

GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

- Witness statement of JOHN ROBERT TAPSCOTT

1. The following are my responses to the questions posed in the letter dated 27th June 2019 from Emily Schwikkard, Assistant Solicitor to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
2. **Question 1(a) My role and responsibilities:** I was employed by Manse Masterdor Ltd (Reg.No: 3530099) (hereinafter 'Manse Masterdor'), a wholly-owned subsidiary of L.B.Plastics Ltd of Firs Works, Nether Heage, Derbyshire DE56 2JJ (hereinafter 'LBP'). LBP had acquired Manse Masterdor in 1999.
3. Following this acquisition manufacturing was undertaken at Manse Masterdor's factories at Halfpenny Lane and Hambleton Grove in Knaresborough, North Yorkshire and at Derwent Works in Derbyshire. The Derwent Works were under the direct control of LBP management. Financial control and overall management was controlled from LBP's Head Office. All manufacturing was progressively transferred to the Derwent Works and completed in 2009 with all product development centred in Derbyshire. The works and offices in Knaresborough closed in 2012.
4. As a retired bank manager, my duties were primarily administrative with particular emphasis on human resources, administration and documentation. For at least the last 12 months my employment was part-time and ultimately I was required to work just two days a week.
5. Up until final closure the local management team in Knaresborough was led by Mr Michael Hudson, reporting to Mr James Litchfield, who was Managing Director of both Manse Masterdor and LBP. Courtesy titles of Associate Director were accorded to Mr Michael Hudson (Sales), Mr Philip Hudson (Production), Mr Keith Hudson (IT) and myself (HR and Administration), but none of us were ever Directors of Manse Masterdor. However we were required (confirmed by a Special Resolution dated 31st December 2000) to sign certain commercial documents delivered to Knaresborough as if Directors to obviate the need for them to be forwarded to LBP in Derbyshire.

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6. **Question 1(b) FD30 and FD30S** Manse Masterdor manufactured and sold standard door sets and fire door sets. A door set is a bespoke door in its frame with all hardware applied. Some door sets were made of engineered timber in a reinforced plastic frame (the Masterdor MF range) and some were made of solid foam within a plastic skin in a reinforced plastic frame (the Suredor range). My understanding was that all fire door sets should be independently tested at a UKAS registered test house to BS476 part 22, or independently assessed based on earlier testing, to resist the spread of flame and smoke within a building for 30 minutes and that all independent testing should be carried out by authorised testing houses. The FD30S relates to the presence of a smoke seal.
7. **Question 2. The relationship between Manse Masterdor, Masterdor Ltd, LBP and Synseal.** Manse Masterdor was a wholly-owned subsidiary of LBP, the principal company of the Litchfield Group of companies. I only remember Masterdor Ltd as a non-trading company that was a wholly-owned subsidiary of Manse Masterdor, although a name swop with another Litchfield Group company may have been undertaken. I have been advised that Synseal acquired Manse Masterdor Ltd after I had been made redundant.
8. **Question 3. Manse Masterdor' customers.** Manse Masterdor primarily sold doors/door sets to local authorities and housing associations.
9. **Question 4(a) When did Manse Masterdor start selling composite doors**
(i) As standard doors. Manufacture to order of the Suredor composite door commenced at the Derwent Works in Derbyshire in approximately 2004
(ii) Composite fire door sets were wholly developed and testing arranged by LBP management in Derbyshire and were manufactured at the Derwent Works. Their sale commenced in 2007.

10. **Question 4(b) Why were they sold.** Composite door sets were manufactured and sold in response to the demand by its customer base who wanted cheap door sets that were easily maintained.
11. **Question 4(c) Testing of FD30 and FD30S composite fire door sets.** I understood that fire door sets were independently tested or assessed by UKAS test houses licensed to carry out such tests and appropriate certification issued. All development and testing of the composite fire door set was organised in Derbyshire by LBP personnel.
12. **Question 4(d) Door slab composition.** Standard composite door slabs are normally made of hard foam faced with plastic with an edging applied. I do not know what was different about the composition of the composite fire door slabs.
13. **Question 4(e) Manufacturers and Suppliers.** I think the door slabs were initially manufactured by a Taiwanese company called Nanya and that the British company that had the UK distribution franchise was Distinction Doors. However, I do not know whether the same door slab was used following subsequent development of the composite door set by LBP.
14. **Question 5(a) Made to order or not.** All door sets manufactured in Knaresborough were made to order and each one was manufactured to fit the relative door aperture on a bespoke basis, each aperture having been previously measured by the company's surveyor(s). I believed that this was the same procedure for composite door sets made in Derbyshire.
15. **Question 5(b). How did employees know they were working on composite fire door sets.** In the Knaresborough factories individual paperwork normally accompanied each door set through the manufacturing process so an employee would have been well aware as to what type of door they were working on. I would have expected the same procedure to be followed at the Derbyshire factory in line with the BS EN ISO 9001 quality management system, but of course I cannot confirm this.

16. **Question 5(c) (i & ii). What was added to make a fire door slab to make it a FD30 or FD30S door set.** I do not know the exact items that were needed to be added but it would include the reinforced frame, wired glass, intumescent sealing and fire-rated hardware.
17. **Question 5(d) Checks.** All door sets that were manufactured in Knaresborough were manufactured to the company's quality control system in accordance with its independently verified, and periodically independently reviewed BS EN ISO 9001 procedures. Routine checking was carried out by individual production line operatives on the basis that they were not to accept the door set from the previous line operative unless it was satisfactorily completed to that stage. The packer was also required to carry out a final check against the specification. The Quality Manager was required to ensure that this process was followed and to carry out his own random checks on the relative components and the finished products. I would have expected these procedures to have also been followed at the Derwent Works but I cannot confirm this.
18. **Question 5(e) How glazing was installed.** I do not know what was the detailed requirements and procedure for the glazing of fire door sets but it would have included wired glass and intumescent sealing. Composite fire door sets were wholly developed and manufactured in Derbyshire.
19. **Question 5(f)(i & ii) Appropriate hardware** Hardware manufacturers arranged for their fire door hardware to be independently tested, fire rated and certified. Manse Masterdor obtained that certification. My understanding was that only tested fire rated hardware was used when the complete fire door set was tested and the same hardware was then used in the subsequent manufacture of the fire door sets but, not being involved in its manufacture, I cannot confirm this. I assume that all hardware was inspected upon delivery to the factory for damage and conformity to order specification but again, not being involved, I cannot confirm this.

20. **Questions 6, 7, 8 & 9. Changes to the manufacturing process up to 2013.** Changes may have taken place to the manufacturing process of composite fire door sets from when manufacturing commenced. However, since these products were developed and testing arranged by LBP management in Derbyshire, I would not have been made aware. I would have expected any material change to a tested fire door set would require it to be re-tested.
21. **Question 10 (a, b & c) Training.** Composite fire doors were manufactured at the Derbyshire factory of LBP. I have no knowledge about the training systems at the Derbyshire factory although I would have expected them to be similar conform to the independently approved and periodically verified BS EN ISO 9001 quality management system adopted by Manse Masterdor in Knaresborough.
22. **Question 11(a, b,c,d & e). Testing.** As all development and testing arrangements of composite fire-resisting door sets was organised by LBP management in Derbyshire I cannot answer these questions, although any resulting certification would probably have been supplied to the Knaresborough office.
23. **Question 12. Any fire doors supplied and/or installed differing from those tested**
Not to my knowledge but I would not know if they had been.
24. **Question 13. Relationship with the London Housing Corporation ('LHC').**
Certain door set products manufactured by Manse Masterdor to detailed specifications were submitted to the LHC for competitive assessment against other manufacturers' products and prices and were subsequently considered approved by the LHC for supply or supply and installation to their members.
25. **Question 14. Extent of business through LHC.** I believe that the business generated by LHC approval was important to Manse Masterdor.

26. **Questions 15, 16, 17, 18 .The Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation ('KCTMO') .** I do not know what was LHC's involvement in the securing this contract. I was not involved in any discussions regarding neither the contract nor the provision of any testing certification.
27. **Question 19. Why MF doors were were changed to SG in the contract.** MF door sets have engineered timber door slabs or blades. I believe SG door sets have doors made from composite door slabs. I do not know why the contract was amended as I was not involved in agreeing the contract.
28. **Question 20 (a, b, c, & d). Self-closing devices for the contract.** Since the relative door sets were made at the Derbyshire factory and I was not involved in any of the negotiation, specification, pricing and manufacture of the relative door sets, I cannot answer this question.
29. **Question 21 (a, b, c & d). Responsibility for manufacture and installation for the contract and handling of any subsequent complaints or issues.** The fire door set product supplied and installed was entirely the responsibility of the LBP staff in Derbyshire so I do not know who was responsible for either the manufacture or the name of the Project Manager for the installation. I would not have known about any issues or complaints raised, or claims made, as these would have been directed to the Project Manager and/or the LBP management team.
30. **Question 22 & 23.** I have no recollection of any specific complaints about any fire-resisting doors, their installation or their self-closing devices. Product complaints were never my area of responsibility.

I believe the facts stated in the above statement are the truth. I confirm that I am willing for the statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and published on the Inquiry's web site should this be necessary and required.


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19th
.....July 2019