

THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

STATEMENT OF BARRY GOOCH IN RESPONSE TO PHASE 2

RULE 9 REQUEST DATED 20th July 2020

I Barry Gooch, previously employed by LB Plastics make this statement in response to a request for evidence under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, and will say as follows:

1. The contents of this statement, and the facts stated, are in relation to my own knowledge and understanding and as what I remember as an individual. This is not a statement on behalf of my previous employers LB Plastics.
2. As a consequence, many of the issues that I have been asked in the Rule 9 request for evidence dated 20th July 2020 are outside my scope of knowledge, but I will endeavor to deal with what aspects I am able to. In relation to the specific issues set out for me to deal with in the Rule 9 request I have provided my replies to these below in the numerical order that they were asked under the subject heading.
3. I think that it is important at the outset to explain what my experience in construction is and also to clarify what my actual role was as an employee of LB Plastics on the Grenfell Tower Project.

Professional background regarding LB Plastics:

4. My professional background is as a qualified engineer. One of my early roles was as a Senior Quality Engineer at Rolls Royce, which is a position I held going back to my early 20's. I am also qualified in health and safety.

5. I was employed by LB Plastics Ltd from early 2000 until 6th August 2012. I joined the company as Operations Manager and was appointed Operations Director after approximately 18 months. My responsibilities were initially for operations at the Nether Heage site, but my responsibilities grew as the company expanded from producing plastic extrusion systems into manufacturing doors and windows at the Derwent site. I have no knowledge of LB Plastics ever making a smoke door or one ever being tested. They made all sorts of doors, fire doors being the smaller set of doors made. The products ranged from timber doors and timber fire doors, to bullet proof and high security doors. There was a variety of products on offer.
6. When I left the company in 2012, I was responsible for all manufacturing across both sites, logistics, sales admin, maintenance, quality assurance, personnel and health and safety.
7. One of the reasons for the expansion of my role was cut backs within the business. When I joined I had taken a role below my pay grade as I didn't have a job at the time and because the Production Director was close to retirement I, in effect, took over a number of tasks senior to my actual position. When the Production Director retired I took on the tasks within his role. As various members of staff left the business I was given more and more responsibility such that my role mushroomed over time as was required.
8. Manse Masterdor (based in Knaresborough, Yorkshire) was a company that had been acquired by LB Plastics before I joined the company. It was a customer of LB Plastics the got into financial difficulties and was consequently purchased by LB Plastics. The company had been run by four brothers David Hudson, Mike Hudson, Phil Hudson and Keith Hudson. When the business was under the LB umbrella David Hudson left the company, but the other brothers remained and continued to run the company as before.
9. In 2000 the Hudson's reported directly to James Litchfield, Group Managing Director and Geoff Rawson, Group Finance Director of the Litchfield Group of companies – LB Plastics, LB Inc (USA), LB GMBH, Litchfield Bros Ltd and

Manse Masterdor. Geoff Rawson retired in 2010 and was replaced by Mark Llewellen, who took over his role and responsibilities.

At this time Leon Litchfield was Chairman of the group.

10. In approximately 2002 it was decided to create a satellite door manufacturing operation in Derbyshire at the Derwent Site, I was given the responsibility of preparing the site and creating the new manufacturing facility. Manufacturing commenced at the end of 2002.
11. The day to day responsibility for the manufacture was given to Phil Hudson and two of his managers from Knaresborough, Paul Taylor (Quality Manager) and Phil Taylor (Joiner). All of the manufacturing instructions and the materials were supplied by Manse Masterdor.
12. Paul Taylor moved to Derbyshire into one of the company houses, Phil Taylor visited the site 3 or 4 days each week. My role at this time was to recruit new people to take the business forward.
13. In approximately 2004 Paul Taylor left the business and I was able to recruit my own manager to manage the daily operations. Nick Novelle took over and stayed with the business until around 2007, although I am not certain of the year. Nick was a graduate engineer and ex-forces. He was an excellent manager and organiser and moved the business forward. However, he ultimately decided to leave and I understood that this was due to the frustration at not being able to manage the business in the way that he wanted to because of the influence of the Knaresborough operation. Due to the financial position of the group I therefore took over the running of the business with three senior supervisors, Ivan Bilbie (Quality and Despatch), Wayne Hope (CNC and door Prep) and Pete Whitton (door assembly and painting) I managed the business successfully with this team until leaving in 2012.
14. The Knaresborough manufacturing operation was closed in 2011/2012 but the order processing, purchasing and sales functions continued at Knaresborough beyond my departure.

15. The Derwent operation only ever manufactured doors using materials purchased and to specifications supplied by the Manse Masterdor operation at Knaresborough. Mike Hudson (Managing Director / Sales Director), Phil Hudson (Production Director) and Keith Hudson (Sales Director) were responsible throughout, as was James Litchfield.
16. Management Consultants Paul Herbert and John Armstrong were brought into the business early in 2012 at the request of the bank to try to stop the losses. Paul Herbert took over the day to day Managing Director role from James Litchfield.
17. When I left the business in August 2012 Brian O'Sullivan was given my role at the Derwent site.

Replies to specific queries raised in request dated 20 July 2020

Please give details of your role and responsibilities while employed at LB Plastics.

18. I have already dealt with this as set out in the paragraphs above.

Please set out your understanding of the regulatory requirements for doors as sold as FD30 and FD30S doors, for the period of your employment at LB Plastics; if you were given information about the regulatory requirements from others, please set out who provided it and what it was.

19. I firstly set out that I had never heard of the FD30S door prior to this Rule 9 Request. As stated, I do not have any knowledge of any testing of doors sold as FD30S nor do I have any knowledge of such doors being manufactured.

20. As to the question itself, doors manufactured at the Derwent site were made to a specification supplied by Manse Masterdor at Knaresborough. I had no specific knowledge of the requirements of the doors supplied other than I was aware there had been FD30 doors that had been tested and that the specification for the doors manufactured was as a result of that test. Any door that was fire tested was produced by the Knaresborough production facility or the LB Plastics Development department. The Knaresborough operation would always provide the specification for manufacture. It would provide details of the materials to be used and the standard operating procedure that would specify how the door would be assembled. This information would be provided by Mike Hudson in the first instance and would be translated into working documents by Phil Hudson and Keith Hudson. If LB Development was involved, as appears to be the case in the report of February 2006, Jim Duncan would have prepared the test door and supplied the information to Manse Masterdor.
21. I wouldn't be told what the particular reference (FD30 etc) was except for perhaps a reference to the British standard and would simply receive a specification on how to manufacture a door. I wasn't involved in the manufacture for test or the regulatory or compliance testing. They would arrange the manufacture for test and arrange for those tests via Manse Masterdor when they should faithfully document what the door was made of and how it was assembled into a specification so that every other door would also pass that test. I had no responsibility or involvement in that process whatsoever. We would subsequently receive the specification and build it to that specification as per the design and test that was sent to us. We had no reason to question that specification. For example, a fire door would contain certain material to prevent the fire going through it, but if the specification was such that there was less of that material within the door I wouldn't know any difference according to what was required for the test. If there was no such material within the door at all then it would not be a fire door, but quantities and size would not ring any alarm bells to anyone manufacturing the door who would be building it according to the specification provided. If any changes were required, then we would be provided with a new specification according to those changes and would not question why changes were being made as it was not our

responsibility to do so. As far as I was concerned it was sent for the build once they were content with it.

Please set out clearly each stage in the design, development and fire safety testing of the range of doors trademarked as 'Suredor' and sold as FD30 ("Suredor Fire Doors") for the period of your employment at LB Plastics, including any modifications made to the door, and indicating:

- a. the extent to which LB Plastics and/or Manse Masterdor Limited was responsible;*
- b. which individuals were involved at each stage and what their role was; and*
- c. your role in each of those stages.*

22. To deal with each point in turn:

- a. The doors manufactured as FD30 were designed, developed and submitted for fire testing by Manse Masterdor and LB Plastics. I cannot be sure which aspect was carried out by which business as there was significant crossover within the businesses.
- b. James Litchfield had overall control of both businesses. The design and development were under the control of James Litchfield and was likely to include Terry Hardy (Design and Development Director) Jim Duncan (Development Manager) who was a direct report to Terry Hardy until approximately 2009. Mike Hudson was usually involved in testing and would present the results of tests at management meetings, which would include a variety of tests for a range of products. He would also report on sales and new prospects for the business; and
- c. I had no involvement whatsoever in the design, development or testing of fire doors. Doors for test were never prepared by manufacturing. Manufacturing would provide a machined door slab to instructions but nothing else. I once attended a security test at an outside supplier location, but I don't remember why and think this was for interest purposes. I have never witnessed a fire test.

In relation to the decision that the Suredor door was suitable to be sold as a fire door, what process was followed, who made that decision and what information was it based on?

23. To my knowledge the Suredor was sold as a fire door based on the results of testing and that without a test certificate it could not be sold as a fire door. The decision would be made by Mike Hudson and James Litchfield who dealt with sales and marketing issues.

Two fire resistance tests were undertaken, one by the Building Test Centre, test number BTC 14434F, document MAS00000001, and one by Chiltern International, test number Chilt/RF 07024, document MAS00000002, ("the Test Reports"). Are these tests the only such tests carried out on Suredor Fire Doors, while you were employed at LB Plastics? If not, please indicate what other tests were conducted.

24. As set out above, at the time of my employment with LB Plastics I would be aware of fire tests undertaken on the Suredor being carried out but would not have any detailed knowledge of those test or how they were undertaken. I knew the mechanism of testing (as I have explained) and would have been aware that a test had been carried out by way of that information being incorporated into a form of the manufacturing specification i.e. the instructions of how to manufacture the door. However, the first time I have read a test report and seen details of a specific test was when such documents were sent to me as part of my Rule 9 Request. I simply wouldn't need to read a test report as part of my role. I do not have any knowledge of any other tests on the Suredor being carried out during my employment at LB Plastics and I would not have had any detailed knowledge of the tests referred to.

Please give details of any smoke leakage tests carried out on Suredor Fire Doors. If no such tests were conducted, please indicate why this was not deemed necessary and who

made that decision.

25. I do not have any knowledge of smoke leakage tests or who made any decisions in relation to such tests. I infer from this question that reference is being made to the FD30S but, as I have set out above, I had no knowledge of this reference. I therefore have no knowledge of the FD30S being sold. As to the issue of smoke leakage tests, I would assume that a fire door test would deal with any smoke leakage issues at the same time but have never heard of this distinction.

The Suredor Brochure, document TMO10037503, shows a number of different glazing styles, available as a 30 minute rated Fire Door. Were fire resistance tests carried out in relation to each of those glazing styles? If so, please provide details, and if not, explain why this was not deemed necessary? If advice was received on this matter, give details of the advice including who gave it, and in what form and why it was given.

26. I do not have any knowledge of specific fire tests being carried out on doors with different glazing styles or who would have given advice in relation to this. In respect of my role I referred to the specification to consider what was required for the build. The glass required would form part of the specification provided which we would follow for the build

The Suredor Fire Doors supplied and installed at Grenfell Tower had different hardware to the door sets shown in the Test Reports. In relation to the different hardware, including the addition of a self-closing device:

- a. please give details of any further tests or assessments that were relied upon to ensure the doors could be sold as FD30S doors;*
- b. if no further tests or assessments were relied upon, please explain why this was not deemed necessary and who made that decision;*
- c. please explain whether and in what circumstances certification provided by the manufactures of hardware was relied upon to ensure the doors could be sold as FD30S doors; and*

d. who made decisions relating to the use of alternative hardware and what information did they base their decisions on?

27. To deal with each point in turn:

- a. As stated above, I do not have any knowledge of FD30S fire doors.
- b. As stated above, I did not have any knowledge as to testing and as such I do not have any knowledge as to why further testing was deemed not necessary or who made that decision as I had no input into the process;
- c. As stated above I do not have any knowledge of FD30S doors; and
- d. The decisions relating to hardware were made by the management team at Knaresborough. Keith Hudson was specifically responsible for purchasing and would have requested certification as part of the purchasing process. Whether he acted independently or consulted with others I cannot say. The hardware was purchased against specific orders and it was then specified on the works instructions as to what should be used. I had no input into the type or supplier of hardware as we used the hardware specified by Manse Masterdor.

Please explain the differences between a Suredor door, a FD30 Suredor Fire Door and a FD30S Suredor Fire Door?

28. As I have stated above, I cannot explain the differences between the FD30 and FD30S. From a manufacturing perspective and my role within LB plastics, I would be supplied with instructions and a specification from Manse Masterdor at the Knaresborough site concerning which door type to make and would then build the door / job as per those specifications. If there are any differences to be considered, they would be highlighted in the manufacturing specification. Hypothetically, if someone asked this question of me when I was employed by LB Plastics, I would have to refer to the specification documents supplied by Manse Masterdor because, in my experience, committing specifications to memory is bad practice on the basis that if specifications change it can result in mistakes being made by those simply working from memory.

Please describe the manufacturing process for Suredor Fire Doors when they were first introduced, including:

- a. how glazing was installed in the fire door; and*
- b. whether smoke seals were attached to all fire doors.*

29. As stated above each door is manufactured according to the specific specification / instructions received. The basic manufacturing process was the same for all doors but how they were treated would vary depending on the door type. My recollection is that each door would have a unique reference, a bill of materials and a specification of how it should be assembled. This specification was supplied by Manse Mastredor so any variations would originate from the customer purchase order given to Manse Masterdor. Every single door made was unique by virtue of its size, colour etc. If a door was specified to be a fire a door at the point of manufacture it would include specific components that would be used in the manufacture of fire doors and tailored to the individual specification and requirement. Different fire-resistant glazing could be used depending on the specification.

Please describe any changes that were made to the manufacturing process for Suredor Fire Doors from when manufacturing commenced until you ceased to be employed at LB Plastics, including any changes made to:

- a. the number of intumescent strips and pads;*
- b. the letter plate;*
- c. the bracketing and sealing of glazing;*
- d. the glass used in glazing; and*
- e. the hardware used.*

30. I would again refer to what I have already set out above. I am not aware of specific changes made to the manufacturing process. There were always changes

as technology moved on but individually, I can't speak to any specific changes made to the manufacturing process as it would depend on the specifications provided to me. As stated above any door or fire door, unless stated otherwise, would be built to the particular specification for that door. During my time at LB Plastics I am not aware of any specific changes made to the manufacturing process of the Suredor fire doors that affected the specification. Undoubtedly changes would have been made to the process in relation to the efficiency, including new machinery, material and suppliers during the time I worked at LB Plastics. However, changes to the items listed (a)-(e) would all be governed by what was contained within the manufacturing specification. Without seeing the specification, I wouldn't readily know if there was a change or not. As a satellite manufacturing operation, anything manufacturing did or fitted to a door would have been specified by Manse Masterdor. Sales order processing, purchasing, development, testing and pricing were all controlled by Manse Masterdor. Until late 2011 or early 2012 the programs for the CNC machinery at Derwent site were sent weekly from Manse Masterdor and it was only after this time that I was able to carry out this function at the Derwent site by one of my own technicians.

Why were these changes made?

31. As stated above I do not have specific knowledge of why changes were made other than introduction of new equipment.

Who was responsible for these changes?

32. I refer to my answer regarding the manufacturing process above. If there were any changes to materials or specification it would have been received from Manse Masterdor. The introduction of new equipment for manufacturing would have been authorised by me but if there were any changes to materials or specification it would have been received from Manse Masterdor.

Were the Suredor Fire Doors tested following these changes?

33. I had no input into any of this and would refer you to what I have stated about testing above.

In relation to Jim Duncan, Mike Hudson and Leon Andrew James Litchfield:

- a. what were their roles and responsibilities;***
- b. what was their involvement with, or knowledge of, any fire resistance and/or cold smoke leakage testing carried out on Suredor Fire Doors;***
- c. how regularly did you meet or otherwise communicate with them; and***
- d. what was the purpose of your communications.***

34. I will deal with each point in turn to the best of my recollection:

a. Roles and responsibility:

Jim Duncan (Development Manager) was responsible for product development and testing for LB Plastics. Until around 2009 he reported directly to Terry Hardy. When Terry Hardy retired (I think around 2009 but am not certain of this date) he reported directly to James Litchfield.

Mike Hudson (Managing Director/Sales Director Manse Masterdor) was responsible for sales of Masterdor doors and had overall responsibility for the Knaresborough site, he reported directly to James Litchfield.

James Litchfield (Group Managing Director) was responsible to Leon Litchfield for all of the group companies. He tended to be closely aligned to sales but attempted to have an overview of the entire business.

b. Involvement:

Mike Hudson and Jim Duncan were both closely involved with testing of doors for fire resistance and security. The report dated 16th February 2006, which I have only seen as a consequence of this Rule 9 request, lists Jim

Duncan as one of the attendees. I also believe Mike Hudson attended fire testing but cannot be specific as to when or the type of door or product tested. The department that Jim Duncan was responsible for at LB Plastics had test equipment for security but not fire. He would have had detailed knowledge of fire test requirements and it is extremely likely that he and his team would have manufactured doors for testing, as would the team at Manse Masterdor. James Litchfield is likely to have had an overview of the testing requirements and would certainly be aware of any testing being carried out as he would need to approve the costs.

c. Regulatory of meetings and communications:

I met and communicated regularly with James Litchfield and Jim Duncan, less so with Mike Hudson as he was based in Knaresborough. I would speak to James Litchfield and Jim Duncan at least on a weekly basis, and often daily. Mike Hudson and I would speak every few weeks and meet about once each month. My meetings were not about fire safety regulations or compliance but concerned my general role as an employee of LB Plastics.

d. Purpose of the communications:

I reported to both James Litchfield and Leon Litchfield, so I met and communicated with James Litchfield regularly. My responsibilities were much larger than the Derwent door manufacturing operation so my meetings with James Litchfield covered all sorts of topics. James Litchfield didn't spend a great deal of time in the business and didn't manage in a conventional way with regular formal meetings.

I met with Jim Duncan regularly and discussed all sorts of issues that affected the business. Jim was a close link with LB Plastics customers, such that if there were issues with LB Plastics products or service, Jim was often the person who was required to liaise with the customer and this included any problems that may have originated in one of my areas of responsibility. I worked closely with Jim on a specific LB Plastics door project to develop a Upvc door for flood protection. I approved his purchase orders for tooling for LB Plastics customers and other expenses, so I saw him regularly. For the avoidance of doubt, I had no supervisory responsibility over Jim Duncan.

I met with Mike Hudson around once a month. We would often speak to discuss customer issues and sales volumes as I rarely had a clear view of how many doors I had to manufacture each week. As stated above, we had infrequent management meetings chaired by James Litchfield. At these meetings he would discuss sales opportunities, customer issues and matters of a general nature involving the business. I would present information about manufacturing performance etc. I would rarely know the identity of the end-customer unless there was a specific manufacturing issue drawn to my attention.

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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

Signed



Dated

22 OCTOBER 2020