



FORTEM

Every Home Matters

> Birmingham City Council

BEECH HILL HOUSE AND KEMPSEY HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM

Overview

Fortem delivered compliant cladding remediation and fire safety works to high-risk buildings to Beech Hill House and Kempsey House, two 9-storey high-rise residential blocks constructed in the 1960s, in line with new building regulations and standards. The initiative is part of Birmingham City Council's £1.6 billion, seven-year investment plan to enhance the quality, insulation, and energy efficiency of its housing stock.

Scope of works

The design brief focused on improving the building's thermal performance to reduce energy consumption, enhance resident comfort, provide higher-quality, energy-efficient homes and limit the external spread of fire.

The works included remediation to both buildings, including the removal and replacement of several elements: Stenni-clad external wall sections; external wall insulation (EWI) systems that were out of warranty or lacked supporting test data; high-pressure laminate and aluminium composite panels with polyurethane cores; and aluminium composite or uPVC cover panels within window runs.

All window systems, louvers and fire compartmentation were also replaced to allow remediation of passive fire breaks located behind the existing window infill panels.

Project Highlights



RESIDENTS:

'Protection of the Public Plans' to complement the overall safe system of the work and emergency response procedure.



COMPLIANCE:

Real-time compliance evidence captured via FieldView.



CAPITAL WORKS:

Contract value: £7.1m (£3.7m & £3.4m).



CLEAR CONTRACTUAL CLAUSES:

Work adhered to standards set by the Building Safety Act, with penalties for non-compliance.



CAPITAL WORKS

> July & September 2024

CLIENT: Birmingham City Council

WORKSTREAM: Capital Works

Fortem is a  WILLMOTT DIXON Group Company

CASE STUDY

Birmingham City Council

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Challenges and resolutions

> Clear accountability and early compliance integration

As Principal Contractor, establishing clear dutyholder accountability at project inception was critical to ensuring compliance with the Building Safety Act 2022. Embedding statutory duties through contractual terms, structured compliance briefings and dutyholder-led workshops ensured all partners understood their legal obligations. Field View was used to capture real-time Golden Thread evidence, supported by regular compliance gateways and work-stage hold points, enabling Fortem to effectively plan, manage and monitor works in accordance with statutory requirements and reduce the risk of non-compliance.

> Standard details are often insufficient in high-risk buildings

The project demonstrated that standard fire-stopping details and products may not adequately address the unique interface conditions found in existing high-rise residential buildings. Engaging specialist passive fire protection consultants and developing bespoke solutions for complex interfaces (such as balconies, roofs, and cladding junctions) significantly improved fire safety outcomes and avoided latent defects, while careful cost reallocation ensured budget control.

> Strong stakeholder relationships enable programme certainty

Creating proactive fire-stopping plans aligned with internal strip-out works, maintaining strong working relationships with the Local Authority Building Regulator, and implementing robust document control systems (SharePoint and the Golden Thread) were key to maintaining momentum. Transparent collaboration with regulators and stakeholders reduced delays, supported timely approvals and ensured works remained compliant, traceable and well-coordinated throughout delivery.



Our partnership did not just develop; it was designed, crafted and carefully put together by two like-minded organisations, aligned through ambition and a mutual thirst for delivering exceptional service levels to customers."

Bob Brow,
Former Service Director,
Birmingham City Council

CASE STUDY



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