

Fire Safety Signage – Barbican Estate Major Works Programme Board City of London Corporation

January 2026

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architecture
building surveying
building services
planning
interior design
climate and sustainability
civil and structural
quantity surveying
project management
CDM and H&S services



Presentation Summary

Within this presentation we will provide a summary and update of the estate-wide programme for the installation of fire safety signage – to include:

- Why we need this work to be done
- Some historic background
- Where we currently are with the programme
- What we need to do to complete the programme

At the end of the presentation, I hope that the Board will have a clearer understanding of the current position.

The presentation will take around 25- 30 minutes, but I suggest that we leave a further 15mins or so at the end, for any questions and we will do our best to answer them.

Introduction





- There is an identified need to improve fire signage across the residential blocks within the Barbican Estate, in order to inform and direct in emergency situations.
- At present, the Barbican Estate does not comply with the statutory requirements for fire safety signage.
- Therefore, a signage strategy has been developed to deliver legal compliance and address fire safety but which at the same time is sensitive to listed building heritage significance and takes in to account resident concerns and feedback.
- Recent changes in Regulations have meant that new signage additional to the signage that we have Listed Building Consent for, is now also required
- Ingleton Wood has been appointed by City of London Corporation to provide Building Surveying services in relation to the replacement and installation of all fire safety signage across the residential Estate.

Summary of Previous Fire Signage Works





- Based upon Fire Risk Assessments and Fire Safety Action Plans undertaken in 2018, the City of London Corporation commenced the installation of additional and replacement fire safety signage in the residential blocks in the Barbican Estate in 2020.
- No Planning or Listed Building Consent was sought for this work
- The works commenced in the upper levels of the tower blocks. It was comprised of new photoluminescent Fire Action Notices next to each lift door (three per floor), including standard FAN symbols as well as information on the 'stay put policy' for residents, and emergency fire exit signage
- Many resident objections were received relating to the implementation of additional and replacement signage soon after works commenced.
- The reasons for these included objections to their appearance, numbers, positions and necessity. As a result of these complaints, works were put on hold.



- In August 2020, the City of London Corporation directly addressed concerns and issues raised by residents. Amongst others, the following conclusions were drawn:
 - ❖ Fire signs are required under the Fire Safety Reform Order 2005
 - ❖ It is a legal requirement that all occupants of a building must be informed of the fire safety instructions, and an effective solution is to display fire action signs with it
 - ❖ All visitors and staff within the building should be able to see at least one fire action sign on their way to their destination
 - ❖ They should be fitted between 1.2m to 1.8m from the floor and at important locations throughout the building - such as fire alarm call points, next to lifts, or near communal & reception areas
 - ❖ Signs are drafted and approved by the Fire Safety Officer to ensure they suit the requirements of the blocks



- The City of London Corporation then appointed ReForm Architects in 2021, to review and produce a Fire Signage Strategy report - to improve the fire safety signage across the Barbican Estate, whilst taking into consideration resident complaints and comments and obtaining the necessary consents. The signage was to inform and direct in emergency situations, and be compliant with planning, building regulation and statutory requirements.
- This Strategy was supported and co-authored by BB7, independent fire consultants, subsequently approved by the London Fire Brigade and then issued in October 2021.
- Listed Building consent based on the fire signage strategy report that was issued, was granted in 2022.
- However, since the production and issue of the fire signage strategy report and obtaining Listed Building Consent, amendments to legislation and regulations relating to fire safety signage across the estate have occurred, which required the strategy to be reviewed and updated again. These changes are:
 - The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and
 - Updates to Approved Document B, Volume 1: Dwellings.



- In light of these Regulations changes, the City of London Corporation therefore then appointed Ingleton Wood to undertake a review of the existing fire signage strategy proposals, and to:
 - update previous recommendations / proposals as required
 - produce tender documents
 - manage a programme of works to replace all existing fire signage and install new fire signage, to all residential block areas across the Barbican Estate.
- BB7 has been appointed as fire engineers and are continuing to advise City of London Corporation on this project with regards to signage, frequency and placement and will be auditing the works programme for compliance.
- ReForm architects have been appointed as Principal Designers.
- Because the Listed Building Consent was due to expire in September 2025, the City of London Corporation took the opportunity to commence some work on the fire safety signage, before expiration, rather than have to issue new applications for LBC again. Hence, some works have been undertaken to Bunyan Court comprising the replacement of the stick-on signage to the glazed balcony screens.
- Works have been deferred until formal statutory permission for the additional new signage has been proposed, has been obtained.

Regulatory Changes





Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022

- This introduced new duties under the Fire Safety Order under Article 24, to implement the majority of recommendations made to government in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report. The regulations came into force on 23 January 2023.
- Of relevance to this programme, these regulations require responsible persons of high-rise blocks to :
 - Provide information to Fire and Rescue Services to assist them to plan and, if needed, provide an effective operational response and additional safety measures.
 - To install wayfinding signage, that is visible in low light or smoky conditions that identifies flat and floor numbers in the stairwells of relevant buildings.
- Additionally, in all multi-occupied residential buildings with 2 or more sets of domestic premises, responsible persons are required to:
 - Provide relevant fire safety instructions to their residents, which will include instructions on how to report a fire and any other instruction which sets out what a resident must do once a fire has occurred, based on the evacuation strategy for the building.



Building Regulations - Approved Document B, Volume 1: Dwellings

- The latest update came into effect from November 2020, applying to new projects.
- This mandates specific fire safety signage in UK residential blocks, particularly for high-risk buildings, (over 11m) - requiring floor identification and flat indicator signs to aid firefighters in smoky conditions.
- (Signage to conform to the specifications and location set out in paragraph 15.14 to 15.16 of Approved Document B Volume 1 2019 edition incorporating 2020 amendments).
- As a result of The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and updates to Approved Document B, Volume 1: Dwellings, there has been some minor amendments to the City of London Corporation's fire safety signage proposals - which include the installation of additional way finding signage, to assist fire fighters.

Evolution of The Proposed Fire Safety Signage Design





Reform/BB7 Fire Strategy and Signage

- Signage design was undertaken by ReForm Architects and BB7 and detailed within their report entitled Barbican Fire Sign Strategy, dated October 2021.
- Applying observations from existing estate signage, ReForm and BB7, proposed new signage designs that were more sympathetic to the character and unique and Listed status of the Barbican Estate.
- They detailed the materiality, fixing proposals, positioning and design / layout of the following fire safety signage:
 - Fire Action Notices
 - Emergency Signage
 - Fire Door Signage
- Further detail on the strategy and placement of these signs can be found within the Reform / BB7 report



The Barbican Estate is comprised of approximately 4000 residents, spanning over three tower blocks, thirteen terraced blocks, mews and townhouses with 21 residential blocks in all. Of these, 17 are included within the scope of work. Reform and BB7 looked at each block individually and subdivided the relevant blocks across three distinct typologies for clarity.

1. Terraced Blocks:

- Andrewes House
- Ben Johnson House
- Breton House
- Bryer Court
- Bunyan Court
- Defoe House
- Gilbert House
- John Trundle Court
- Mountjoy House
- Sedon House
- Speed House
- Thomas More House
- Willoughby House

2. Towers:

- Lauderdale Tower
- Shakespeare Tower
- Cromwell Tower

3. Crescent:

- Frobisher's Crescent (upper residential levels and entrance core only)

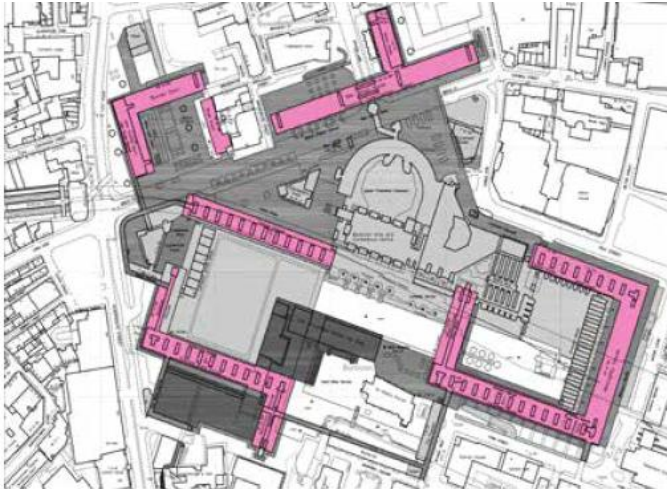
Lambert Jones Mews, Brandon Mews, Wallside and The Postern were excluded - as they are freehold buildings

However, Brandon Mews will benefit from additional signage from car park levels.

The buildings grouped within these three typologies are largely consistent in their escape strategy and layout, materiality and finishes and follow a clear set of principles regarding organisation and layout.

Terraced Blocks

The majority of the residential blocks in the estate.



Terraced Blocks

Within the terraced blocks there are some variations, but principles of access and egress are generally consistent.

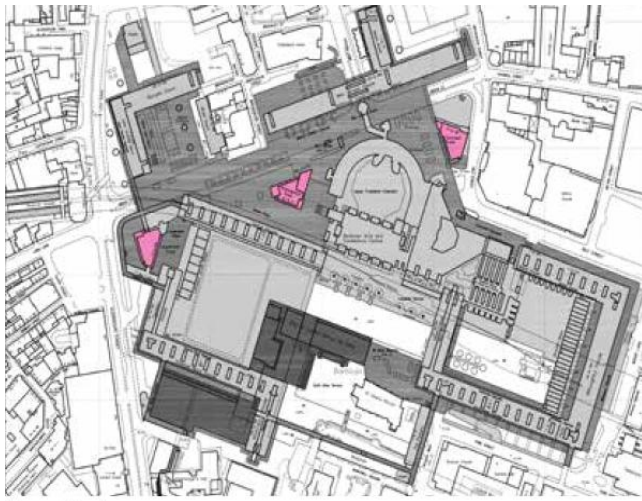
All residential units have a minimum of 2 means of escape.

An escape route is provided via the front door, as well as alternative escape via external balconies.

There is no external escape balcony on Level 7 of type A blocks. Access is only to the access core stair, or via an internal stair to level 6.

Towers

The three towers are arranged along a single axis parallel to the Beech Street tunnel and are individually rotated to fit designated positions within the larger site geometry. They divide the North and South portions of the Barbican Estate.



Tower Blocks

The internal layout of typical floors in all three towers is the same. All three towers share the same principles in terms of arrangement and circulation

A central, triangular lift shaft runs up the full height of the building.

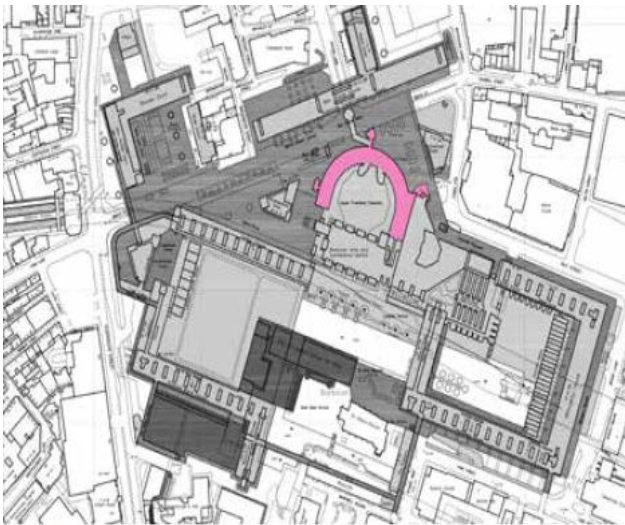
The lift core on each upper-level acts as a lobby for up to three residential dwellings.

Main door escape is via the front door and to the escape stair.

An alternative escape is via the escape balcony to the escape stair, or via a concrete stair to the lobby below and to the escape stair, or via a concrete stair to the lift lobby two floors below and to the escape stair.

Frobisher Crescent

The Crescent was initially intended to be residential, but following its construction, it was used for commercial purposes, and acted as an extension to the Arts Centre, housing a gallery, workshops and offices for the Centre's administration. The form of the Crescent marks out the form of the Barbican Hall's lower gallery.



Crescent

In 2009, the upper three levels of Frobisher Crescent were converted into flats by the City of London Corporation. On these levels, single storey apartments can be accessed via a shared corridor on each residential level, on the outer arc of the crescent. This corridor is connected to three concrete stair cores with a series of glazed link bridges which lead to the main access on Podium level.

Signage Generally



- Taking into account previous resident feedback, the proposed new signs are all bespoke and more sympathetic to Barbican's unique character.
 - Quantity and placement of some escape signage will be variable - dependent upon individual block layouts. However, a minimalist approach adopted throughout, and judicious placement has been balanced against life safety of residents, visitors and other building users.
 - For instance, within the towers, only one Fire Action Notice is proposed for each level (as opposed to three – one per lift as previously proposed).
 - The new signage will also provide consistency in terms of placement, appearance and materiality.
- ❖ Signs are all 5mm thick aluminium
 - ❖ Signs are mechanically fixed with spacers / washers as required (apart from adhesive signage to balcony screens)
 - ❖ The Fire Action Notices (FANs) are clear and concise and contain all relevant information such as informing residents of the stay put policy
 - ❖ The emergency signage design adopts a minimalist premise by including only the graphical symbol for emergency exits (running man) and a directional arrow – (modelled from Herbert Spencer)
 - ❖ The doors signage has a minimalist / simple design with Helvetica Bold font

Signage Generally



- Signage proposals for each block “type” are detailed more specifically within the ReForm Report – “4. Fire Safety Proposals”.
- The contents of this report formed part of the Listed Building Consent obtained. A copy of which can be found within Appendix B of the IW report.
- As part of the Listed Building Consent process, proposals went out for estate-wide public consultation, and the ReForm report and proposals were presented to and discussed with the Estates Chairs for wider distribution to estate residents. We understand that there were no recorded objections / comments.
- As the proposals appeared to be acceptable to the residents and obtained Listed Building Consent in 2022, from the City of London Conservation team, Ingleton Wood do not propose to amend them, when updating for new Regulations.
- In the next few slides, we have shown images of the proposed signage taken directly from the ReForm report for which Listed Building Consent has been obtained and we have also included some images of general, “off the shelf” signage for comparison.

Fire Action Notices - ReForm Design

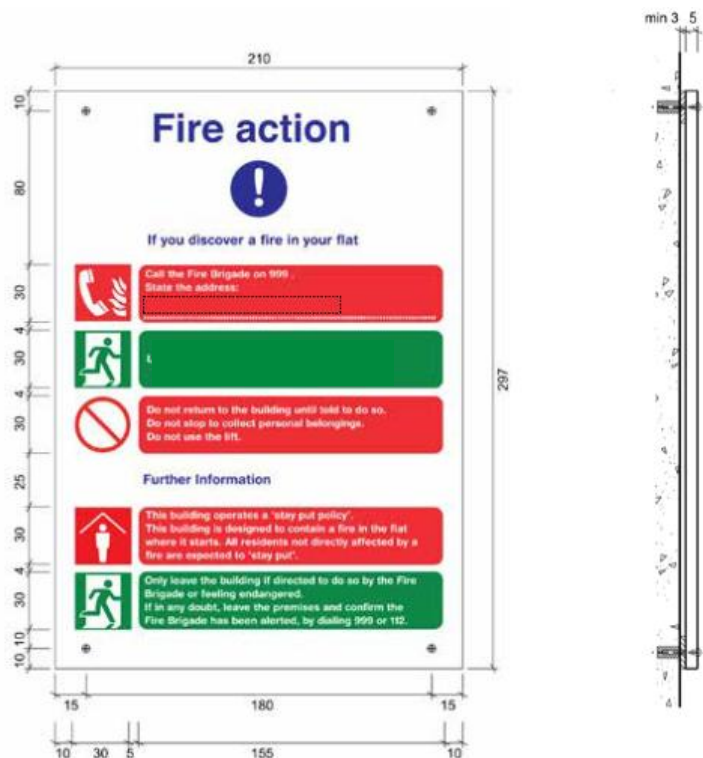
6.2.2 Design

Size: A4
Material: Aluminium
Thickness: 5mm
Fixing: Round head screw
3mm minimum rubber washer where fixed to concrete

The fixing will be a mechanical fixing, with an appropriately sized Rawlplug, and stainless steel round head screws - appropriately fixed to manufacturers specification.

Colours (ISO 3864-4:2011 Part 4)
Background: White (RAL 9003) Powder Coated
Content: Blue (RAL 5005),
Red (RAL 3001)
Green (RAL 6002) Printed

Fonts
Title: 60pt. Helvetica Bold
Subtitle: 21pt. Helvetica Rounded Bold
Text: 16pt. Helvetica Rounded Bold



Exact Content to be agreed

Fire Action Notices - Common / “Off the Shelf” Signage for Comparison



Directional Escape Signage – ReForm Design

6.3.2 Design

Size: 100(h) x 200 (w) mm
 Material: Aluminium
 Thickness: 5mm
 Fixing: Round head screw
 3mm minimum rubber washer where fixed to concrete

The fixing will be a mechanical fixing, with an appropriately sized Rawlplug, and stainless steel round head screws - appropriately fixed to manufacturers specification.

Colours

Background:

Content:

(ISO 3864-4:2011 Part 4)

Green (RAL 6002) Powder Coated

White (RAL 9003) Printed

Fonts

Title:

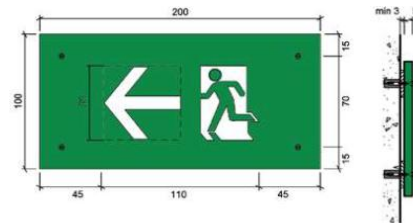
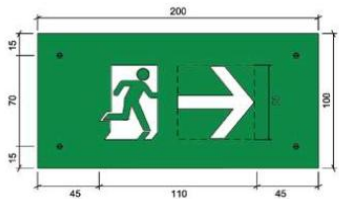
Icon:

Arrow:

30mm (h). Custom Font

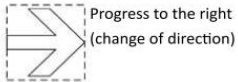
55mm (h)

55mm (h) x 55mm (w)



Orientation:

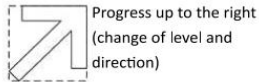
Arrow Symbol to RIGHT of Running Man:



Progress to the right
(change of direction)



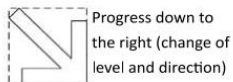
Progress forward
(no change) and/or
up (change of level)



Progress up to the right
(change of level and
direction)



Progress down
(change of level)



Progress down to
the right (change of
level and direction)

Arrow Symbol to LEFT of Running Man:



Progress to the left (change
of direction)



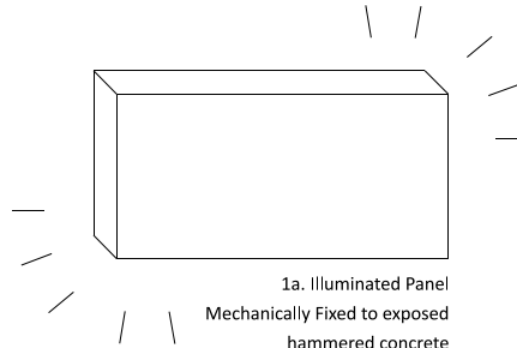
Progress up to the left
(change of level and
direction)



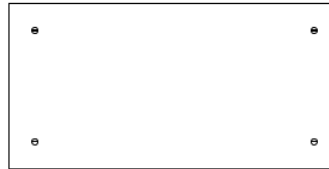
Progress down to the left
(change of level and
direction)

The different types of emergency signage are as shown Use of signage is to be agreed in each specific location with BB7, the Conservation Officer and IW.

1. a) Illuminated. Required in the lift lobby of all the towers due to the low level of lighting. Detailed design of integrated illuminated panel or externally fitted lighting required.
1. b) Panel fixed to exposed hammered concrete wall. The materiality and aesthetic of the signage has been designed to have a bold and robust appearance in keeping with the textured concrete.
2. Panel fixed to smooth wall or panel. To be used where lift lobbies have smooth in place of textured walls, or where the position of the textured wall is not suitable for the signage.
3. Folded Panel. To be used where there is no available wall for fixing. This is utilised on the ceilings of access corridors for visibility.
4. Double Panel. To be used where none of the previous options are feasible. Blank sheet to be identical to front panel without text or symbol.
5. Film. To be used on privacy screens on escape balconies only, as these are not visible from the communal areas.



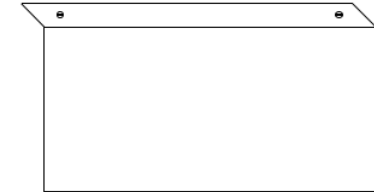
1a. Illuminated Panel
Mechanically Fixed to exposed
hammered concrete



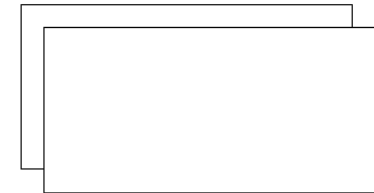
1b. Panel
Mechanically fixed to exposed
hammered concrete wall



2. Panel
Mechanically fixed to smooth wall or panel (concrete,
plasterboard, timber panel, timber door or metal sheet)



3. Folded Panel
Mechanically fixed to u/s of ceiling (concrete/
plasterboard) or to window/door frame (steel/timber)



4. Double Panel likely to be film
Glued to glass on both sides, with a blank
sheet on the rear to conceal adhesive



5. Film
Adhered to glass

Directional Escape Signage – Common / “Off the Shelf” Signage for Comparison



Fire Door Signage – ReForm Design

6.4 Fire Door Signage

6.4.1 Information

It should be ensured that all fire doors are provided with appropriate fire door signage. The appearance of these should match standard approved designs, such as a filled blue circle with white text. Such signs should contain instructions such as:

- Fire door keep shut - on both sides of all manual fire doors
- Fire door keep clear - on the rear of all fire escape doors
- Automatic fire door keep clear - on automatic doors leading to entrance lobbies and Podium level
- Fire door keep locked shut - on all fire doors to service risers and cupboards (excluded from this report as not serving dwellings)

Two types of fire door signs are to be provided across all fire doors in the estate.

6.4.2 Design

Size:	76mm dia.
Material:	Aluminium
	Vinyl Stickers (glass/metal doors)
Thickness:	5mm
Fixing:	Round head screw
	Stickers on Glass and Metal doors

Where fixed to timber, the fixing will be a mechanical fixing, with an appropriately sized Rawlplug, and stainless steel round head screws - appropriately fixed to manufacturers specification.

Colours

Background:

Content:

(ISO 3864-4:2011 Part 4)

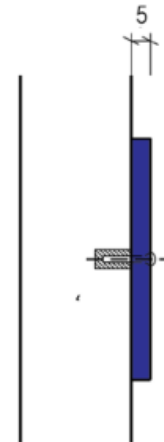
Blue (RAL 5005) Powder Coated

White (RAL 9003) Printed

Fonts

Text:

34 Pt. Helvetica Bold



Fire Door Signage – Common / “Off the Shelf” Signage for Comparison



Signage Additional to ReForm / BB7 / Listed Building Consent



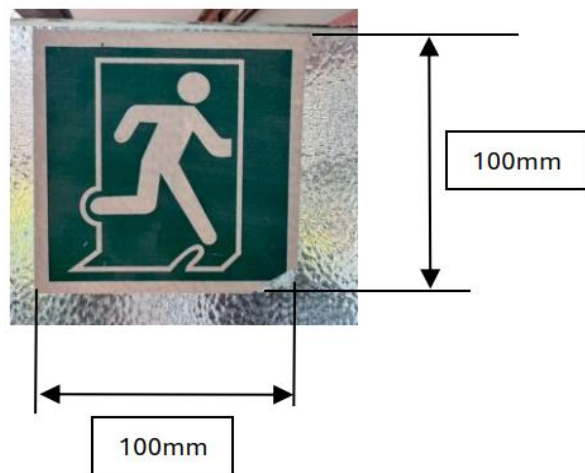
- Ingleton Wood are proposing to add the following signage to what has been approved – to include:
 1. Additional stick-on running man and Fire Exit Keep Clear signs - to balcony screens - (not included within the 2021 ReForm report and LBC)
 2. New wayfinding signage – comprising: Floor Indicator Signs and Flat Indicator Signs – installed to fire fighting lobbies / stairwells - (required by changes in legislation).
- Ingleton Wood are in ongoing consultation with the City of London, BB7, City of London Building Control and City of London's Design and Conservation Team, for the design, appearance, placement and materiality of this new way finding signage.
- The new signage will require formal statutory planning approval - obtained via a Section 19 Application for Variation or Discharge of Conditions - once all relevant consultations have been completed and decisions finalised.
- Current proposals for additional proposed signs, can be seen in the next slides - though these are **not** finalised and may be subject to changes throughout the consultation process.

Draft Images of The Proposed Additional Signs

Balcony Screens – Film adhered to the screens as it is currently

EXISTING

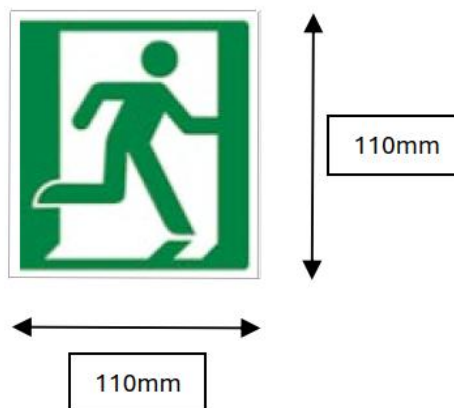
Escape sign - Existing



Currently the running man escape signs on the screens are depicted using a white running man with a green background.

PROPOSED

Escape sign - Proposed



We propose to increase the size of the sign to 110mm and change to depict a green running man on a white background - to ensure consistency with the other proposed escape signage to be installed across the estate).

NOTE:

The proposed escape sign image demonstrates the design intent. The green colour shown is not representative. RAL 6002 is to be used – the same as the Reform directional escape signage

Draft Images of The Proposed Additional Signs

Balcony Screens – Film adhered to the screens as it is currently

EXISTING

Fire Exit Keep Clear sign - Existing



Height: 100mm, width 250mm

PROPOSED

Fire Exit Keep Clear sign – Proposed



NOTES:

Sign to be same dimensions adhered to the bottom of the screens (as currently)

RAL 6002 is to be used – the same as the Reform directional escape signage

Wayfinding Signage - Placement

Where existing, Floor Indicator Signs to remain and Flat Indicator Signs to be added below.

Where they are not present, both Floor Indicator Signs and Flat Indicator Signs will be added.

Where Floor Indicator Signs are not found within lift lobbies but can be seen on stairwells (from the lift lobbies through GW glass), new signs will still be added to the lobbies - as visibility is not considered good enough.

Flat Indicator Signs will state the flat numbers and have a directional arrow to inform fire fighters, which direction they need to go in case of fire.

Where there is just one flat in one direction from a lobby and several flats in the other direction, the one flat will still be signed on Flat Indicator Signage with an arrow – just as the several flats will be.

Where there is a lift lobby and an additional adjacent lobby with 1 or more flats, there will need to be Flat Indicator Signage in both lobbies.

The Conservation Officer has already provided some input on the design of these signs, to ensure that they are in keeping with the existing character and historic interest. Whilst consistency of signage is key, and will be prioritised, there may need to be a degree of individuality for the signage to certain blocks - to account for variations in lighting and decorations.

Draft Images of The Proposed Additional Signs

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding Signage comprises:
Floor Indicator Signs and **Flat Indicator Signs**.

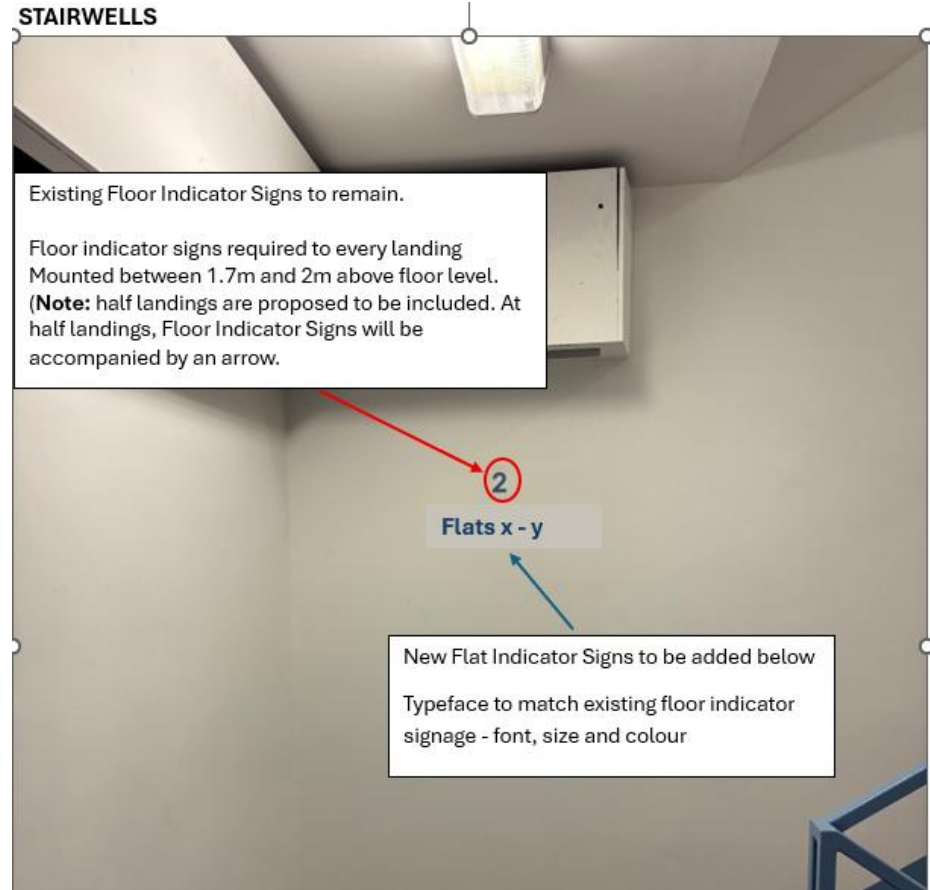
Proposals deviate from the prescriptive Building Regulations and create bespoke signs, utilising the existing floor identification signs where present and adding text / arrows using the same size, materiality and typeface).

This approach will retain existing signage, minimise impact of new signage and create consistency whilst retaining the character of the existing signage.

It will also significantly improve the current variability of signage across the estate and satisfy requirements to inform and direct fire fighters.

Exact positioning of signage is still to be agreed with BB7 and the Conservation Officer.

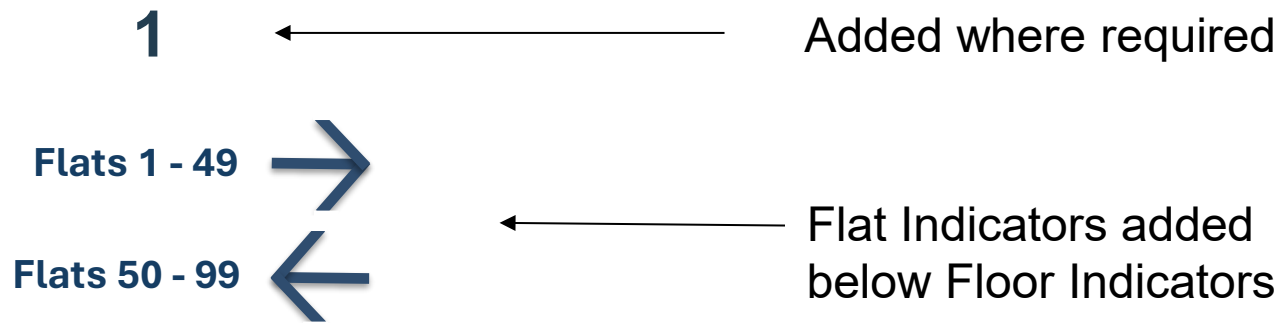
It is not proposed to utilise illuminated signage. Though the Tower lobbies are in consideration as the luminance is poor.



Draft Images of The Proposed Additional Signs

Wayfinding Signage

Typical Floor and Flat Indicator Signage



Note: Where a lift and a stair serve just 2 flats – one on either side of the lift / stairs - eg Speed House - no Flat Indicator Signs will be used.

Instead, Barbican Estate will ensure that the door number signage is clear and contrasting with the background and maintained as such.

Mock ups for all Signage

Once designs have been finalised, sample signs will be mocked up for viewing.

We propose to provide mock-up signs for all signage – the new wayfinding signage and balcony screen signage as well as the signage designed by Reform – for which we have Listed Building Consent for.

We anticipate that mock ups of all proposed signage, will likely be produced on or before April / May 2026 – following design completion and approval by the Conservation team.

Mock up signage will then be issued to the board and be made available for residents to view, so that they can see what is going to be installed.

Approvals / Consents for Signage





BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVALS FOR THE PROPOSED NEW FIRE SAFETY SIGNAGE

- Meetings were held with the City of London Project Manager for Housing Property Services, BB7, City of London Building Control and City of London's design and conservation team to discuss whether there needed to be formal Building Control Applications for the installation of the proposed fire safety signage.
- It was confirmed by City of London Building Control, that formal applications would not be required on the grounds that the works were adding to the existing signage and improving it – by improving signage uniformity, distribution, appearance and simplifying / rationalising signage already present.
- It was agreed that a final consultation will be had with City of London Building Control - to provide them with the detailed signage proposals including frequency and placement of signage - to ensure compliance with all regulations.



LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR THE PROPOSED NEW FIRE SAFETY SIGNAGE

Listed Building consent has already been obtained for the proposed ReForm signage and therefore it is the intention to install the signage that we have consent for.

- Listed Building Consent will be required to be obtained for the proposed additional wayfinding signage – designs for which are currently being discussed.
- To satisfy the City of London’s design and conservation team, Ingleton Wood has proposed additional wayfinding signage that is more sympathetic with the estates existing signage and does not adhere to some of the more prescriptive conditions relating to typeface, colours and size - as set out within Approved Doc B. However, signage still provides the additional and requisite way finding signage.
- With regard to the balcony screen stick on signage, it is intended to replicate what is there exactly, except for switching the background of the running man escape signs. (Slide 29 – “Images of the Proposed Additional Signs”, above).

Next Steps





- Conclude wayfinding design signage, balcony screen signage and associated consultations
- Submit S19 Application to CoL conservation
- Produce and issue mock ups
- Undertake small pilot – Bunyan House
- CoL to provide measured floor plan drawings
- Produce and issue tender documentation
- Obtain statutory permissions
- Review tenders / CoL procurement / estate committee approvals
- Appoint Contractor
- Commence works on site.
- Produce and issue block by block works programmes
- Total estimated duration for signage installation – circa 12 weeks – TBC.

The End

THANK YOU ... and questions