



Fire Assessment Risk for The Breakers Tamarisk Way East Preston By Fire Safety Sussex.

Introduction

We have been asked by the owners Karen & Guy Folland to assess the risk of fire at the above property, including and not limited to internal checks on the fire alarm, extinguishers, electrical wiring and escape routes. In my role as a Fire Risk Assessment Officer I quickly concluded that there is a potentially devastating scenario that no one has the power to control.

Findings

The house was rewired in 2010 the fire alarm system is well maintained but should have a panel upgrade to be able to ascertain exactly where the heat source is, in case of activation, the extinguishers are placed on all floors and in strategically correct locations.

The main threat to an uncontrollable fire at the property is the fact that it has a very large thatched roof. A property opposite - No 34 Tamarisk Way was originally thatched and was burned down in 2014. Cause unknown, some comments indicate arson others say an electrical fault. The property could not be saved even though up to 74 fire fighters were in attendance. The occupants were saved by quick thinking passers by who saw the flames but the occupants were unaware the property was on fire even though the house had lost all electrical power.

Mr & Mrs Folland have a fire alarm as previously highlighted so could be safe in any event but the sensor only triggers at 65c and therefore the fire would already be intense if it had been ignited externally.

External risks to consider and out of control of the owners are;

Beach bonfires, Beach BBQs, and Global Warming, The Breakers is located on the coast at East Preston where the main wind direction is from the south west and winds are particularly breezy. Over the last year the number of incidents have increased. Beach bonfires and BBQs are actively discouraged but members of the general public have ignored requests to desist. The beach is bordered by a Tamarisk hedge which like gorse burns very easily, the owners have personally witnessed embers from bonfires landing in their garden as well as going over the roof. We are now experiencing longer periods of dry warm weather which the Met Office expect to increase the increased risk of heatwaves leads to an increased risk in fires, California currently and Chobham in July are good



examples. Fire and Rescue Services have requested members of the general public to refrain from having bonfires or disposable BBQs but the warnings have not been heeded. On 12th August a waste bin caught fire because of a hot BBQ being put into it in East Preston. Arun District Council "do not encourage beach barbecues as there are many safety issues" but are powerless to stop them. Needless to say since the first lockdown in March the number of people utilising the beach has increased massively, staycation has coincided with record numbers coming to the coast, there was a gorse fire in Bournemouth that threatened a number of properties at the time.

The risk to the property and surrounding properties obviously increases in the warmer months but another factor is the reduced equipment levels afforded to West Sussex Fire and Rescue. East Preston fire station is now an on call station and is not manned permanently, other stations would probably have to be called with times to the property of between 10 minutes minimum to 31 minutes. Proximity of Fire Hydrants to the property, when both were tested recently the water pressure was low and it is known that Southern Water reduce water pressure in the summer months to conserve supplies this would require Fire and Rescue to call in water carriers of which there are two, one in Petworth 34 minutes away and another in Burgess Hill 41 minutes away.

Conclusion

The risk of fire is moderate this increases to high at certain times of year, but the consequences are far reaching. Not just for this property but those that surround it and any fire crews sent to save it. The accompanying file goes into the fullest detail and expands on the risks that exist, potential consequences and the ability of West Sussex Fire and Rescue to be able to effectively deal with an outbreak of fire at the property.

D Batchelor

D Batchelor

Fire Safety Sussex