

# GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

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## PHASE 2 - WITNESS STATEMENT OF

### STEPHEN BEECHING ELLIS

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I, **Stephen Beeching Ellis**, will say as follows:

1. I make this statement further to my statement to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry dated 23 September 2019.

#### **My Experience**

2. I exhibited as SBE 1 to my first statement a short CV. I explained in that statement that I worked for Butler and Young Lift Consultants Limited (BYLCL) from 1995 until my retirement in 2014 [REDACTED]. Below I detail many of the projects that I worked upon while at BYLCL. Much of this has been from memory but I have been provided with information from BYLCL to assist in compiling this list.

London Borough of Wandsworth. William Willison Estate – circa 1995.  
Refurbishment of three passenger lifts.

London Borough of Wandsworth. Lusher & Glassinghall – circa 1996.  
Refurbishment of two passenger lifts.

London Borough of Wandsworth. Ashburton Estate – circa 1996.  
Refurbishment of several passenger lifts.

City of London. Barbican Estate – circa 1997 to 2008. Refurbishment of eighty one lifts.

British Museum – circa 1997. Refurbishment and conversion of two goods lifts into passenger lifts at the King Edward Building.

British Museum – circa 1999. Refurbishment of the Gold lift – King Edward Building including creation of safe solid surrounds whilst maintaining the decorative cage works.

Palace of Westminster – circa 1996. Refurbishment of one hydraulic passenger lift including glazed shaft construction at the Speakers Residence.

MAFF – circa 1997 Quantum House, Taunton. Partial refurbishment of two passenger lifts.

N M Rothschild – circa 2000. No. 1 King William Street E.C.3. Comprehensive report on base build, maintenance and building fitout issues.

Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Tennant Management Organisation – circa 2001. Broadwood Terrace and Chesterton Square. Refurbishment of two passenger lifts.

Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea – circa 2003. Kensington Town Hall. Refurbishment of twelve passenger/goods lifts.

HM Land Registry – circa 2002. Lincolns Inn Fields. Refurbishment of two passenger lifts.

NM Rothschild – circa 2003. 18 St Swithins Lane. Refurbishment of a three car group of direct acting hydraulic passenger lifts.

Optima Housing – circa 2003. Birmingham City Council. Sentinel Towers and Bell Barn blocks. Refurbishment and enhancement of fourteen lifts.

Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea – circa 2007. Chelsea Old Town Hall. Refurbishment of one passenger lift.

Jones Lang La Salle (Aviva) – circa 2006. Mansfield House, Southampton Street. Refurbishment of two passenger lifts.

Jones Lang La Salle (Aviva) – circa 2008. Ashton House and Norfolk House, Milton Keynes. Refurbishment of four passenger lifts.

St Albans District Council – circa 2005. Council Offices. Refurbishment of two passenger lifts.

English Partnerships – circa 2009. 110 Buckingham Palace Road. Refurbishment of two passenger lifts plus one hydraulic vehicle lift.

Jones Lang La Salle (Aviva) – circa 2004. Great Charles Street, Birmingham. Refurbishment of seven passenger lifts.

City of London – circa 2011. Avondale Estate, Old Kent Road. Refurbishment of 10 passenger lifts.

Museum of London – circa 2011. London Wall. Refurbishment of one passenger lift and one large goods lift.

Natural History Museum Kensington - circa 2008. Refurbishment of one passenger lift plus conversion of one goods lift to DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant passenger lift and duplex the pair.

Science Museum Kensington – circa 2011. Conversion and refurbishment of one large goods lift with vertical rising doors to horizontal doors and use as a part time passenger lift during busy periods.

Royal Courts of Justice, Strand – circa 2004 – 2008. Refurbishment of two groups of three passenger lifts and provision of evacuation facilities to one passenger lift. Installation of two less abled persons platform hoists.

Reed Publishing, Sutton – circa 2006 – 2010. Refurbishment of two groups of four passenger lifts.

Network Rail – circa 2005 – 2010. Refurbishment of lifts at various stations on West Coast Line. Conversion of goods lifts to DDA compliant passenger lifts.

33 Gracechurch St. EC3 – circa 2010 . Replacement of a four car group of passenger lifts using the first generic manufactured Hall Call Destination control in Europe. Included a visit to Kollmorgen works in Cologne and assisting in control design elements. Also refurbishment of two back of house lifts.

3. The vast majority of these projects were what are called “Turnkey” projects. This is where a lift contractor was engaged who was responsible for all enabling, civil and electrical works associated with the scheme.

### **Grenfell Tower Lift Refurbishment 2003 - 2007**

4. In my first statement I outlined my role in the Grenfell Tower Lift Refurbishment Project. Upon reflection I believe I worked with Ian Moorhouse in developing the Specification, probably in the final stages assimilating material provided by the structural engineer and architect.

5. Ian retired in 2005. Ian chaired the project pre-start meeting in November 2004 but was not heavily involved beyond that time. I took over the day to day administration of the project from November 2004 until its conclusion.
6. My recollection is that the residents of Grenfell Tower had endured multiple breakdowns in the period prior to the refurbishment and that there were also issues regarding the size of the lift cars (particularly in respect of buggies).
7. In my experience, there were always budgetary considerations when local authority refurbishments were being considered which, of course, had an influence on the scheme eventually selected.
8. The scheme selected and undertaken at Grenfell Tower incorporated enhancements to the usual type of local authority residential refurbishment, incorporating improved speed, service, lift car and entrance dimensions and features to assist residents with a wide range of disabilities. In my opinion the resultant refurbishment provided considerable benefits to the residents in terms of improved facilities and enhanced reliability.
9. In this statement I will expand upon two issues addressed in my first statement: Firefighting Lifts and the Express Drop Key.
10. In 2003/4 Grenfell Tower would have been viewed as a reasonably fire secure structure where, due to compartmentalization of the building, it would have been exceptional for a fire to have spread from one flat to another and even less likely from floor to floor.
11. From my recollection of the Codes and Standards, a lift could only be classed as a "Firefighting Lift" if it and the building provision around it complied fully with the requirements of BS5588-5. As far as I am aware there is no category of a "partial" Firefighting installation. The lift is either a Firefighting Lift or it is not.
12. From recollection at least the following civil and lift works would have been required to achieve compliance with BS5588-5:

- Fire secure lobbies at each non-residential landing with smoke dispersal. – including the Ground floor;
- Lifts to serve all floors – at the time of this refurbishment not all floors were served;
- Landing and/or pit drainage;
- Alternatively routed main supply, to changeover upon failure of the primary supply;
- Dedicated Firefighters’ intercom; and
- Trap door in the lift car roof, which in my experience was not generally favoured in local authority housing lifts. Local authorities were generally concerned about trap doors in terms of safety and security of the building. This was particularly relevant to BS 5588-5 which required that a trap door be opened from within the lift creating a potentially hazardous situation in terms of misuse.

13. In my view to achieve compliance with BS5588-5 would have added considerable cost and delay to the Project, even if all elements were feasible.

14. BYLCL considered that the two passenger lifts at Grenfell Tower comprised a refurbishment because significant equipment was retained. This retained equipment included guide rails, guide bracketry, counterweight and landing back boxes. From recollection the term “refurbishment” was employed on every document throughout the Project.

15. If these lifts had been regarded as new lifts at that time then they would have required a CE Mark (Certificate of Conformity) before they could legally enter service. The two lifts were not CE Marked by the lift contractor, Apex.

16. In respect of the fire integrity of the landing entrances, as far as I am aware the Apex Test Sheet for the first lift to be commissioned demonstrates that the lift entrances were two hour fire rated. As I recall they could not receive an automatic certificate due to the architrave arrangement, but required a letter of assessment from Warrington Fire. I have a memory of chasing Apex for this letter and eventually receiving a copy.

17. The view at the time was that because these lifts were refurbished lifts in an existing building compliance with BS5588-5 was not mandatory.

18. I exhibit as SBE 12 Technical Guidance Note No 24 rev 1 published in January 2017 by LEIA (Lift and Escalator Industry Association) which I have read recently. It concerns standard BS 8899:2016 titled 'Improvement of fire-fighting and evacuation provisions in existing lifts – Code of Practice'.

19. The Guidance refers to the Foreword to the Code (first bullet point on page 1) and states:

*“For many older lifts provided for operation by fire services prior to BS 5588-5/BS EN 81-72, modernizing them to BS EN 81-72 might not be feasible. Guidance is needed on improving provisions for fire service to allow the lift to be used so BS 8899 has been developed to assist in improving the fire-fighting and evacuation provision in lifts installed before the publication of BS EN 81-72:2015”*

20. BS EN 81-72: 2015 would be the successor to BS EN 81-72: 2003, both of which set out the requirements for Firefighting Lifts.


21. My reason for drawing the Inquiry's attention to BS 8899:2016 is not so much for what it contains but the fact that it was felt necessary to develop the Code at all. It suggests to me that it must have been considered that the existing BS and EN standards did not provide sufficient guidance in respect of existing lifts in existing buildings and had not done so for many years. I have read through BS 8899 and, from my understanding there is scope for selected improvement without full compliance with BS 5588-5. Such guidance was not available back in 2003/2004.

22. In relation to the Express Drop Key, this was a direct instruction from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation. This key in my experience was the 'go to' secure key for the lift industry working on local authority sites. This was because of its enhanced security features to combat issues of vandalism and misuse, compared with the easily available Triangular Euro Key.

I believe that the facts stated in this statement are true.

I am willing for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and published on the Inquiry's website.

Signed:



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**STEPHEN BEECHING ELLIS**

Dated:

8 June 2021