

Grenfell Action Group

Working to defend and serve the Lancaster West community



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MAXILLA 3 – MORE DECEIT AND BETRAYAL

Posted on [September 27, 2015](#)



There is an old adage that “timing is everything”. We at the Grenfell Action Group believe that the current action of the TMO in depriving local residents of the Lancaster West Community Rooms without any consultation or warning, or offer of replacement premises, at the same time that the Lancaster West Residents Association has been re-constituted and the Grenfell Tower Residents Association has been newly formed, tells us all we need to know about the duplicity of our landlords, how little they can be trusted, and their propensity to trample with impunity over residents rights.

There simply could not have been a worse time to remove the only property left on Lancaster West Estate that allowed residents to pursue our right to meet and commune together and we believe that the message the TMO are sending is that they are incapable of

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empathising with the needs of our community and are incapable of responding to the concerns of tenants and leaseholders.

Residents of Lancaster West Estate have now lost free and unrestricted access to the only place left in our community that was suitable to facilitate group meetings and we believe that this is totally unacceptable. The Grenfell Action Group are demanding that the TMO return this invaluable resource back to residents without delay.

The first blow to democracy on Lancaster West came without any consultation or warning as the community was deprived of our old EMB Community Rooms back in 2014. This occurred as a result of the TMO moving staff out of Grenfell Tower to facilitate the Improvement Works. The EMB Rooms were then converted to office space for staff, newly decorated and made to look nice with the addition of flower pots, etc. This was after years of the TMO forcing residents to use the same premises while in a state of neglect.

Around the same time the Lancaster West community lost access to our Resource Centre as this property was also commandeered by the TMO as a temporary venue for the Grenfell Under 3 Creche. Again, no warning or consultation between the TMO and local residents before the Resource Centre was simply taken away from us.

Finally, a few weeks ago, again without so much as a polite warning and total absence of any consultation, our community was told that we would be losing the only remaining space left on the estate for residents to meet.

We were told that the Maxilla Nursery and Childrens Centre would be taking over our last refuge in the old caretakers office beside Grenfell Tower, and that we would have to find an alternative venue, away from Lancaster West Estate, if we wanted to continue to hold regular residents’ meetings.

This latest outrage was particularly galling as we had received correspondence in response to concerns that we had raised with our MP, Lady Borwick, that gave assurances that the Goldborne Childrens Centre would be finished on time and led us to believe that the Community Rooms would be spared.

We received the email below from Lady Borwick’s parliamentary private secretary John Sweeney on 27th August;

“Further to our email conversation, Lady Borwick has been informed...that the school will be ready for 8th September, so the children will be going back on time. Lady Borwick had been told there would be a delay, but she is delighted to hear that this will not now be the case.”

However questions subsequently addressed to the relevant RBKC Scrutiny committee by Councillor Blakeman received the following response on 16th September which she immediately copied to us;

“We have secured these rooms until 2017 and shall review the use and suitability of this location at the end of the academic year. This will include a consultation with users about their views on the site (July 2016). If the review suggests that the rooms are not suitable we will seek alternative provision. Following the refurbishment of the building

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and feedback from parents who have begun to use the site, we are hopeful that the community rooms will become a community hub with an increased offer for local families.”

We have no doubt that Lady Borwick’s reassurances were offered by her in good faith, which leads us to conclude that she also was misled and deceived by RBKC officers, just as we were, indicating that they have no more respect for her office as Member of Parliament than they have for the rights and needs of the less privileged communities of North Kensington.

In addition to the above, which clearly indicates that the Council’s use of our meeting room as a nursery is anything but ‘temporary’, as previously claimed, the Grenfell Action Group does not believe that these premises are suitable for use as a childrens’ nursery, a view clearly shared by Councillor Blakeman, who in her submission to the Scrutiny Committee also said;

“Can you advise why these premises were deemed suitable for use as a crèche? These rooms are subterranean, situated directly beside the vehicular access to Baseline Studios and the garages beneath Hurstway Walk. The siting of the entrance is dangerous as this service road is in perpetual use. The rooms have no daylight, so the children will be permanently in artificial light. What outside space will be available for the children...and what provision will be made for their toileting? At the moment there are only two adult lavatories available.”

The Grenfell Action Group believes that the seizure of our meeting rooms is a direct threat to democracy on Lancaster West. The rooms in question are also totally inappropriate for a children’s nursery, failing to meet the ‘Statutory Framework For Early Years’ standard, despite Council claims to the contrary. We therefore challenge the Council and the TMO to justify their treatment of these local children, and of our local community groups which have been unfairly penalized by the seizure of our much valued and much needed meeting rooms.

[Statutory Framework For Early Years Care](#)

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