

WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules, r27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5b

Statement of: PARKER, MALCOLM

Age if under 18: Over 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

Occupation:

This statement (consisting of 6 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature:

Date: 24/08/2020

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded ☐ (supply witness details on rear)

I am employed by the London Fire Brigade (LFB) as a Fire Safety Inspecting Officer (FSIO) based at Paddington fire station. My only involvement with Grenfell Tower was the building consultation I responded to in February 2016. I had no other involvement and I never visited the site. The purpose of this statement is to provide information about my role, my training, the consultation I responded to and the context in which it was done.

The people I will mention in my statement are: Ben DEWIS, Matt RAMSEY, Orlando BRANCACCIO, Siamkee YEO, Julie (I am unsure of her Surname), Michelle MCHUGH, Chris HARDMAN, Clive STEWART, Michael RICHARDSON, Rebecca BURTON, Sue NAILER.

I have been with the London Fire Brigade since January 2001. I joined as a non-operational station officer to work on the Fire Precautions Act in the fire safety office. I originally studied architecture and worked in the building industry before I joined the brigade. I brought these skills and experience with me, from my previous employment. I retire from the LFB on 31st August 2020.

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The Fire Safety Department consists of two separate departments – the Fire Safety Regulation Team and the Fire Engineering Department.

I am a Fire Safety Inspecting Officer (FSIO) within the Fire Safety Regulation Team. Our express task is to administer Fire Safety Regulations within a set procedure for examining buildings.

I have been trained by the LFB to administer the work we do. That training has varied over the last twenty years and evolved as the regulations we were administering evolved. From the Fire Precautions Act we had several rules and regulations that came in for the Fire Safety Order. Alongside it, came building consultations. For these we specifically check drawings on two aspects - means of escape and fire service attendance. Fire service attendance includes equipment required for fire service etc. Hydrants and access for fire service (B1 & B5).

The Fire Engineering Department are specialists in engineering and are consultants for the Fire Safety Regulations department. If we don't have the confidence in what we are looking at we can call on them to give an opinion. Fire engineering has a separate management structure but they come under fire safety regulations. Fire Engineering work on two levels. If it is a complex project, they might be approached before we see it. Then when it comes in as a full set of plans, it comes to our desk and we run it as a full job, consulting with them.

During the course of my employment I became a Fire Engineering Liaison Officer (FELO). A FELO was effectively a conduit or liaison officer between the Fire Safety Regulation Team and the Fire Engineering Team. Not all FSIOs are FELOs. I was the only FELO on my team, my speciality was doing the building design jobs (D jobs).

I received training in Approved Document B for fire safety and in Building Standards BS9999. For Approved Document B, our training focussed specifically on B1 and B5 but there are others things to consider as well. There are several add on documents for Building Standards BS9999. BS9999 allows for

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quite a bit of flexibility so you have to understand why it is as it is in order to apply it correctly. The Fire Precautions Act used to be more straight- forward because the administration used to be controlled by the Fire Service. Now, under BS9999 if you put sprinklers or ventilation systems in, that means that you could change details around fire escape to mitigate fire safety risk.

Initially we had in house specialist trainers that were very good at their jobs. Every year we did training when for example, when building standards changed. I needed to do regular training to keep up my accreditation as a FELO, which is an internal accreditation. There was other training that you could request and may have the opportunity to undertake when there was an available place on the course. When Babcock took on training for the brigade they did not have a fire safety module. I understand that they put something together with the Fire Service College, however, apparently that did not work out particularly well so it changed again. I understand that the new training regime is very specific. New Fire Safety Inspecting Officers (FSIOs) coming in to the department have to achieve a certain standard before coming in. I have not been on the current training so I do not know what it involves. I think it might be pass or fail. When I did my training it was continuous professional development and we were generally expected to ask questions if we did not understand a particular point being made. A training record is kept on computer, of what we have done. Each officer has a continuous training record or similarly named item. A lady by the name of Sue NAILER at head office is the person who has been responsible for training. I do not think it is a comprehensive record but if I wanted a copy of the records, I would ask Sue NAILER or my team leader.

We generally have a FELO day, quarterly. I don't specifically recall the tall building façades presentation but I may have seen it. I don't recall anything about it or anyone else who may have been at the presentation.

When I joined the LFB I was originally in the Soho Fire Safety Team. When the Soho and Westminster teams merged, I moved to join the Hammersmith, Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea Fire Safety Team. This was in either 2015 or early 2016 but I do not recall exactly when. The Hammersmith, Fulham,

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Kensington and Chelsea Fire Safety Team moved from Kensington Fire Station to be based at Paddington Fire Station around the same time I joined them.

The Fire Safety Regulation Teams consisted of approximately twelve (12) officers, ranging from experienced officers to new people joining it. The team members would help one another as needed. Spencer SUTCLIFFE was our Area Manager and my team in Kensington was led by Rebecca BURTON. The other officers on the same team as me were: Ben DEWIS, Matt RAMSEY, Orlando BRANCACCIO, Siamkee YEO, Julie (I don't recall Julie's surname), Michelle MCHUGH, Chris HARDMAN, Clive STEWART, Michael RICHARDSON. There were some other people also on the team but I do not recall all their names now. All of these people were Fire Safety Inspecting Officers.

I did D jobs, which are building consultations and fire safety inspections which are also known as Audits. 7(2) D visits are not a FELO or FSIO job. When I was at Kensington I sometimes used to go with firefighters and do joint visits at buildings. This would happen via a request from the Station officer to the team leader and then referred to a team member to conduct the visit. This was supposed to be regular and it may have been for some time, but then things change over time. All Commanders of a borough do things differently.

As a team, we generally worked independently and sometimes in pairs. For specific tasks like a 'hot strike' when we were doing a row of fast food shops for example, the whole team worked together. Buildings are risk graded and a team plan is issued to the team leader. The jobs are then divided up between team members. All the jobs are recorded on the FARYNOR system. We were allocated around ten (10) jobs per month, plus some other tasks.

FARYNOR has been around for a long time and is an old system. It is named after the baker who started the fire of London. Basically it holds all the information we have on the buildings that we are working on. Each building is identified by an allocated number and information for that building is held under that number. It is linked to the gazetteer, which created some difficulties when the building isn't listed on the gazetteer. Everything to do with a particular building which the LFB has ever inspected should be on the system. So different job types, like an audit or a building consultation, for that building would still be

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under the same building number but will have different job numbers for each job. Access to FARYNOR could vary, depending on role and management level. I have a fire inspecting officer access. When you are allocated a job you can transfer it onto your own work file. Currently I think we have two things running, FARYNOR and we now have an electronic portal. The Admin department posts the job on the electronic portal.

Fire safety inspections or 'audits' are recorded on FARYNOR. Generally there is a selection of buildings drawn from a team plan, or a type of building in your area that is of particular focus. The team leader allocates the audits to FSIOs to go and do. There is a form that we complete for each audit. They are conducted under the Building Regulations B1 and B5, we would pass comment on the exterior of the building if we noticed something but this is a visual check and is not something we would ordinarily get involved with. It's not LFB's building, it is the owner's responsibility. What is covered in an audit has changed over time and again, since the Grenfell Tower fire.

The audit covers the B1 and B5 aspects of the common parts through the building and up to the flat front doors. We became responsible for the common parts which were not part of our responsibility previously. The understanding of 'common parts' has evolved over time. I wouldn't like to comment if flat front doors and door closers on the doors were part of the audit prior to the Grenfell Tower fire, but are now. Front doors became a bit of an issue between the LFB and the Kensington and Chelsea Tenants Management Organisation (KCTMO). We do what the Government want us to do. They make the law and we apply it accordingly.

I normally obtain the Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) for the building, from the responsible person for that building, prior to or at the time of the audit. The fire service has no input into an FRA. I would also ask for the 'Significant Findings' document to see if any issues identified by the FRA had been addressed. I would sometimes be accompanied by someone from the building management agency during an audit but it varies from building to building. If I was accompanied, the person's details would be noted on the audit form.

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I would not normally ask for a test demonstration of any of the equipment that has been installed. For example, I would check that the smoke control system is present and looks correct. I would check that it is being maintained correctly by looking at the maintenance records but I would not ask for this to be demonstrated. The same is true for the dry risers. It all depends on what you find and the circumstances.

If deficiencies are found, there are various levels of enforcement, depending on the scoring that has been done during the audit. It could be a verbal warning which would be noted on the audit; it could be a notice of deficiencies; an enforcement notice or prosecution. The FSIO decides what is appropriate and professional judgement plays a part in this. The team leader would vet the decision and the admin department processes it. It would all be noted on the FARYNOR record. Follow up checks are not done by the LFB on verbal notices or deficiency notices but are for enforcement notices. There is a time limit set for the deficiency to be corrected and we check that it has been done in time.

Following an audit, if there is something that the local fire station specifically needs to know about, it will be put on a specific form and sent electronically. This is also logged on FARYNOR. It's a Station notification form but I don't recall the specific name or number for the form.

I have no personal knowledge of the dry rising mains, smoke control system or door closers in the common areas or flat front doors at Grenfell Tower. I do not know if these were checked pre or post renovation and I have never done an audit on Grenfell Tower.

Building consultations or D jobs are recorded on FARYNOR too. There is a framework for doing building consultations but you can do them several different ways. If you are very experienced, you can look at the type of building and know what to do. It is only when it comes on to more complex cases that it becomes more difficult. You get training in B Doc (Approved document B) for fire safety and also in building standards. B1 and B5 are what we are asked to specifically comment on ordinarily, that is the

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extent of our involvement and that is as far as our statutory duty goes. For anything else, we may give advice or pass comment on, if it is appropriate to do so, but we are not required to as part of the process.

A simple job is one where there are no alterations to the fabric of the building so we are checking for the likes of smoke doors, fire alarms and so forth. The next step up is where they propose to change the layout and are making alterations to the building. Then you get the cases which is a new building of several stories with for example a smoke extraction system. That is more complex. If you are new to the fire safety inspection team and have not done this kind of work before, you typically start with the simple cases and gradually move on as you gain more experience in the role.

If it is a more complex case, then you have their fire engineers report which we in the fire and rescue service can go through. They highlight the fire safety issues in their fire safety report and the lay out their fire engineering solution for that issue. That is the part you need to concentrate on to decide how they impinge on the other areas. Quite often you get a consultation through saying that if they did x, y, and z, the building inspector would agree the proposed works. We would respond by saying that the LFB are satisfied with the proposals, with the proviso those things were done. We would also sometimes advise that the fire risk assessment is reviewed to incorporate the changes being made. We would sometimes have meetings on site and discuss the situation on site but for small jobs like turning a small house into flats you wouldn't need to go visit it as long as they meet the requirements for smoke alarms, automatic vents etc. It is all a little bit fluid as to whether to visit the site or not. We are able to ask for meeting on site if we wished. Any visits would be recorded on FARYNOR.

Ultimately, it is Building Control that signs off a building as compliant, it is not our role at the LFB.

We used to work under Workplace Regulations and we didn't have anything to do with blocks of flats. The LFB role changed around 2005 or 2006 when European regulations put us in for common parts in blocks of flats and houses of multiple occupation. When we had the fire precautions act, it was very

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defined and fire service charged for it. Now it's more ambiguous. In London building structures are complex. They are built as one thing years ago but used for something else now.

In terms of the building consultation at Grenfell Tower. I completed a consultation for Grenfell Tower in February 2016 that was received by our Fire Safety Inspecting Team. I was relatively new to the team at the time. I don't recall much about it. It was only a small consultation compared to others that I have done. The building consultations we receive are in hard copy paper format. We are not set up to process electronic submissions. The consultations are delivered to head office. They copy the top letter from the approved inspector. It is then repackaged and sent to our hub. I think at that time we may have been at Clapham. We used to go there for a full week and process as many jobs as we could. Admin put a file number for FARYNOR, and a job number. We would log into FARYNOR, pull down the letter and answer it as you see fit. Latterly we moved to Kensington. They would get logged when they came in. Head office would not copy the documents themselves. We would get the originals that were sent in. We don't have storage facilities. The consultations are kept for approximately six (6) months possibly slightly longer and then they would be shredded. The information is held by the approved inspector and not by us. We retain a copy of the letter we sent out. That is our contribution. The person consulting the LFB should have a full copy. The LFB don't need to and also don't have the space to keep them.

The consultation document bundle typically contains a plan of the area to be altered, a description of what they are actually doing, and you normally get the building inspectors comments on what they are proposing to do and why. In the case of the Grenfell Tower consultation, I think it was an approved inspector requesting the consultation. I think the consultation papers for Grenfell Tower were for machinery for the smoke ventilation system and what they were planning to replace it with. It was described and gave various codes etc. I think they said that they would submit details of the cladding at a later date. Cladding was not included in what we look at, so why send it to us. We are only supposed to look at means of escape and fire service access. If cladding proposals were sent, we would still only look at means of escape and fire service access so it would be outside of the scope of our statutory involvement anyway. That would be for the building inspector. I think my comment was to do a risk assessment for the changes that they were planning to make. We don't have anything to do with the risk assessment. The response is a template letter. I completed the consultation and responded by letter. My only involvement

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