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**From:** Cllr.Blakeman@rbkc.gov.uk  
**Sent:** 27 August 2014 15:01  
**To:** Jonathan.Bore@rbkc.gov.uk  
**Cc:** Cllr.Lasharie@rbkc.gov.uk; CllrR.Atkinson@rbkc.gov.uk; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Applications Nos. PP/12/04097 and PP/14/03655: Grenfell Tower Refurbishment

**Importance:** High

Dear Mr. Bore

I have received a number of complaints from residents of Lancaster West concerning the decision to remove and not restore the ramp from Grenfell Walk down to the ground that has emerged as a result of the Council/TMO's refurbishment works to Grenfell Tower.

Before these works commenced, Grenfell Tower was linked by a first floor walkway to a first floor walkway known as Grenfell Walk, which 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 consequently provided easy access for people with impaired mobility, pushchairs, some wheelchairs etc. However, this ramp has been demolished and we have now been told that there is no intention to replace it.

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. There is disability access to the southern ends of the three "finger blocks" but not to their northern ends.

There is ramped access at the far end of Grenfell Walk that takes residents a long way round to the ground at Station Walk. 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" and Grenfell Walk are three very narrow staircases that wind round, are very dark and are difficult even for able-bodied people to use. They also pose a security hazard on occasion, especially during the dark 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 at the end of the refurbishment, 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.

As far as point (b) is concerned, I have looked at these two applications and both applications state quite clearly under the heading *Pedestrian and Vehicle Access, Roads and Rights of Way* that no changes are proposed. In addition, the officers' report that went to the Planning Committee, while making it clear that the first floor walkway joining Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk was to be removed and not replaced, contains no reference to removing, either permanently

or temporarily, the curved ramp from Grenfell Walk to ground level. Therefore, there was no public consultation on this matter.

Consequently, I am at a loss to understand how planning permission can have obtained to remove and not replace this ramp. If planning permission was not obtained, then why was the ramp removed?

I have taken advice from Planning Aid, London who tell me that this matter should have been the subject of public consultation. The TMO indeed claim that this issue was consulted on in their leaflets to residents of Grenfell Tower about the refurbishment programme. Again, however, I have studied these leaflets and there is no reference to the permanent removal of the ramp. In any case, those leaflets only went to Grenfell Tower and not to the addresses that have been affected by the ramp removal.

Can you please advise me how it has come about that this ramp has been removed and will not be replaced – apparently without planning permission? Or alternatively, point me to the grant of an application and the public consultation process that was followed.

Many thanks.

Cllr. Judith Blakeman

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The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

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