and .*

*b. to reduce the chance of fires becoming large, on the basis that large fires are more dangerous, not only to occupants and fire service personnel, but to people in the vicinity of the building. Compartmentation is complementary to provisions made in sections 2-6 for the protection of escape routes, and to provisions made in Sections 13-15 against the spread of fire between buildings.*

***9.3*** *Sub-divison is achieved using compartment walls and compartment floors. The circumstances in which they are needed are given in paragraph 9.9 to 9.20.*

**Junctions**

**7.5** *For compartmentation to be effective, there should be continuity at the junctions of the fire-resisting elements enclosing a compartment, and any openings from one compartment to another should not present a weakness.*

**Flats**

**9.15** *In buildings containing flats or maisonettes the following should be constructed as compartment walls or compartment floors:*

*a. every floor (unless it is within a maisonette, i.e. between one storey and another within one dwelling); and*

*b. every wall separating a flat or maisonette from any other part of the building; and*

*c. every wall enclosing a refuse storge chamber.*

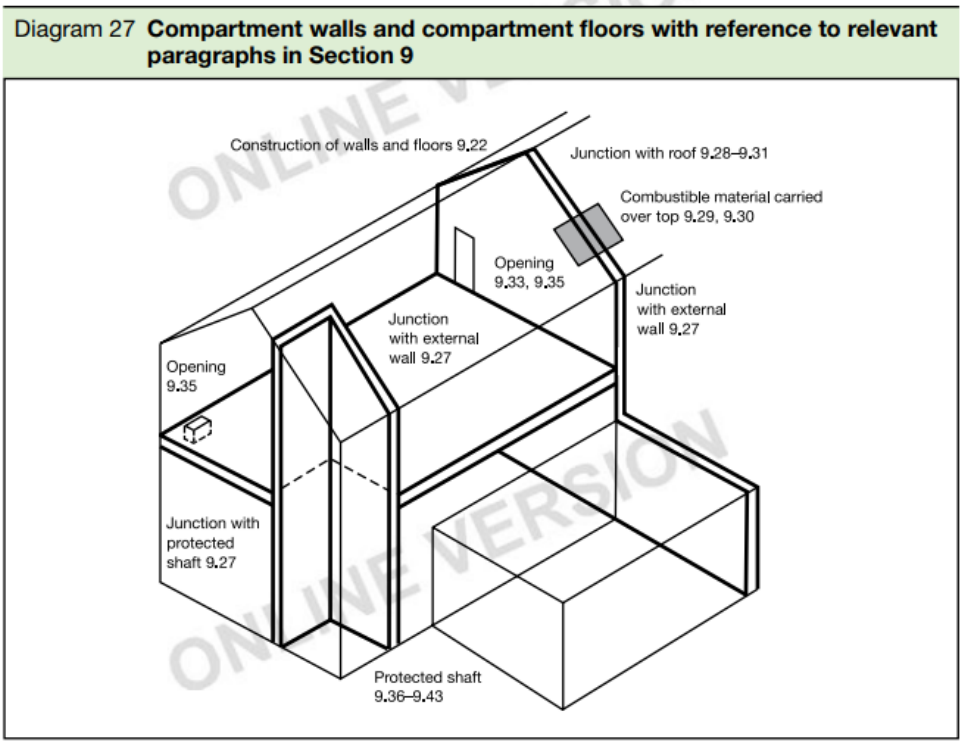
**Construction of compartment walls and compartment floors**

**9.24** *Compartment walls used to form a separated part of a building (so that the separated parts can be assessed independently for the purpose of determining the appropriate standard of fire resistance) should run the full height of the building in a continuous vertical plane. The two separated parts can have difference standards of fire resistance.*

**Junction of compartment wall or compartment floor with other walls**

**9.27** Where a compartment wall or compartment floor meets another compartment wall, or an external walls, the junction should maintain the fire resistance of the compartmentation.

Diagram 27 **Compartment walls and compartment floors with reference to relevant paragraphs in Section 9**



**Openings in compartmentation**

**9.33** *Any openings in a compartment wall which is common to two or more buildings, or between difference occupancies in the same building, should be limited to those for:.*

*a. a door which is needed to provide a means of escape in case of fire and which has the same fire resistance as that required for the wall (see Appendix B, Table B1) and is fitted in accordance with the provisions of Appendix B; and*

*b. the passage of a pipe which meets the provisions in Section 11.*

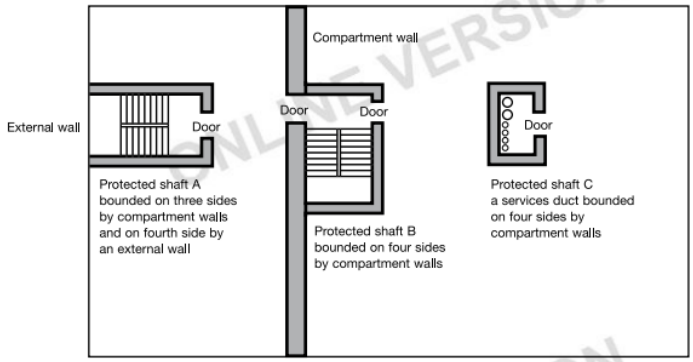
**Protected shafts**

**9.36** *Any stairway or other shaft passing directly form one compartment to another should be enclosed in a protected shaft so as to delay or prevent the spread of fire between compartments.*

Diagram 29 **Protected shafts**

See paras 9.36–9.38

Protected shafts provide for the movement of people (e.g. stairs, lifts), or for passage of goods, air or services such as pipes or cables between different compartments. The elements enclosing the shaft (unless formed by adjacent external walls) are compartment walls and floors. The diagram shows three common examples which illustrate the principles.




The shaft structure (including any openings) should meet the relevant provisions for:
Compartment walls see paras 9.21–9.40, external walls see Sections 13 and 14 and Diagram 21

**Protection of openings and fire-stopping shafts**

**11.2** *If a fire separating element is to be effective, then every joints, or imperfection of fire, or opening to allow services to pass through the element, should be adequately protected by sealing or fire-stopping so that the fire resistance of the element is not impaired.*

**11.12** *In addition to any other provisions in this document for fire-stopping:*

*a. joints between fire separating elements should be fire-stopped; and*

*b. all openings for pipes, ducts conduits or cables to pass through any part of a fire separating element should be:*

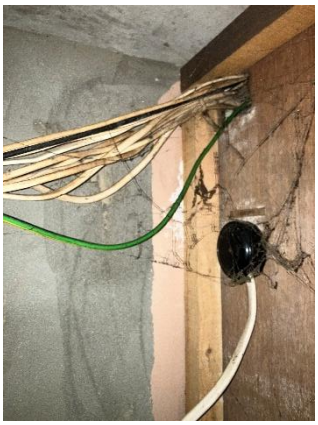
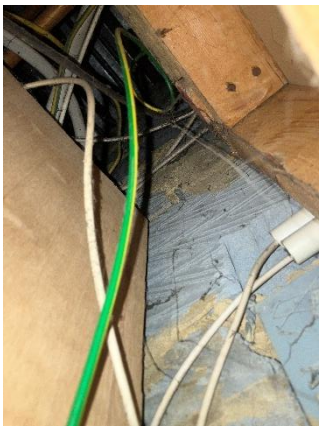
*i. kept as few in number as possible; and*

*ii. kept as small as practicable; and*

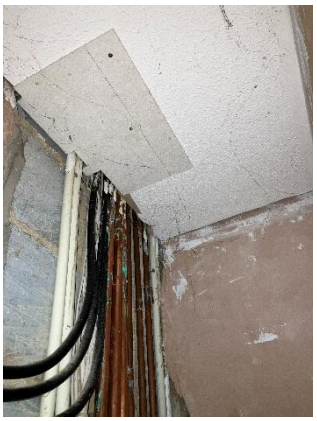
*iii. fire stopped (which in the case of a pipe or duct should allow thermal movement)*

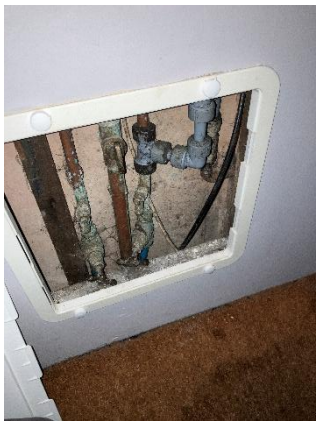
## 5. COMPARTMENTATION SURVEY:

### Block 1-6

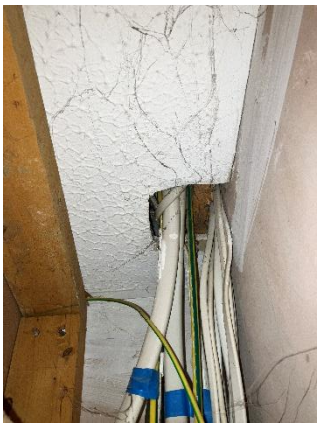
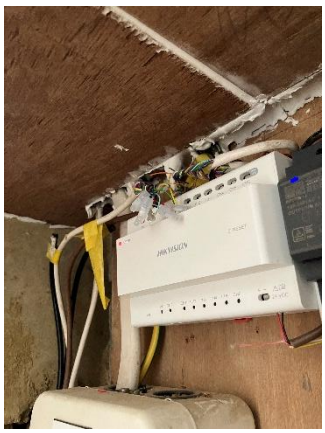
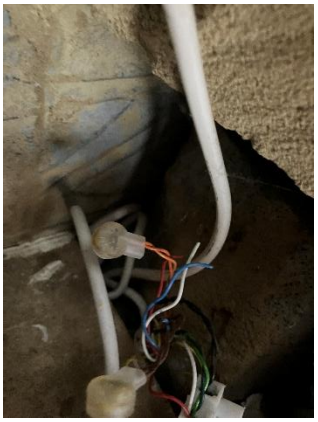
| PENETRATIONS TO COMPARTMENT WALLS / CEILINGS / SERVICE CUPBOARD | RISK |
|---|---|
| **Location:** Compartment walls, ceiling and service cupboard.<br><br>**Findings:** Cable and pipe penetrations are present to the compartment walls forming the service cupboard, under cupboard staircase and communal corridors / hallways and stairwell lobby. The cable and pipe penetrations extend through the walls which should provide adequate fire resistance. Due to the penetrations not being firestopped, the walls fail to provide the required fire resistance.<br><br>    | High |
| **NON-CONTINUATION OF COMPARTMENT WALLS** | **RISK** |
| **Location:** Compartment wall (landings to service cupboards).<br><br>**Findings:** There are areas where the service cupboard compartment walls either do not fully extend above the ceiling line or have not been sealed or lined with plasterboard or similar; therefore, the service cupboard walls do not provide the required standard of fire resistance.<br><br>    | High |

**Blocks 7-9, 12-14 & 18-19**

| PENETRATIONS TO COMPARTMENT WALLS / CEILINGS / SERVICE CUPBOARDS | RISK |
|---|---|
| **Location:** Compartment walls, ceilings and service cupboard / hatch.<br><br>**Findings:** Cable and pipe penetrations are present to the service cupboards which appear to penetrate the compartment wall although our inspection was limited. Pipework and cable penetrations to floor / ceiling junction within service cupboard. Services are not firestopped with intumescent collar, fire batt or sealant.<br><br>    | High |

| FIRE RESISTANCE OF SERVICE CUPBOARD | RISK |
|---|---|
| **Location:** Service cupboards<br><br>**Findings:** The walls to the service cupboard are formed in timber frame with a single, possibly plywood, lining to the outer face of the framing. The internal side of the cupboard is not fitted within an appropriate lining, and therefore the cupboard will not provide suitable fire resistance. Furthermore, several doors to the service hatches do not appear to be fire rated. The hatches and cupboards may not be designed to be fire rated, however as a precautionary advice note, it is recommended remedial work is undertaken or the design intent via the fire strategy is confirmed.<br><br>    | High |

**Blocks 20-30 (24-25 & 28-29 accessed via separate entrances)**

| PENETRATIONS TO COMPARTMENT WALLS / CEILINGS / SERVICE CUPBOARD | RISK |
|---|---|
| **Location:** Compartment walls, ceiling void and service cupboard.<br><br>**Findings:** Cable and pipe penetrations are present to the compartment walls forming the service cupboard and apartments. The cable and pipe penetrations appear to extend through the walls. Where seen via the ceiling void, cables penetrated the compartment wall with no fire stopping present. Due to the penetrations, the walls and service cupboards fail to provide the required fire resistance.<br><br>    <br>    | High |

## 6. SUMMARY

| | |
|---|---|
| Is the design and maintenance of the compartmentation considered adequate? | Yes ☐ No ☒ |
| Are there reasonable distances of travel: | Travel distances appear suitable although no fire strategy was provided. |
| Are the escape routes suitably maintained? | N/A ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ |
| Are fire-resisting doors maintained in sound condition and self-closing, where necessary? | N/A ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ |

The apartments to Lakeside, Watermead are purpose built, estimated to have been constructed in the late 1990's. There are 24 flats set out over two and three floors with commercial units on the ground floor. The compartment floors are constructed of concrete, and the walls appeared to be of masonry construction. The compartment elements are required to achieve 30-60 minutes fire resistance depending on the compartments they are separating.

Areas of fire hazard are present, specifically to the service cupboards on the landings or ground floor. The cupboards should be constructed of fire resisting construction achieving 30 minutes fire resistance. However, there are issues relating to the compartmentation integrity and service penetrations to all service cupboards, as well as under the stairs to block 1-6. Where the service cupboards were inspected on the landings (such as block 7-9), the cupboard walls did not extend to the underside of the floor above, the linings were missing and there were significant gaps between the cupboard, communal areas, and apartments.

Penetrations through compartment elements or fire resisting construction, whether they are service cupboards, risers or roof voids should be fire-stopped.

The service cupboards and risers are not formed in fire resisting construction, and multiple electrical and cable services breach the cupboard walls and ceilings. Additionally, the linings to the service cupboards and risers did not appear to provide the requisite fire protection, neither did many of the service hatches. Where inspected to block 20-30 the ceiling void had cable penetrations through the compartment wall.

Following our inspection of the compartmentation to the communal areas and service cupboards, we consider the standard of workmanship does not comply with the intentions of the relevant Building Regulations, and immediate remedial work is required. Where inspected, we consistently found breaches of the compartmentation.

Overall, we consider the risk to be high, and remedial work is recommended.

## 7. ACTION PLAN:

It is considered that the following actions should be implemented in order to reduce fire risk:

| Essential/Regulatory Improvements | Priority | Timescale |
|---|---|---|
| Firestopping to junction between compartment walls, service cupboards and stairwells. | High | Urgent |
| Replace, upgrade or firestop as necessary to the walls and service cupboards, and understairs cupboards to ensure they meet the 30 minutes fire resistance requirement. Or confirm design intent via fire strategy. Services running through these walls must be suitably fire stopped. | Medium | Short term |
| Provide this report to the fire risk assessor so the Type 1 FRA can be updated. | High | Immediate |