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## The British Library and SMBL Developments Ltd

**British Library Extension** 

Fire Statement

Issue 2 | January 2022



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## **Project Description**

The Proposed Development would involve extending the northern aspect of the existing British Library to provide library accommodation; commercial space designed to cater for knowledge quarter uses (including life sciences, cultural, scientific and heritage collections and data sciences); retail space; and the Crossrail 2 works at basement level.

The Proposed Development would provide a gross internal area (GIA) of up to approximately 97,000m<sup>2</sup>. The new library accommodation and the Alan Turing Institute and public circulation, including a public foyer, would be provided at approximately 10,000m<sup>2</sup> in addition to a replaced British Library Centre for Conservation (BLCC) and British Library tank farm and other library infrastructure. Approximately 76,000m<sup>2</sup> (GIA) would be provided for commercial space together with retail. Infrastructure related to Crossrail 2 would be provided at approximately 4,300m<sup>2</sup> (GIA), plus a shaft descending between basement levels 2-7. With respect to Crossrail 2, the Proposed Development would provide the main civils and structural elements of the Euston St Pancras Station eastern shaft and passenger subway tunnel. There will be adaptions to existing library operational areas, including the loading bay.

The Proposed Development would be 'car lite' with five wheelchair-accessible car parking spaces, four operational spaces for maintenance vehicles and a single minibus bay. The BLCC and the Story Garden are located within the Site. In order to facilitate the construction of the Proposed Development, the BLCC would be relocated and a new community garden would be created within the Site.

## **Executive Summary**

The fire safety strategy for the British Library Extension has been developed considering its location, proposed use and operation, as well as fire safety requirements by the British Library, holistically.

The extension building will be 12 storeys tall with one basement level. The height to the topmost occupied floor is approximately 46m above lower ground level. The overall new floor area being constructed is approximately 97,000m<sup>2</sup>. A large central atrium will span the full height of the building above ground.

The development will extend the existing British Library building Northwards up to Dangoor Walk, adjacent to the Francis Crick Institute. The extension building will be located above Crossrail 2 when this is constructed (basement shaft, fans and passenger tunnel). The extension building will be located adjacent to St Pancras International Station, which is on the opposite side of Midland Road.

Whilst the planning application includes the below-ground structure for the Crossrail 2 asset, the development of the Crossrail 2 infrastructure is to be brought forward by Crossrail/TFL and does not form part of the development for the purposes of this fire statement.

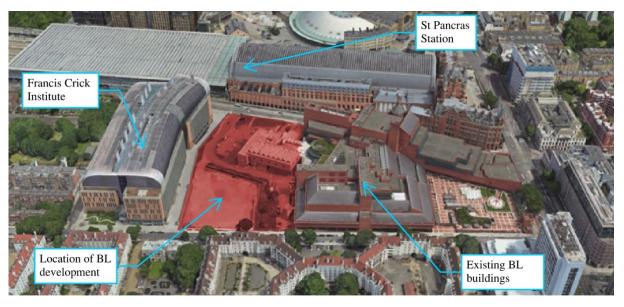


Figure 1: Location of British Library development

The structural frame of the building will be reinforced concrete. Some of the floors on the upper levels might include limited soft spots with cross-laminated timber (CLT) infills. The facades will be primarily glazed curtain walling, with limited areas of anodised aluminium cladding at lower ground – level 01. Escape stairs on the perimeter of the building will be clad with non-combustible cladding such as low-density concrete panels.

The fire safety measures proposed will also meet the functional requirements of Part B of the Building Regulations 2010 (as amended) by following the British Library fire safety brief and framework for fire engineering provided in PD 7974, which leans on guidance within the risk-based fire safety standard BS 9999:2017. Where proposed, green roofs will follow the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formerly DCLG) guidance *Fire Performance of Green Roofs and Walls*, August 2013.

The performance-based design approaches have been discussed with the Building Control Authority and the London Fire Brigade's Fire Engineering Group prior to planning and no objections to the fire strategy approach taken have been raised at this stage.

The building will be provided with the following:

- 1. A series of evacuation zones that are aligned with the functional uses of the building. Evacuation will be phased to evacuate the zone at risk; with subsequent escalation manually controlled. The British Library areas will form a new evacuation zone to the existing British Library building, with interlinked systems to allow the British Library zone to evacuate when there is a fire is in the existing building should this be desired.
- 2. Use of lifts to aid evacuation of persons that cannot self-evacuate;
- 3. An automatic fire detection and alarm in line with the British Library specification for their areas, and suitable for the risk identified in the remainder of the new development;
- 4. Sprinkler protection throughout;
- 5. Eight fire fighting cores to provide access to all floors, with above ground firefighting core comprising a firefighting stair, a firefighting lift and a ventilated firefighting lobby with dry fire main, and the firefighting cores serving the basement comprising a firefighting stair, ventilated firefighting lobby with dry fire main and an evacuation lift as the basement is less than 10m deep; in addition to these provisions the stair in the British Library Centre for Conservation (BLCC) building will be provided with a dry riser;
- 6. The fire brigade will have vehicle access to the East and West elevations of the extension;
- 7. A mixture of natural and mechanical smoke ventilation will be implemented in the basement level;
- 8. The central 'Foyer' atrium will be enclosed in fire resisting glazing on the upper levels and provided with a mechanical smoke control system to maintain tenable conditions on floors and bridges that are open to the foyer;
- 9. Active and passive fire protection measures are provided to the entrance areas serving the different uses of the building to limit disruption to business operation of areas not directly affected by fire or smoke;
- 10. The building is generally provided with floor to floor fire resisting compartmentation, with the exception of the atrium foyer which has a performance based fire and smoke control design approach;
- 11. The loadbearing structure and external wall comprises predominantly non-combustible materials, with limited exceptions of timber being considered where its application presents an acceptably low fire risk;
- 12. All loadbearing elements of structure to achieve a minimum of 120 minutes structural fire resistance for loadbearing capacity.
- 13. Inclusive design features will be provided in addition to management procedures to ensure the safe evacuation of disabled occupants such that no reliance on carry down procedures is required by providing evacuation lifts that may be used by the building management to aid those requiring assistance during their evacuation.

## **Introduction**

This fire statement has been prepared by Arup to summarise the fire strategy that has been developed during RIBA Stage 1 for the British Library Extension. This fire statement has been prepared by Chartered Engineers registered with the Engineering Council in membership of the Institution of Fire Engineers.

#### **Fire Safety Objectives** 1.1

To comply with the functional requirements of Part B of the Building Regulations 2010 (as amended), the design has followed the guidance of the PD 7974 fire engineering framework and BS 9999:2017 - "Fire Safety in the Design, Management and Use of Buildings".

The fire strategy is developed to:

- Allow for the existing British Library fire strategy principles to be extended into the new • British Library areas, as set out in the British Library fire safety brief;
- Reduce the risk associated with the approvals process; •
- Maximise net lettable area in the commercial spaces;
- Minimise disruption to building operations as a result of minor fire events and/or false alarms; and
- Provide flexibility for the commercial levels to be sub-divided into multiple tenancies.

Careful consideration has been given to policies D5 Inclusive Design and D12 Fire Safety of the London Plan 2021, including the requirements for a fire statement to be provided with major development proposals.

A detailed project fire strategy will be prepared as the design progresses in subsequent design stages.

#### **Description of the Building** 1.2

#### 1.2.1 **Building Use**

The British Library extension will sit on a constrained site, bounded by the existing British Library building to the south, Dangoor Walk to the north, Midland Road to the east and Ossulston Street to the west. Crossrail 2 will pass beneath the site and will have a ventilation shaft on the west elevation of the extension building at lower and upper ground levels. Whilst the planning application includes the below-ground structure for the Crossrail 2 asset, the development of the Crossrail 2 infrastructure is to be brought forward by Crossrail/TFL and does not form part of the development for the purposes of this fire statement.

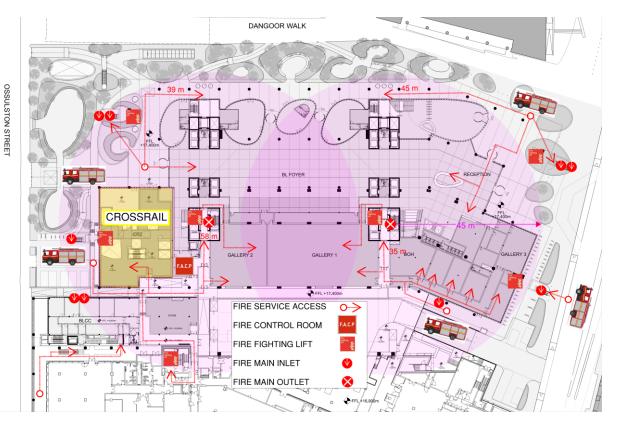


Figure 2: Site plan showing firefighting access. Magenta shading indicates areas within 45m from a fire main outlet

The extension's topmost occupied floor will be approximately 46m above fire-fighting access level. The building will comprise an extension to the existing British Library facilities and commercial accommodation above, which will be designed to have the flexibility for life science laboratory use at levels 02-07. A shared basement will contain plant space, bike storage and shower facilities.

The British Library extension will include galleries, exhibition and event spaces at ground and first floor; the Alan Turing Institute will also be at the first floor. The British Library Centre for Conservation (BLCC) will be accommodated at basement, lower ground, upper ground and level 01 on the southwest corner of the extension building.

A large atrium will be in the centre of the extension building, spanning all floors and extending from the Midland Road to Ossulston Street over a length of 150 m, effectively dividing the extension building in two. This atrium is referred to as the Foyer and will be operated by the British Library and open to the public. The Foyer will be a flexible space that can host talks, exhibitions and other activities. Four retail stores will be located on the North side of the Foyer beneath the commercial building at lower ground level. The British Library will have a retail space located on the opposite side of the Foyer. One further retail unit will be located on the West entrance at the corner of the CR2 Headhouse.

The roof areas at level 09 to the north of the building and level 10 to the south of the building will be used for plant.

An independent entrance for the commercial spaces will be provided in the northeast corner of the building from Midland Road. Access to the British Library areas will be via the Foyer area at lower ground level, which has entrances from Midland Road and Ossulston Street.

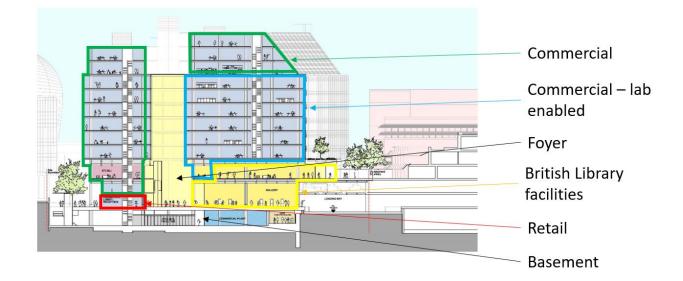


Figure 3: Section of the British Library Extension noting the different building uses

The site needs to be coordinated with the construction of the Crossrail 2 (CR2) shaft which will occur below the development prior to the library extension. The Crossrail shaft will be located on the west side of the development and will span from basement level to upper ground.

#### 1.2.2 **Construction**

The building's main structural frame will be made of concrete. A large concrete transfer deck will be located at level 2. Secondary structure beneath the transfer deck will be constructed from timber and these. These elements provide deflection and vibration control only and are not required to provide stability in the fire load state. The structure beneath level 2 will be flexible and lightweight to enable reconfiguration throughout the life of the building.

The south side of the extension will have Post-Tensioned concrete floors at Levels 3–8. Levels 9-10 will have a hybrid floor build-up of cross-laminated timber (CLT) and Post-Tensioned concrete.

It is anticipated that the north side of the extension will have a hybrid floor build-up of CLT and Post-Tensioned concrete.

The main façade at level 2 upwards will primarily be an aluminium framed glazed façade, with the exception of the perimeter stair cores which will also include lightweight concrete panels.

#### 1.3 **Risk Profiles**

The following fire risk profiles (Table 1) have been established for each type of area use within the building, noting that these take into account sprinklers being provided throughout the building.

Table 1: Area risk profiles

Area Use	Characteristics	Risk Profile
Plant	Awake, familiar, sprinkler protected	A2
Retail/Public	Awake, unfamiliar, sprinkler protected	B1 or B2, depending on use
Areas		
Office	Awake, familiar, layout may be cellularised	A1 or B1, depending on fitout

## 2 Main Fire Protection Features

The high-level principles of the fire strategy for the British Library Extension being applied at this stage include the following:

## 2.1 Evacuation Strategy

The building will be subdivided into evacuation zones which will be aligned to the functional uses and operational controls in place in the building.

In line with requirements set by the British Library, its new British Library areas within the extension will form a new evacuation zone to the existing British Library building and will evacuate when there is a fire in the existing building. It is not proposed to evacuate the commercial areas in this situation, unless a fire is subsequently detected within the extension building.

During a fire in the extension building the evacuation will be phased, designed to minimise the disruption to the different users in the building due to false alarms or during minor fire events that do not place other users at risk. The design of how the building will be divided up into different phases or evacuation stages will be developed in future design stages in consultation with the building operators and the approving authorities.

## 2.2 Vertical Means of Escape

The building is provided with 8 stairs used for means of escape by both commercial and British Library occupants as well as firefighting access.

The new building does not rely on the existing British Library for means of escape so that this can be operationally independent and vice versa.



Figure 4: Escape cores (highlighted red) - evacuation lifts indicated by green wheelchair icon

The commercial areas are served by two escape cores at upper ground and level 01, six escape cores on levels 2-9 and four escape cores on level 10, sized to be suitable to evacuate two adjacent floors together, based on an anticipated maximum occupancy of 1,522 per floor in the commercial levels.

The Library, including the BLCC facility has access to five escape stairs.

The shared basement has access to four escape stairs. The BLCC basement, which is separate to the main basement area, has access to a single stair.

All cores will discharge to outside via protected routes designed to remain available for egress in the event of fire anywhere in the building. All stairs serving means of escape shall have a minimum clear width of 1100mm, maintained all the way along the escape route to the outside. Where these corridors are to be used for fire service access they will be 500mm wider than the required egress width.

## 2.3 Horizontal Means of Escape

## 2.3.1 Travel Distances

Travel distances within the building are proposed to follow recommended limits as a function of the risk profiles set out in Table 11 of BS 9999, taking account of benefits arising from early warning available from automatic fire detection coverage and the provision of voice alarm.

Recommended maximum travel distances, as a function of risk profiles are set out in the table below; these take account of sprinkler protection, and detection and alarm. Additional fire protection measures have been applied based on the recommendations in BS 9999 which states that:

"Where a clear benefit resulting from the addition of detection and warning systems is demonstrated and is appropriate to the circumstances, a 15% increase in allowable travel distance and a 15% reduction in door width, corridor width and stair width can be applied"

Table 2 - Factors used to calculate maximum travel distances

Use	Risk Profile	Single direction of travel (after fitout)	Two
Open plan office	A1	29.9 m	74.7 r
Plant room	A3	20.7 m	51.75
British Library public areas	B2	23 m	57.5 r
Retail units/ Foyer	B1	27.6 m	69 m
Reception	B1	27.6 m	69 m

way travel (after fitout)
n
m
n

#### **2.3.2** Exit Widths

Storey exits are recommended to be a minimum of 1050mm, to enable future flexibility, which generally exceeds the minimum widths required for BS 9999.

Typical exit width factors proposed to be adopted for different use types are following BS9999, as set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Factors used to calculate required exit widths for doors

Use	Risk Profile	Number of floors evacuating together	Required exit width
Open plan office	A1	2	2.805 mm per person
Plant room	A3	1	3.91 mm per person
Retail units/ Foyer	B1	1	3.06 mm per person
Reception	B1	1	3.06 mm per person

Doors will open in the direction of escape where the anticipated occupancy is greater than 60 people.

### 2.4 Means of Escape for Disabled Occupants

The building offers an exemplary standard of means of escape for disabled occupants, with every escape stair being provided with an associated lift that can be used for evacuation of occupants unable to use the stairs.

This allows building management to support the evacuation of disabled occupants without resorting to carry down procedures. Occupants can use the emergency call points located within refuges to communicate with the building management team.

The two central fire fighting cores that serve all floors will be provided with an evacuation lift in addition to the fire fighting lift. The BLCC escape stair will be provided with an evacuation lift.

The four perimeter fire fighting cores will each be provided with fire-fighting lifts, which have resilient power supplies and can therefore be used by management for evacuating occupants in a fire event until fire brigade arrival at which point a management strategy must be in place to continue the evacuation should anyone still require assistance.

There are six firefighting lifts provided across the firefighting cores serving the above ground levels, allowing for parallel operation of firefighting access and evacuation.

In the basement the two basement fire fighting cores on the north side of the building will be provided with evacuation lifts. It is expected that these cores will be key to the evacuation of any mobility impaired persons as they are located adjacent to the bike stores and shower facilities. The south side of the basement comprises plant space. While it is not expected that mobility impaired persons will be working in these areas, the fire fighting lifts that serve the central fire fighting cores extend down to the basement and can be used by management to evacuate any occupants needing assistance in this area.

### 2.5 Assembly Points

The existing assembly point for the British Library is in the Story Garden, which will be built over by the extension building. Therefore, it is proposed for the assembly point to be moved to the front of the British Library. Potential points for the commercial areas will be reviewed in the next stage of the project. If a dedicated assembly area is not available, a dispersal strategy could be adopted whereby occupants will disperse on site away from the building. The building management should determine the strategy or identify the preferred assembly points for the building.

Please refer to Figure 5 for the site plan indicating routes to reach assembly areas.

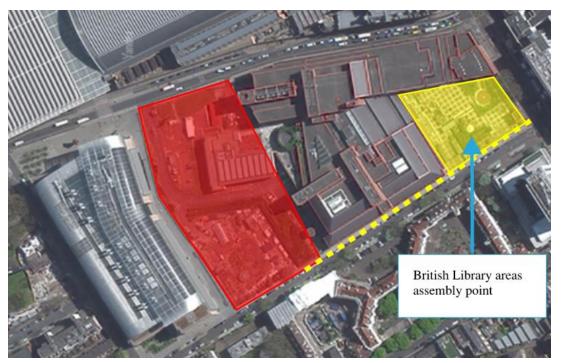


Figure 5: Assembly points

## 2.6 Fire Safety Systems

### 2.6.1 Detection and Alarm System

The British Library areas of the extension building will be provided with an L1 standard of fire detection and alarm including public address/voice alarm (PA/VA), in line with the existing provisions in the existing main British Library building.

In all other parts of the extension building, an automatic detection and alarm system to at least an L2 standard is proposed, including PA/VA.

The detection and alarm system throughout will be designed and installed in accordance with BS 5839-1 and part 8. Emergency Voice Communication points will be provided to all refuge spaces.

### 2.6.2 Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting will be provided in accordance with BS 5266-1.

#### 2.6.3 Escape Signage

Escape signage will be provided in accordance with BS 5499-1.

#### 2.6.4 Automatic Suppression System

Sprinkler protection is proposed throughout the building in accordance with BS EN 12845.

### 2.6.5 Smoke Control

The basement areas of the extension will be provided with both natural smoke venting and mechanical smoke extract achieving 10 air changes per hour (ACH). Areas served by natural smoke vents will be separated from mechanically vented areas by fire resisting construction.

It is proposed that the galleries and exhibition spaces will be provided with a means of clearing smoke after a fire has been extinguished. This system would be operated manually.

The Foyer will be provided with a mechanical smoke control system to maintain tenable conditions above areas required for escape. The smoke control system is envisaged to be designed to maintain smoke above the last occupied floor / bridge open to the foyer.

### 2.6.6 Emergency Power

Emergency power will be provided by generators or local battery backup to all life safety systems (e.g. sprinkler pumps, firefighting lifts, fire detection and alarm etc).

### 2.7 Internal Fire Spread

Wall and ceiling linings are to achieve the following surface flame European Classifications according to BS EN 13501-2:

- Within circulation spaces: B-s3, d2
- Rooms larger than 30m<sup>2</sup>: C-s3, d2
- Rooms smaller than 30m<sup>2</sup>: D-s3, d2.

### 2.8 Structural Fire Resistance

Fire resisting elements of structure are assigned European classifications. For the purposes of this document fire resistance in terms of loadbearing capacity will be referred to as 'R'.

Due to the height of the extension, elements of structure are recommended to be designed to achieve a minimum R 120 minutes fire resistance. In future stages of the design, structural fire engineering analyses may be completed to demonstrate that a lower period of fire resistance is appropriate for the types of fires anticipated in large open plan compartments to meet the requirements of the Building Regulations.

The use of timber as structural element has been carefully considered, to identify where such material may be reasonably used. The commercial areas were identified as potentially suitable areas, with CLT potentially forming part of a hybrid CLT and concrete floor build-up. The CLT would be largely encapsulated by fire resisting construction to limit the amount of timber that becomes available as fuel. The proposed extent of exposed CLT is subject to further consultation and analysis. The material properties of any exposed CLT will be evidenced such that glue line integrity failure is avoided.

The secondary structure in the underside of the L2 slab, used for deflection and vibration control, is proposed to be timber; the structural design of these elements is such that the overall stability of the structure in a fire scenario does not rely on the timber elements to be present.

All areas where timber is proposed will be provided with an automatic suppression system.

## 2.9 Compartmentation

Fire resisting elements are assigned European classifications. For the purposes of this document fire resistance in terms of loadbearing capacity, integrity and insultation will be referred to as R, E and I respectively.

All floors will be constructed as compartment floors, designed to achieve a minimum of REI 120 minutes fire resistance. Penetrations through compartment floors such as service risers, lift shafts etc will be enclosed in REI 120 minutes fire resisting construction.

Where floors include CLT, the CLT will be largely encapsulated by fire resisting construction to manage the risk that the combustible structure introduces to the building.

The walls separating firefighting stair, firefighting lift and firefighting lobby will follow fire safety compartmentation arrangements as set out in BS 9999, and will be constructed from non-combustible materials.

Plant rooms and other space uses that present a fire hazard will be separated from adjacent accommodation by fire resisting construction appropriate to the risk posed according to Table 29 in BS 9999.

The existing British Library building shall be separated from the extension by REI 120 minutes fire resisting construction above ground and REI 240 minutes fire resisting construction below ground, in line with requirements by the British Library.

The standard of compartmentation within British Library areas of the extension will be consistent with that in the existing British Library building where this exceeds the above provisions.

The Foyer atrium will be provided with a glazed enclosure from level 1 upwards, which will achieve E 30 minutes fire resistance.

At lower ground the retail areas on the north side of the Foyer will be provided with glazed enclosures which will achieve E 30 minutes fire resistance and FD30S fire doors. The British Library retail area on the south side of the Foyer at lower ground and the commercial reception at upper ground level are not proposed to be separated from the Foyer and will instead be provided with smoke control systems designed to prevent smoke spread into the Foyer. Bridges within the Foyer at upper ground and first floor levels will not be provided

with enclosures as the smoke control system within the Foyer will be designed to maintain smoke above the level 2 slab. Bridges within the Foyer at level 2 and above will be provided with glazed enclosures which will achieve E 30 minutes fire resistance.

#### 2.10 **External Fire Spread**

The risk of fire spreading to adjacent buildings will be evaluated, taking into consideration the proposed use, configuration and provision of automatic fire suppression systems.

Specific consideration will be given to fire safety during the construction period where some of the systems may not yet be fully operational; such that fire spread risks are controlled adequately also during the construction phase.

Some external escape routes require fire resisting elements on the external facades to protect single direction escape configuration along external walls.

#### 2.11 **External Wall Construction**

The external wall construction of the new building will comprise materials that achieve A2,s1-d0 classification, with exceptions in line with prescriptive building regulations for e.g. gaskets and seals.

#### 2.12 **Roof Construction**

The roof covering materials shall achieve Class BROOF(t4) or Class CROOF(t4) in accordance with BS EN 13501-5:2016. Green roofs will follow the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formerly DCLG) guidance Fire Performance of Green Roofs and Walls, August 2013.

#### 2.13 **Firefighting Provisions**

The firefighting provisions for each level of the British Library are as follows:

- Fire vehicles will be able to drive around two sides of the new building (East and West);
- Upper ground and level 01 can be accessed by four firefighting cores; •
- Levels 2 to 9 can be accessed by six firefighting cores;
- Level 10 can be accessed by four firefighting cores;
- The basement can be accessed by four firefighting cores;
- The BLCC stair, while not a firefighting core, will be provided with a dry riser.

This is shown on the drawings in Appendix A.

The distances from the fire fighter entrance to the firefighting cores exceeds the recommended 18m due to the constrained access to the site and the need to position firefighting cores towards the centre of the building to meet hose cover requirements on the floorplates.

The building will be provided with dry rising mains. An outlet from the rising main will be provided in the fire-fighting lobbies at each level and inlets will be provided on the façade at Firefighting cores serving the above ground levels will each comprise a firefighting lift, firefighting stair and ventilated firefighting lobby with a dry fire main.

The firefighting cores serving the basement only will comprise a firefighting stair, naturally ventilated firefighting lobby with a dry fire main and an evacuation lift.

Where direct access is not available into a fire fighting core, protected routes enclosed in 120 minutes fire resisting construction have been provided to ensure that a safe route into each firefighting core available in the event of a fire.

Any corridor from outside into the firefighting cores at ground floor shall achieve the width of the stair plus an additional 500mm. This will cater for counter flow between occupants escaping and the fire brigade attending.

The design will ensure that every part of the building is within 60m from a dry fire main outlet to meet the hose coverage requirements for firefighting operations.

#### 2.14 **Fire Safety Management**

The fire safety principles set out in this document have been developed with early input from the British Library and the developer, informing configuration of escape routes and evacuation zones. As the design develops, aspects of the fire strategy that rely on ongoing fire safety management will be further refined developed and documented in more detail in the fire strategy report.

A fire safety management plan will then need to be developed by the eventual operators to incorporate these requirements and demonstrate compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

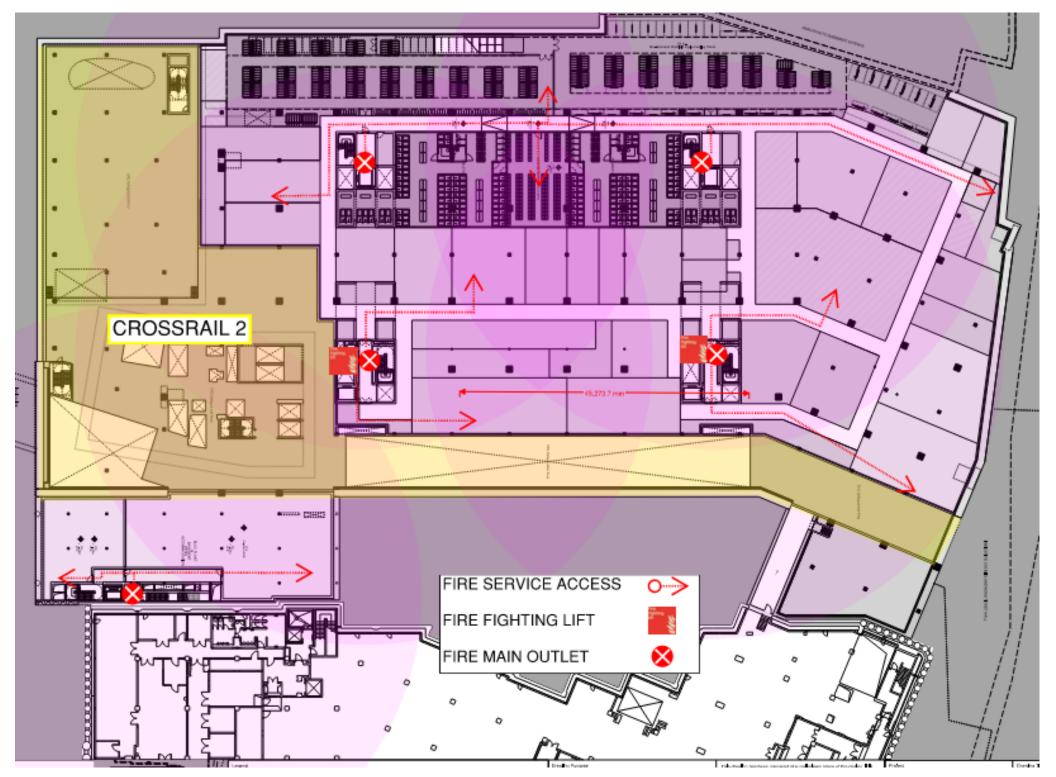
The fire safety management plan will need to ensure that any potential future modifications to the building will take into account and not compromise the base build fire safety/protection measures.

This should include the list of items below which are not exclusive:

- Cooperation between the different entities within the building.
- Specific management procedures are required to facilitate the evacuation strategy. Trained staff will need to be familiar with the nature of the phased / staged evacuation, their role in facilitating the evacuation and operation of the voice alarm system;
- Management of the fire load within the Foyer;
- Building management to identify preferred assembly area for the building.

# Appendix A – Proposed fire fighting access and facilities

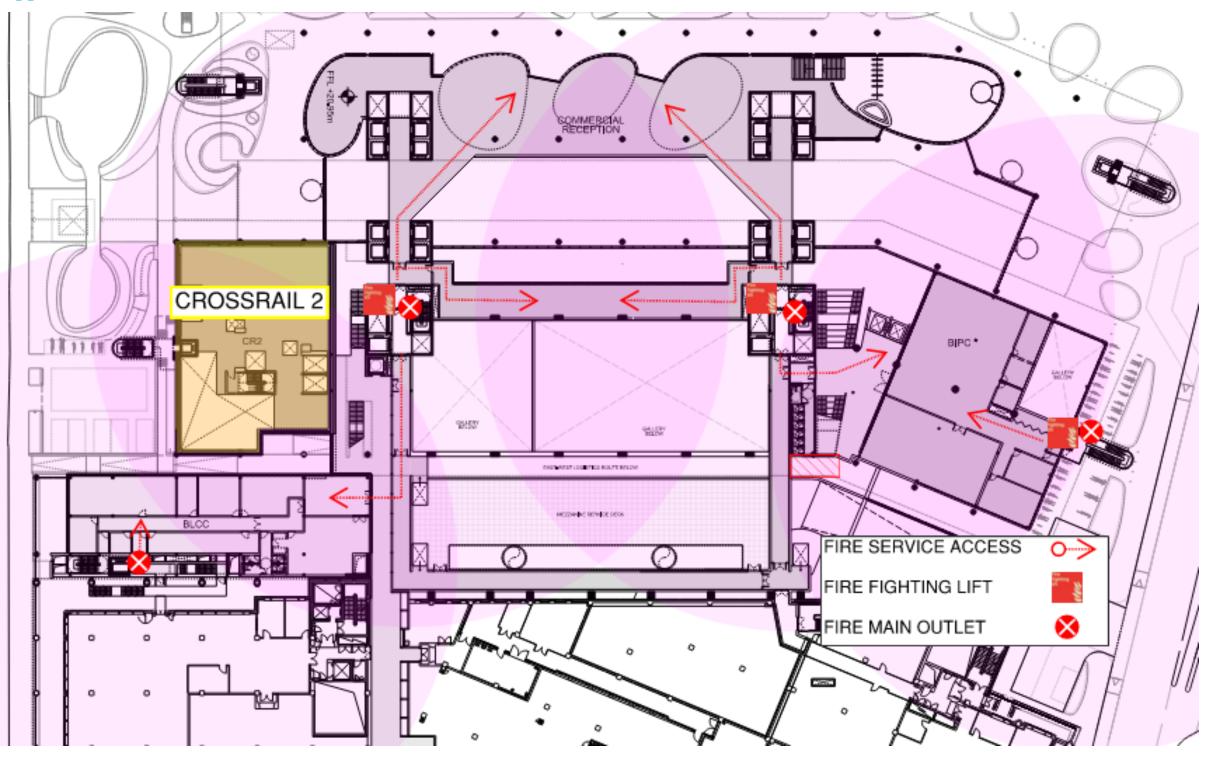
## **Basement**



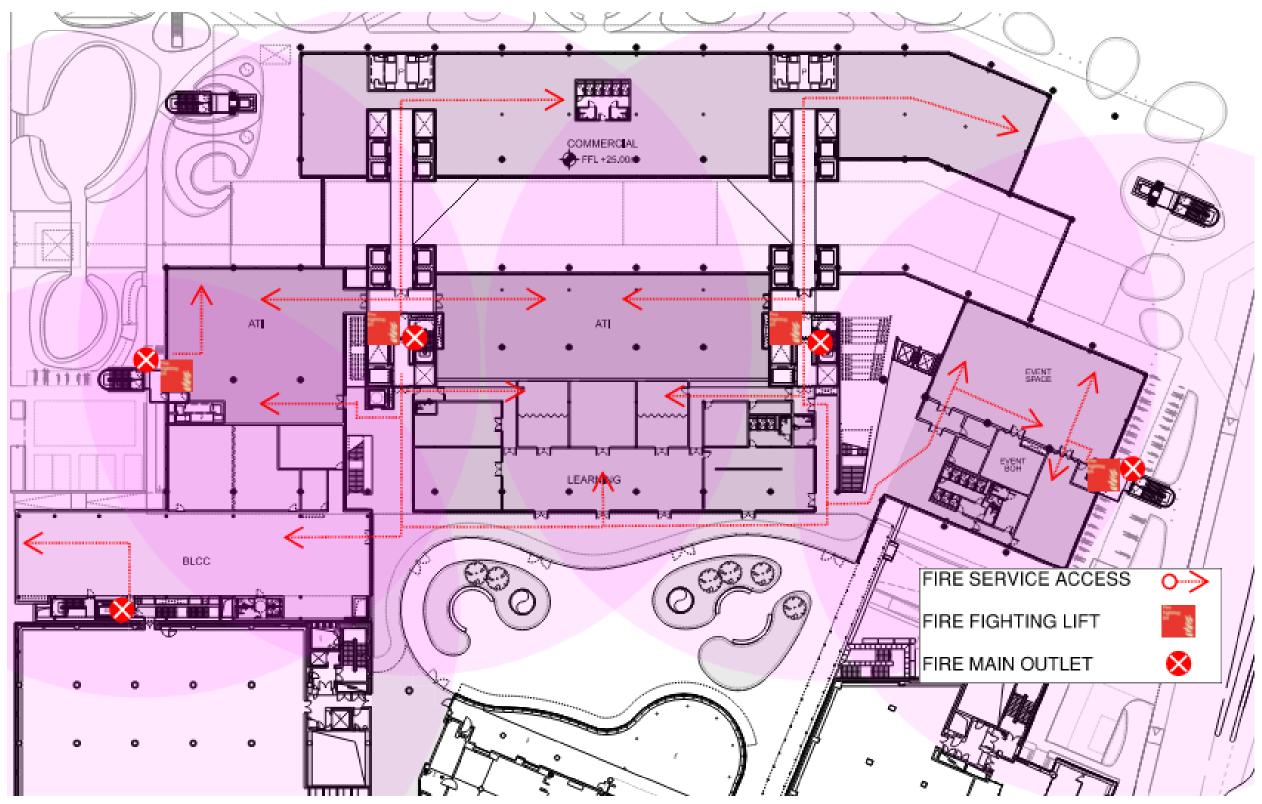
### **Lower Ground**



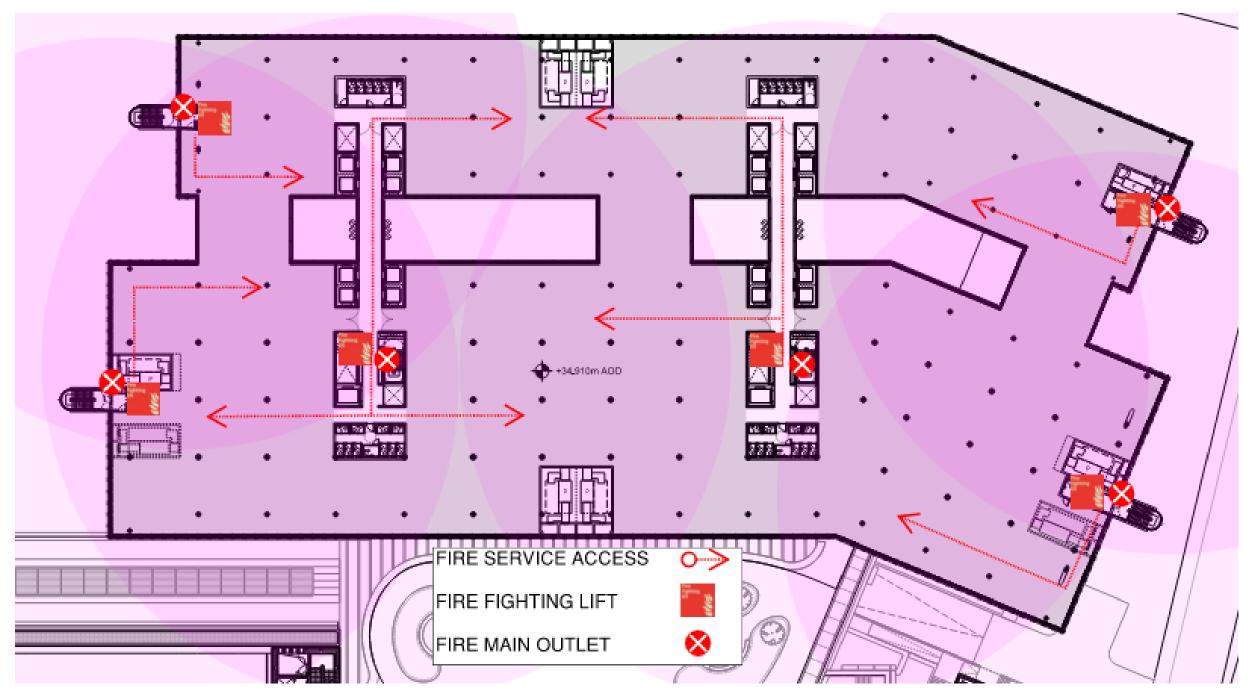
## **Upper Ground**



## Level 1



## Levels 3-5



8 Fitzroy Street London W1T 4BJ