
From: Jamie Renton <chiefexecutive@adkc.org.uk>
Sent: 08 August 2014 09:44
To: Cllr.Blakeman@rbkc.gov.uk
Subject: RE: Removal of Disability Access Ramp at Grenfell Walk, London W11

You can rely on ADKC for a letter of support for this. Please let me know if there's anything else we can do.

From: Cllr.Blakeman@rbkc.gov.uk [mailto:Cllr.Blakeman@rbkc.gov.uk]
Sent: 07 August 2014 17:16
To: Jamie Renton
Subject: RE: Removal of Disability Access Ramp at Grenfell Walk, London W11

Thanks, Jamie. I suspect we may be taking the current formal complaint on to the Ombudsman if the TMO maintain their entrenched position on the matter!

Judith

From: Jamie Renton [mailto:chiefexecutive@adkc.org.uk]
Sent: 07 August 2014 16:55
To: Cllr, Blakeman, Judith
Subject: RE: Removal of Disability Access Ramp at Grenfell Walk, London W11

Dear Judith

Our Access Group meets on Monday, when an officer from RBKC's Planning Department will be in attendance. I'm very happy to raise this issue at the meeting.

I'll let you know the response of the group (and the planning officer!) after the meeting.

My understanding of the situation is that, under the Equalities Act, there would need to be a ramp. However, as is often the case with legislation of this kind, individuals would have to take RBKC to court and prove that their access had been denied by the lack of a ramp. Although the threat of such action (and the resulting negative publicity) might be enough to sway things our way.

I hope that you find this useful.

Please let me know if there's anything else I can do and I'd certainly be very interested to hear what Planning Aid for London say.

Kind regards

Jamie

From: Cllr.Blakeman@rbkc.gov.uk [mailto:Cllr.Blakeman@rbkc.gov.uk]
Sent: 07 August 2014 15:51
To: Jamie Renton
Subject: FW: Removal of Disability Access Ramp at Grenfell Walk, London W11
Importance: High

Dear Jamie

Please see the enquiry below. I am getting a lot of complaints from residents about this problem and I have one already in the formal TMO complaints procedure.

I have asked Planning Aid for London for guidance and I was going to seek advice also from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. However, on looking at their website it seems they no longer provide advice but refer us to a local advice agency. In this instance, the local advice agency that came up was ADKC!

So maybe you can offer some advice – but in reality, I think this is a planning matter and I hope Planning Aid for London can help.

Kind regards.

Judith

From: Cllr, Blakeman, Judith
Sent: 07 August 2014 15:41
To: 'mark@planningaidforlondon.org.uk'
Cc: Cllr, Lasharie, Beini; Cllr, Atkinson, Robert; 'Sang Virginia'
Subject: Removal of Disability Access Ramp at Grenfell Walk, London W11
Importance: High

Dear Mark

I would be grateful for some advice on the following matter.

In the ward that I represent, Notting Dale in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC), a project to refurbish a tower block on Lancaster West Estate, Grenfell Tower, has just commenced. Grenfell Tower is an integral part of this Estate.

Before the refurbishment works commenced, Grenfell Tower was linked by a first floor walkway to a first floor walkway known as Grenfell Walk that provides access to homes in Grenfell Walk itself and the three "finger blocks" of Barandon Walk, Testerton Walk and Hurstway Walk. Leading down to the ground floor from Grenfell Walk was a curved ramp. This ramp, although stepped, had very long, very shallow steps and was therefore provided easy access for people with impaired mobility, pushchairs and some wheelchairs. However, this ramp has just been demolished and we have been told that there is no intention to replaced it as part of the refurbishment works.

The unintended consequence of this has been to remove disability access from residents living in Grenfell Walk and the northern ends of Barandon Walk, Testerton Walk and Hurstway Walk. It is possible to have mobility access to the southern ends of the three "finger blocks" but not at the northern end.

There is ramped access at the end of the first floor walkway that is a long way round from these addresses. This route adds an extra quarter of a mile and can add between 5 and 15 minutes to a person's journey, depending on how mobile they are. The only other means of access to and from the "finger blocks" are three very narrow staircases that wind round, are very dark and difficult even for able-bodied people to use. They also pose a security hazard on occasion, especially during the winter months. In addition, they can be damp and the steps can become iced in very cold weather.

We have asked for the ramp to be restored during these works, but have been told that it this will not happen because:

- a. The works are refurbishment, not a new development, and therefore do not need to be Disability Discrimination Act compliant; and
- b. The removal of the ramp was consulted on when the planning application was submitted.

While I accept under point (a) that this is a refurbishment, I am not clear that this means that a refurbishment can justify the reduction of existing disability access without it being restored. As far as point (b) is concerned, I have looked at the officers' report that went to the Planning Committee and while it is clear that the first floor walkway joining Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk was to be removed and not replaced, there is no reference to removing, either permanently or temporarily, the curved ramp from Grenfell Walk to ground level.

I am in discussion with the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation, which manages the Lancaster West Estate on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, about the need to restore disability access to Grenfell Walk and the northern ends of the "finger blocks", but the TMO states that it is not required to restore the ramp and will not be doing so.

I would be very grateful to know whether the TMO/RBKC stance is correct and whether planning rules would agree that the extra one quarter of a mile ramped route is sufficient for residents now that the much closer ramp from Grenfell Walk has been demolished.

I hope I have explained the position; it is rather complicated, so please let me know if you require further information.

Kind regards.

Councillor Judith Blakeman

On behalf of the Notting Dale Ward Councillors and the Lancaster West Estate Residents' Association

Hundreds of free or low cost activities and events this summer for the family and young people.

Download Summer in the City <http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/summerinthecity>

Check out our Ecology events in Holland Park <http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/ecology>

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

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