

Dated: 28 January 2020

IN THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF GEORGE WHITTON

I, GEORGE WHITTON DO SAY as follows: -

1. I make this witness statement in response to a written request for evidence under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 made by the Grenfell Tower Inquiry on 27 November 2019. In this witness statement I address the specific questions put to me in that request for evidence.
2. I was employed by Manse Masterdor Limited as Team Leader for the team that was responsible for the production of frames, the paint line, and the manufacture of both GRP and timber doors. I was fully trained in the manufacture of fire doors.
3. **I have been asked if I was aware of any differences in the production of FD30 and FD30S composite doors.**

I was not aware of any differences.
4. In relation to the time that production ceased at Knaresborough, I have been asked:
 - 4.1 **What my role was.**

My role was Team Leader.
 - 4.2 **What the relationship between LB Plastics Limited and Manse Masterdor was.**

I believe that LB plastics owned Manse Masterdor.
 - 4.3 **What the role of Mike Hudson was.**

He was Sales Director.
5. In relation to the construction drawings in the BTC Test Report and the Chiltern Test Report ("the Test Reports") I have been asked:
 - 5.1 **If I have previously seen either of the Test Reports.**

I have not seen the Test Reports.

5.2 If I was aware of the existence of these Test Reports; between 2007 – 2014.

I was not aware of the existence of the Test Reports. I have not seen them.

5.3 If I have previously seen construction drawings similar or identical to those in the Test Reports.

I have no knowledge of the Test Reports [or of any drawing similar to those in the Test Reports].

6. I have been asked if I was aware of any differences in the production of a FD30 and FD30S composite doors.

As stated at paragraph 3, I was not aware of any differences.

7. In relation to testing for fire resistance and cold smoke leakage for composite FD30 and FD30S doors between 2005 and 2017, I have been asked:

7.1 If I was aware of any testing.

I was not aware of any testing.

7.2 If I was aware of who was responsible for ensuring the doors were tested.

Jim Duncan was responsible for testing.

7.3 If I was aware of the Manse Masterdor policy on testing.

I have no knowledge of this.

8. In relation to the glazed panels in composite fire doors, I have been asked:

8.1 If, in the period 2009 – 2014, any changes were made to the process of glazing doors, including changes made to the intumescent strips, sealant or butile and the number of clips used.

All I know is that Jim Duncan, Garry Fox and Dan Jones changed the way we glazed doors.

8.2 To indicate the date or year at which the changes were made in the fixing of glazing into the doors.

I cannot recall the date or year.

8.3 If I can set out any conversations I recall having or hearing about these changes, including why they were necessary and the consequences of them.

I remember that we argued about the changes, but we were told to carry on with the new way decided by Jim Duncan, Dan Jones and Garry Fox, which meant we moved from fire sealant to intumescent strips and less clips.

8.4 To indicate my view on the potential impact of the changes of the fire resistance of the doors.

I was not happy with the changes as I believed that all the changes impacted on the integrity of the door.

8.5 If the means of fixing the glazing at any time matched those set out in the Chiltern Test Report.

I do not know because I did not see the Test Reports.

9. In relation to intumescent strips on composite fire doors, I have been asked:

9.1 If, in the period 2009 – 2014, any changes were made to the number or location of intumescent strips or pads on composite fire doors, including to those around the lock strip and pockets and the letter plate.

I was told to remove the pads on the locks and down the lock strip by Jim Duncan.

9.2 To indicate the date or year at which these changes were made.

I cannot recall the date or year.

9.3 If I can set out any conversations I recall having or hearing about these changes, including why they were necessary and the consequences of them.

All the supervisors/team leaders and operatives argued about the changes, but we were told to carry on with the new way of manufacturing decided by Jim Duncan, Dan Jones and Garry Fox.

9.4 If the number and placing of intumescent strips and pads at any time matched those as set out in the BTC Test Report.

I have no knowledge of this report.

10. I have been asked to explain what the TDR was and why it was a useful document to have.

The Training Development Record was very useful because it explained every process of the factory in an instructional manner, which meant it was easy to follow as you were doing the tasks in the factory

11. I have been asked to indicate when the TDR stopped being used and whether I was aware of any problems this caused.

The Training Development Record was replaced with the Standard Operating Procedure in 2004. I have no knowledge of any problems this caused.

12. I have been asked if I was aware of any other changes to the manufacturing process of composite fire doors.

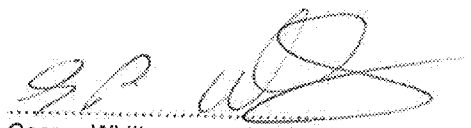
Jim Duncan, Garry Fox and Dan Jones changed quite a few things from the way we first manufactured fire doors. The main things that were changes is that they removed all the intumescent out of the lock pockets and of the locks themselves. They removed some of the intumescent out of the frame, and from the hardware as well, such as the viewer, letter plate, handles and they also changed the way the doors were glazed. Prior to the changes the glazing was full of fire-retardant sealant, which was removed and replaced with a strip of intumescent.

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

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

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

Signed:


George Whitton

Dated: 28 January 2020