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# Site Visit Report The Old Priory Leominster Herefordshire HR6 8EQ.



Conducted by:

Bryan Morgan

Date:

28<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Contact:

Jackie Whittall

## Background

Request from Leominster Town Council to provide the outline requirements for a suitable fire alarm to be installed in the Old Priory which will be included in the on-going extensive refurbishment of the building.

Located in the centre of the rural market town of Leominster, the Old Priory building is a large (1740m<sup>2</sup>) Grade 2 listed building and scheduled ancient monument within walking distance of Leominster's High St.

Ownership of the Old Priory building was transferred to Leominster Town Council from Herefordshire Council in September 2022 via Community Asset Transfer.

The Old Priory has played an important role in Leominster's community life for over 900 years. The building currently accommodates a number of essential organisations that includes the following:

- Leominster Foodbank
- Talk Community Hub.
- Leominster Meeting Centre
- ECHO (Leominster
- Youth Hostel Hereford Diocese

Sections of the Old Priory building will be converted into self-catering accommodation that complements the current offer available at the Leominster Youth Hostel, while responding to a local need for additional visitor accommodation

In March 2024, Leominster Town Council was offered a grant from Central Government's Community Ownership Fund to enable the implementation of phase 1 of the Old Priory Centre development plans.

The funded works will focus on making much needed repairs and improvements to areas of the building currently occupied by essential local support services and community groups, in addition to renovating unoccupied areas in order to provide additional office suites, incubation and co-working spaces, self-catering accommodation units and several small/medium size meeting rooms

#### **Fire Risk Assessment**

A Fire Risk Assessment was carried out in June 2023 and risk level was recorded as a medium risk, but large amounts of remedial work required to discharge the Action Plan with the additional comment added:

"... It is understood that there are plans in place to upgrade and re-furbish the un-occupied old parts of the building. When the works are complete a further assessment should be carried out prior to any occupation. Until then it is recommended that the present fire safety provisions in the areas, including the means of escape and fire alarm system, be maintained..."

In addition, the following the following recommendation was recorded:

"... In the circumstances it is considered that the systems should comply fully to BS 5839: 2017: Part 1: Grade A: Category M/L2..."

### **Observations and Recommendations**

Having visited the Old Priory on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024, but was not practical to undertake a Fire Risk assessment or a Review of the current Risk Assessment due the building work being undertaken and some of the internal layouts not yest being confirmed but I can offer advice the following:

## Fire Alarm

## **ML2** Installation

- The Fire Alarm should be a ML2 installation in accordance with BS 5839 Part 1 (2017). A category L2 fire alarm system is a type of fire alarm system that provides advanced warning of a fire in a building. L2 systems are designed to protect life by providing early warning to occupants in high-risk areas and escape routes.
- They are suitable for medium-sized premises, or commercial properties sleeping up to ten people. This would include the potential self- catering accommodation. More than 10 sleeping would require an ML1 installation.
- Typically, this involves placing fire and smoke alarms in high-risk rooms and opening onto escape routes leading to fire exits. In small and medium-sized premises, L2 systems place fire detectors in areas where the risk of ignition is high, such as kitchens. Boiler rooms, server rooms and linen cupboards etc.

### Addressable System

- It is recommended that the Fire Alarm is an Addressable Installation. An addressable fire alarm system is a fire detection system that uses a unique address for each device, allowing it to identify the exact location of a fire or smoke:
- Each device, such as a smoke detector, heat detector, or manual call point, has its own address and is connected to the control panel through a network or loop.
- When a device detects smoke or fire, it sends a signal to the control panel along with its address. The control panel can then display the device's location and status.
- Addressable systems can help reduce false alarms, improve response times, and prevent the spread of fire and smoke.
- They also allow for better zone identification and the ability to add new devices over time.
- Conventional systems connect multiple devices to a single circuit, and all devices on the same circuit report the same.
- Addressable systems are more advanced and flexible than conventional systems, but they are also more complex to install and maintain

## System Design

- The current British Standard for Fire Alarm Installation, BS 5839-1 (2017), outlines the code of practice for fire alarm systems in non-domestic premises.
- Full compliance with BS 5839-1 will be required by building control bodies and other authorities including the Enforcing Authority
- It is recommended that a specialist and independent engineer creates the installation following the guidance with the B5 B839 Part 1
- A specialist. third party registered contractor would be responsible for supplying and installing the system.
- Commissioning. a commissioning engineer is responsible for verifying that the system operates correctly, but not for verifying the design or installation work
- After commissioning, certificates must be provided for each of the three processes: design, installation, and commissioning.
- The user should be handed over all relevant documentation and an engineer should demonstrate the system to the Responsible Person at the premises and hand over the Logbook before leaving site.

## **Call Monitoring**

- Fire alarm monitoring is a service that sends a signal from a fire alarm system to a monitoring centre when a fire is detected.
- When a fire alarm is triggered, the fire alarm system sends a signal to a monitoring centre, also known as an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC).
- The ARC team then responds to the signal, which may involve calling the fire brigade or contacting the building's occupants.
- This is particularly important for multi occupied buildings where the Responsible Person or their representatives are not available throughout the day.
- Fire alarm monitoring can help reduce property damage and save lives by ensuring a rapid response to fires.
- It can also provide peace of mind, as the ARC team will act even if the building is empty.
- One major advantage of a monitored installation is a reduction in false alarms.
- This is a huge problem, and a massive drain on the time of fire and rescue with many Fire Services no longer attending activations unless backed up with a 999 call.
- By comparison, ARC staff will always verify an alarm before they call 999. While the site is occupied, they would do this by calling up and asking anyone present to check.
- At night, they may check by other means including access to CCTV, cross verification identifying whether just a single head is operating.

### Zone Plans

- In accordance with BS 5839-1:2017, when a competent person or company installs a fire any fire alarm system it is a requirement that a zone plan should be included
- Fire Alarm Zone Plans are essential to translate the illuminated zone LED on the fire alarm control panel into an identifiable area of the building, to facilitate the quickest and safest response to an alarm condition
- A Fire Alarm Zone Plan is a diagrammatic representation of the building, showing at least the building entrances, the main circulation areas, and the division into zones.
- These should be sited next to each CIE (Control & Indicating Equipment), which is any fire alarm control panel or fire alarm repeater panel location.

## **Fire Safety Strategy**

- The specification of the Fire Alarm will only form part of the building's Fire Safety Strategy. Other elements of the Fire Strategy including the following will need to be considered during the refurbishment by the architects, designers and project managers:
  - Means of Escape
  - Internal Fire Spread- Compartmentation
  - External Fire Spread
  - Fire Service Access
  - Fixed Installations- sprinklers, smoke Ventilation etc
  - Fire Safety Management procedures.
- The fire strategy is a complex document specifically tailored to a building, reviewing all aspects of the building's fire safety features including construction, compartmentation strategy, means of escape and other fire safety features/measures including management arrangements in place to ensure it is fit for use for the end user of the premises or intended purpose group.
- Where a building is erected or extended, or has undergone a material change of use, Regulation 38 of the Building Regulations requires that a package of fire safety information must be assembled and given to the responsible person of the premises.
- A fire strategy is commonly used as a means for collating and providing that information for the building owners or Responsible Person to ensure compliance and to assist in the Fire Risk Assessment process.
- Completing a fire strategy will protect business procedures and assets by analysing potential fire spread and implementing a plan to minimise the destruction caused by a fire.
- The fire strategy can be used alongside a business continuity plan, which is a pre-planned management system implemented to ensure a company can continue to operate after a disaster such as fire, flood or any other natural occurrence.

### Declaration

This Report is based upon my survey of the building and the observations at the time. It is to the best of my knowledge a fair and accurate assessment of the fire safety status within the building.

Dated: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Signed:



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