

Response to Report of [REDACTED] in relation to the Fire at 9-15 Moss Hall Grove 08th June 2023

1. Introduction

Capital PCC were provided with a copy of a report from [REDACTED] & his views on the possible causes of fire spread at 9-15 Moss Hall Grove which occurred on 08-06-23. Mr [REDACTED]'s report also included commentary in relation to the findings provided in the Capital PCC report to Barnet Homes dated 11-07-23. Capital were invited to respond to Mr [REDACTED]'s report and comments.

We will make our response in relation to each clause in Mr [REDACTED]'s report following the same numbering format, starting at section 2. This will not include any commentary in relation to comments about HHSRS assessments of findings undertaken by others.

2.1 - No comment

2.2 – The summary report by the LFB provided in Mr [REDACTED] report states “*The material mainly responsible for the development of the fire: Plastic – raw material only*”, however Mr [REDACTED] then states after speaking to an LFB officer (name, rank or qualification to comment not provided), that this was unlikely to refer to the cladding. From all the photo evidence which exists of the buildings, I would ask if this does not refer to the cladding then which other plastic material present in sufficient quantity could it be referring to? Mr [REDACTED] appears to have decided this key factor was not important enough a point to pursue. I would argue it is of key importance and supports Capitals view that the uninterrupted UPVC cladding was a key element in the rapid spread of the fire across the housing units.

2.3 – Covered in 2.2 above Mr [REDACTED] decided not to pursue this key line of inquiry, the material mainly responsible is identified in the report, there is no other plastic material present in sufficient quantity which could be a contributing element to the fire load to result in such severe damage.

2.4- No comment

2.5 – No comment

2.6 – Mr [REDACTED] fails to mention the authors professional membership of the Institution of Fire Engineers (MIFireE), for which a minimum of 5 years' experience in fire related work is required, along with formal qualifications.

2.7 – No comment

2.8 – Mr [REDACTED] states no information was provided in the Capital report “*into the size and intensity of the fire, how close it was to the rear wall of the terrace, what was burning and how long it took hold before the houses ignited. No eyewitness evidence is presented*”. This would be because no such information was available at the time of writing, Mr. [REDACTED] was also unable to provide any evidence of this type in his report, only conjecture.

No internal investigations were carried out as the buildings had been condemned as dangerous structures by the local authority building control and were not to be entered.

2.9 – Charred outer plywood cladding to the lower wall highlighted, showing evidence of surface spread of flame



2.10 – I think Mr [REDACTED] may have mis-understood some of the meaning of the Capital report in this section. The Capital report clearly states at 3.1 that “they (the buildings) fall **outside** the scope of the Fire safety Order 2005 and amendments, which includes provisions provided within PAS9980”. The Capital report suggests that the buildings may not comply with the functional requirements B3 & B4 following the issuing of the MHCLG circular on 01-07-2019 advising regulatory authorities in England & Wales, which states:-

*“Requirement B4 of the Building Regulations 2010 requires that – the external walls of the building shall adequately resist the spread of fire over the walls and from one building to another, having regard to the height, use and location of the building. This requirement applies to **buildings of any height**”*

My view would be in this case that functional requirement, was not met.

2.11 – Modern building regulations require fire stopping both within the eaves and at the junction of the party wall with the roof, in order to provide a complete and continuous line of compartmentation at the party wall line, Capital evidenced that there was none present within the eaves, it is therefore reasonable to arrive at a conclusion that this was a route of fire spread during the fire.

2.12 – No comment HHSRS

2.13 – No comment HHSRS

2.14 – No comment HHSRS

2.15 – No comment HHSRS

2.16 & 2.17



Photographs clearly showing combustible plywood cladding to the lower floor, plywood sheet & UPVC cladding spanning the party wall line to the upper floor, no insulation is present, also fire damage to remains of the plywood sheeting indicating surface fire spread via this route. Inspections into these areas were carried out.

2.18



Aerial image showing rear of 11, there is a modest (approx. 3.5 x 2.5m) shed at the bottom of the garden, furthest from the house (approx 5.5m), contents unknown. I do not agree with Mr [REDACTED] conjecture that a fire which originated in & consumed the shed was the cause of such extensive damage to the houses, rather it is a more likely scenario that it was the houses which ignited and the radiant heat generated from the intensity of the large fire caused the shed, fences and other garden elements to combust and be consumed by the rapidly spreading fire.

3.1 – There is no evidence of the fire of a high fuel load in the yard behind No. 11, save the modest shed at some 5.5m from the rear of the house. As a result, no evidence to support Mr [REDACTED] theory. Initial reports from Barnet Homes were that the fire originated from a motor bike leaning against the back wall of the house

3.2 – The areas where the UPVC cladding remains intact & Mr [REDACTED] states demonstrates no fire spread across the UPVC cladding are evidenced in photo's within his report as being subject to dousing by firefighters after their arrival on the scene (as seen in the photo's in Appendix 2 of his report). The front façade of the property is much less likely to have been affected and this could be contributed to several factors:-

- a) Direction of fire attack is from the rear of the property
- b) Internal plasterboard linings would offer protection from the direction of fire attack
- c) The result of dousing from fire fighters

3.3 – The national class of fire rating no longer applies to building materials components following the Grenfell fire, as a standard of classification it was found to be less reliable than that of the Euroclass system, which has now been universally adopted to comply with the EU Construction Products Regulations.

Euroclass C or D which applies to UPVC cladding, denotes it as combustible.

3.4 – See 2.10 regarding functional requirement B4 from MHCLG

3.5 – No comment

3.6 – See 2.11

3.7 – The Capital report states 3 potential routes of fire spread in 3.6.2 & 4.1.3:-

- a) Combustible cladding bridging the compartment line
- b) No fire stopping at the eaves
- c) Potentially over the top of the party wall under the roof covering

Mr [REDACTED] appears to have missed the comments in relation to this in the Capital report at 4.1.3 & 4.2.2

3.8 – The areas of risk identified in the Capital report have been based on official guidance, not supposition e.g. the Euroclass combustibility rating system for construction products, NHBC detailing and MHCLG circular of 01-07-2019 in relation to the application of functional requirement B4.

4.1 - Does not correspond with initial reports as to the cause of the fire

4.2 – See 3.2

4.3 – Euroclass guidance was referred to, the capital report concluded that the rapid spread of fire was not solely due to the combustible cladding but the combination of several factors:-

- a) Combustible cladding
- b) Lightweight timber frame
- c) Ineffective compartmentation at the party wall line

4.4 – See 4.3

4.5 – No evidence to support this theory

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18th July 2024