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**Inspection Report
22 Talbot Place, Woolloomooloo**

22 Talbot Place, Woolloomooloo



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Notes

24/03/2023

**Council investigation officer Inspection and Recommendation Report
Clause 17(2), Part 8 of Schedule 5, of the Environmental Planning and Assessment
Act 1979 (the Act)**

File: CSM 2940526

Officer: T. Zeljkovic

Date: 24 March 2023

Premises: 22 Talbot Place, Woolloomooloo

Executive Summary:

Council received correspondence from the Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) in relation to 22 Talbot Place Woolloomooloo identified as “Matthew Talbot Hostel”, with respect to matters of fire safety.

The Hostel comprising of a three-storey post war brick and concrete building, bounds four street frontages, being Talbot Place, Corfu Street, Cross Lane, and Burrahpore Lane in Woolloomooloo. Operating since 1965, the Hostel is run by St Vincent De Paul Society and contains 4 levels, with 95 beds, an administration office, health clinic, laundry, kitchen and recreation facilities. The building is affected by a heritage listing and is contained within a conservation area, under the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.

An inspection of the premises was undertaken by a Council officer in the presence of the building manager and revealed there were no significant fire safety issues occurring within the building. The premises is not fitted with external combustible cladding.

The premises are equipped with numerous fire safety systems (both active and passive) that would provide adequate provision for fire safety for occupants in the event of a fire. The annual fire safety certification is on display within the building in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment (Development Certification and Fire Safety) Regulation 2021.

Council investigations have revealed that the overall fire safety systems provided within the building are considered adequate.

Chronology:

Date	Events
24 February 2023	Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) correspondence dated 23 February 2023 received regarding their 7 February 2023 attendance – which noted, a fire panel fault, exit signs, sprinkler booster/valves, block plan deficiencies, and possible egress, annual certification / management issues
25 February 2023	Council records show: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ No. 22 Talbot Place is a subplot of No. 2 Corfu Street in Woolloomooloo (1991 subdivision)○ One three storey building is built across both allotments○ The building operates as “Matthew Talbot Hostel” commencing in 1965 as crisis accommodation○ Operated by St Vincent De Paul Society Annual fire safety dated 20 October 2022 received [Reference No.: E/2004/86] contains twenty-one fire safety measures and a Fire Engineering Report by Holmes Fire and Safety dated 17/09/2010, relating to roof terrace. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The Hostel is subject of proactive Places of Shared accommodation inspections by City staff [Reference: No. BH3/2006/1]

Date	Events
27 February 2023	A request for inspection was sent to the facilities manager of Matthew Talbot Hostel
06 March 2023	Site inspection conducted in presence of assistant building manager revealed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 24-hour on site manager at ground level reception ○ annual fire safety statement and evacuation plan present ○ main fire indicator panel - no faults, monthly test records up to date ○ exit signs illuminated ○ exit and egress doors accessible, magnamatic devices and door signage present – ground level toilet doors open, additional locks noted and loading dock lacking door/latch device ○ booster valves - Storz couplings hanging from existing booster valves /not installed ○ sprinkler block plan within pump room, valves open / strap and lock present ○ ground level hose reel not in interlock position ○ hydrant block plan not present ○ premises in good and clean condition
13 March 2023	Corrective action letter sent to owners pertaining to minor maintenance issues noted during City's inspection i.e., verify exit signs, hose reel maintenance, door hardware, install booster Storz couplings, hydrant/sprinkler block plans, furnish occupancy records/management information.

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW REPORT:

References: [BFS23/373 (26072); 2023/151657-01]

Fire and Rescue NSW conducted an inspection of the subject premises after receiving an enquiry about an existing hostels operation, evacuation, fire door and hydrant system issues.

Issues: The report from FRNSW detailed the following issues, regarding maintenance of certain fire safety measures:

Issue	City response
Various exit signs either did not operate when the test button was pressed or were not illuminated.	Addressed by Council's written instruction, requiring review of exit sign(s) and maintenance check by a credible fire safety practitioner (CFSP)
Fire Indicator Panel (FIP) – At the time of the inspection, the FIP displayed 07/02/2023" "Zone 13 CCT-1/0 CCT Conventional Circuit	On 6 March 2023 Council's inspection verified faults to FIP had been investigated and cleared - no isolations noted, monthly testing conducted.
Sprinkler block plan not present adjacent to control assemblies – which contain position of the main stop valve and other specific information Storz couplings were not attached to the sprinkler booster valves - Cross Lane The stop valve was not padlocked	On 6 March 2023 Council's inspection verified that the stop valve padlock was present. Hydrant/Sprinkler block plans and Storz couplings were addressed by Councils written instruction - evidence was furnished verifying installation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Block plans within booster cabinet, pump room and adjacent to Fire Panel ○ Storz couplings installed to booster valves
Doors forming paths of required exits and final exit doors - operation / door swing to be reviewed against development consent	Addressed by Council's written instruction – all exit doors are accessible, have appropriate signage and or/ door devices, in keeping with consents and building code(s)/ Australian standards
General comments: Fault to the FIP – sensor water damage. Manager attending to issue at time of FRNSW attendance	6 March 2023 Council inspection verified faults to FIP has been investigated and cleared, monthly testing conducted

Issue	City response
Security issue – due to providing crises accommodation and Health services – Ground level Toilets are locked after 4:40pm, other review exit doors with magnamatic latches compliance Register – recommend Council review Plan of Management	Addressed by Councils written instruction – Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o additional locks to toilet area removed o magnamatic latch exit doors are consistent with consents, Building Code/ Australian Standards and always accessible, with pull door signage provided o Plan of management consistent with approved use(s), with 24-hour on-site staff - occupancy register furnished - verifying short-term crisis/ accommodation
Annual Fire safety Statement (AFSS) - not present	6 March 2023 Council inspection verified the current AFSS was installed in a prominent position adjacent to FIP, further written instruction sent ensuring latest version installed annually
Items for Further Investigation - compliance with consents and Annual Fire Safety Statement (AFSS) requirements achieved	Council inspection verified AFSS and occupancy in accordance with approved use(s), the current AFSS was certified by an accredited Fire Safety Practitioner and addressed by Councils written instruction regarding minor maintenance issues

FRNSW believed there were inadequate provisions for fire safety within the building at the time of their inspection.

FRNSW Recommendations

FRNSW have recommended that Council inspect the subject premises and appropriately address noted (and other) deficiencies identified within their report

COUNCIL INVESTIGATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Issue Order (NOI)	Issue emergency Order	Issue a compliance letter of instruction	Cited Matters rectified	Continue to undertake compliance action in response to issued Council correspondence	Continue with compliance actions under the current Council Order	Other (to specify)

As a result of the above site inspection undertaken by Council's investigation officers it is recommended that the owners of the building continue to comply with the written fire safety compliance instructions as issued by Council officers to rectify the identified fire safety deficiencies noted by FRNSW.

It is recommended that Council not exercise its powers to give a Fire Safety Order at this time.

That the Commissioner of FRNSW be advised of Council's actions and determination.

Referenced/Attached Documents:

2023/151657-01	FRNSW S9.32 report dated 23 February 2023
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Trim Reference: 2023/151657

CSM reference No#: 2940526

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File Ref. No: BFS23/373 (26072)
TRIM Ref. No: D23/13005
Contact: [REDACTED]

23 February 2023

General Manager
City of Sydney
GPO Box 1591
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Email: council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Attention: Manager Compliance/Fire Safety

Dear General Manager

**Re: INSPECTION REPORT
'MATTHEW TALBOT HOSTEL'
22 TALBOT PLACE, WOOLLOOMOOLOO ("the premises")**

Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) received correspondence on 31 January 2023 concerning the adequacy of the provision for fire safety in connection with 'the premises'.

The correspondence stated in part that:

This hostel has permanent residents and accepts others off the street.

- It does not keep daily records of how many are on the premises at any one time making accountability impossible in the event of a fire evacuation*
- Fire hydrants are inadequate*
- Fire doors remain propped open ...*
- The Toilet fire escape door on ground floor remains locked after 4:40pm blocking egress*

Pursuant to Section 9.32(1) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), Authorised Fire Officers from the Fire Safety Compliance Unit of FRNSW inspected 'the premises' on 7 February 2023.

Fire and Rescue NSW

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Community Safety Directorate
Fire Safety Compliance Unit

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Greenacre NSW 2190

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On behalf of the Commissioner of FRNSW, the comments in this report are provided under Section 9.32(4) and Schedule 5, Part 8, Section 17(1) of the EP&A Act.

The items listed in the comments of this report are based on the following limitations:

- A general overview of the building was obtained without using the development consent conditions or approved floor plans as a reference.
- Details of the Provisions for Fire Safety and Fire Fighting Equipment are limited to a visual inspection of the parts in the building accessed and the fire safety measures observed at the time.

COMMENTS

Please be advised that the items in this report are limited to observations of the building accessed at the time of the inspection and identify possible nonconformities with the National Construction Code 2019, Volume 1 Building Code of Australia (NCC) and provisions for fire safety. The items are not an exhaustive list of non-compliances. FRNSW acknowledges that the differences observed at the time may contradict development consent approval or relate to the building's age. Therefore, it's the Council's discretion as the appropriate regulatory authority to consider the most appropriate action.

The following items were identified during the inspection:

1. Essential Fire Safety Measures

1A. Maintenance – Regulation 81 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment (Development Certification and Fire Safety) Regulation 2021 (EPAR 2021) requires maintenance of the Essential Fire Safety Measure to a standard no less than when it was first installed. At the time of the inspection, authorised fire officers observed the following:

A. Exit signs – Many exit signs either did not operate when the test button was pressed or were not illuminated.

B. Fire Indicator Panel (FIP) – At the time of the inspection, the FIP displayed the following fault:

i. "12:33; 07/02/2023"

ii. "Zone 13 CCT-1/0 CCT Conventional Circuit"

C. Sprinkler System Generally

i. Block Plan – Clause 8.3 of AS2118.1:2017 – "Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems - General systems" require the installation of a block plan. The plan must display the protected building, including the position of the main stop valve and other specific information placed adjacent to each set or group of installation control assemblies where it can be readily seen

by firefighters and others responding to the alarm. A block plan could not be located at the time of the inspection.

- ii. Storz Couplings – Clauses 7.1 and Clause 8.5.11.1 of AS2419.1-2005 outlines compatible attachment with FRNSW appliances and equipment, where Storz couplings are one such attachment. At the time of the inspection, storz couplings were not attached to the sprinkler booster valves on Cross Lane.
- iii. Stop Valves – Clause 8.2.3 of AS2118.1:2017 – “Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems - General systems” require stop valves to be secured open by a padlocked chain or a padlocked or riveted strap. The stop valve was not padlocked at the time of the inspection.

2. Access and Egress

- 2A. Final Exit Door – Clause D2.20 of the NCC details that ‘required exit’ doors or swinging doors forming part of a ‘required exit’ must swing in the direction of egress unless the door serves a floor area not more than 200 m² or a sanitary compartment or airlock. Many sign-posted final exit doors in the building open against the path of travel and appear to open upon activation of the automatic detection and alarm system. The Council may require a review of the development consent.

3. Generally

- 3A. Investigation Outcomes – The following are outcomes from the investigation on Tuesday, 7 February 2023:
 - A. Fault to the FIP – The maintenance manager was aware of the fault and location and accompanied the attending Authorised Fire Officers to the storey where the faulty detector was. The sensor was in a water-damaged ceiling. However, the surrounding open areas that were not at fault included smoke detectors and VESDA-type detectors. Given the location and the maintenance manager’s knowledge of the fault and assurances to have the sensor repaired within a few days, FRNSW took no enforcement action. The Council may require a review as part of the AFSS review.
 - B. Security – The maintenance manager advised that the purpose of the hostel is to provide temporary crisis accommodation. In addition to housing, ‘Matthew Talbot Hostel’ also offered health services. Given the issues surrounding a hostel and various services, he advised that:
 - i. Particular doors were closed, which included the toilet fire escape door on the ground floor, which he confirmed was locked after 4:40 pm;

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- ii. The subject doors allow occupants to egress upon detection of smoke via a magna-latch. The Council may require a review of the development consent.
 - C. Register – The centre manager provided a register of all the people currently sleeping at the hostel. The maintenance manager advised that the hostel staff were present overnight to assist with evacuation. The Council may require a review of the plan of management.
- 3B. Annual Fire Safety Statements (AFSS) / Fire Safety Schedule (FSS).– Regulation 89(4)(b) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment (Development Certification and Fire Safety) Regulation 2021 (EPAR 2021) requires the owner of the building to prominently display in the building a copy of the AFSS and a copy of the current FSS. At the time of the inspection, the FSS could not be located, and the AFSS was out of date. The maintenance manager showed the updated AFSS and removed the old AFSS. The Council may require a review.
- 3C. Items for Further Investigation – The Council may require an investigation as the appropriate regulatory authority to confirm that the maintenance of the essential fire safety systems meets the local Council's obligations to regulate the development consent approval. Moreover, the Council has confirmed that the owner submits details from an accredited practitioner (fire safety). Ensuring that they have assessed, inspected and verified the performance of each fire safety measure (including exits) that applies to the building as a part of the Annual Fire Safety Statement (AFSS) requirements.

FRNSW believes that there are inadequate provisions for fire safety within the building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FRNSW recommends that Council:

- a. Review items 1 to 3 of this report and conduct an inspection.
- b. Address any other deficiencies identified on “the premises”.

Please be advised that Schedule 5, Part 8, Section 17(2) requires any report or recommendation from the Commissioner of FRNSW to be tabled at a Council meeting. This matter is referred to Council as the appropriate regulatory authority. FRNSW awaits the Council's advice regarding its determination under Schedule 5, Part 8, Section 17 (4) of the EP&A Act.

Please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] of FRNSW's Fire Safety Compliance Unit at FireSafety@fire.nsw.gov.au or call on [REDACTED] if there are any questions

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or concerns about the above matters. Please ensure that you refer to file reference BFS23/373 (26072) regarding any correspondence concerning this matter.

Yours faithfully

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Fire Safety Compliance Unit