

IN A MATTER CONCERNING THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF ANTHONY WILLIAM SMART

1. I make this statement to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry in response to a written Request for Evidence dated 26 July 2019. In this statement, I will do my best to address all the questions and issues raised in the Inquiry's Request.
2. At the time of the fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, I was working for PDERS which is a division of Otis Ltd, a UK lift maintenance company. I have since retired.

Training, experience and qualifications

3. Prior to my retirement in April this year, I worked in and around London as a lift engineer for 35 years. I spent 28 of those working for Otis, which I joined in 1991. I started out as a construction lift erector, so I was part of a team that installed lifts into new or refurbished buildings. Then I moved on to being a lift repair engineer, before spending the last 13 years of my career as a service engineer for passenger lifts. This involved carrying out the planned servicing of lifts and also attending some breakdowns and emergency repairs.
4. During my career, I have installed, serviced and repaired a variety of different lifts from a number of different manufacturers, including Otis, Express and others.
5. Before joining Otis, I trained for and achieved the Engineering Industry Training Board's Modules J5 and J26 in Lift Practice and Lift Erection in 1984, which meant that I was certified as a skilled lift fitter/engineer. The training system has changed over the years since then, and the Module training would now be equivalent to an NVQ Level 3.

Involvement with Grenfell Tower lifts

6. In around June or July 2015, I took over PDERS' lift servicing route for the southern part of Kensington and Chelsea. This mainly covered Chelsea and included around 68 lifts, but it did not include the lifts at Grenfell Tower which formed part of the northern route. In the circumstances, I did not carry out any planned service visits to the Grenfell Tower lifts. However, I do recall carrying out some repair visits (known as call out visits, attended as and when faults or issues were reported) to the Grenfell Tower lifts, which would have happened when the usual engineer was on leave or otherwise unavailable.
7. I do not recall receiving any documentation or verbal handover regarding the Grenfell Tower lifts before I carried out these repair visits, although I would have received details of the breakdown reported to the Call Centre and these would have been downloaded to my PDA. I do not recall seeing any Operation and Maintenance Manual for the Grenfell Tower lifts. There was a log card and wiring diagrams kept in the motor room. The log card was for engineers to record each visit with a brief description of any faults found and work done, and the wiring diagrams were there for us to refer to if we needed to. In my experience, this is the normal level of information provided to a lift engineer when attending a repair visit or call out.
8. If I ever needed assistance with a particular lift or with a technical issue I was unsure of, I would call our technical support, Grant Berry. I see from my visit reports (see paragraph below) that I attended Grenfell Tower on 21 March 2017 to attend to a problem with Lift H091. As I could not resolve the problem with the trailing flex that prompted my visit, which is the electrical cabling which provides power to the lift car (in-car lights and passenger controls) and travels up and down the shaft with the car, I called Grant and we both attended the next day, 22 March 2017. Work to resolve the issue was then passed to the repair department of PDERS to be carried out. The trailing flex issue was not related to the Fire Control Switch (see below).
9. I have checked PDERS' Service Visit Reports and Repair Visit Reports relevant to me and the visits range from 20 January 2016 to 7 June 2017. A copy of these reports are attached as Exhibit AWS/1 (URN:).

10. Among the reports I can see that my name appears as the attending engineer for two service visits to Grenfell Tower, on 12 April 2017 and 9 May 2017. This is incorrect and stems from the fact that my colleague Mark Wallis, who was responsible for servicing the northern route (which included Grenfell Tower), had only transferred to the Kensington and Chelsea area in April 2017. He came from another area of PDERS. I recall him not having a PDA, or at least one that worked, for the first few months. In the circumstances, I recorded these two service visits for him on my PDA, along with other jobs he would have done that day. As Mark didn't have a working PDA, I was told by Philip Edwards (our manager at the time) that Mark's jobs would be sent to my PDA and I would be asked to close them when completed. Mark would attend the jobs then speak to me, usually by telephone unless we happened to meet. He would tell me his times and the information to record. The same thing goes for two call outs/repair visits that Mark carried out, on 5 and 7 June 2017. While the Repair Visit Reports have me down as the attending engineer, this was actually Mark. Again, I entered the details of his visits for him into my PDA.
11. In terms of the repair visits that I did attend, I believe that these are all recorded in the Service and Repair Visit Reports (AWS/1:). In 2016, the records indicate that I carried out repair visits to Grenfell Tower on 20 January, 20 April, 27 May, 16 and 30 September, and 4 November. In 2017, I attended repair call outs on 21 February, 21 and 22 March, and 16 May.
12. The issues that prompted these visits ranged from problems with the lift car lighting, the car door/gate pick up skate, and a control panel processor, to call outs when there turned out to be nothing wrong with the lifts.
13. When attending these call outs I dealt with the fault that prompted the call out. Sometimes I would have to inspect parts of the lifts in order to work out what was wrong and what needed doing, but I would not have carried out any review or inspection beyond trying to deal with the fault. The exception might be if I had come across anything obviously amiss along the way, which I do not recall happening when I visited Grenfell Tower.
14. I would not have carried out any inspection or test of the Fire Control Switch (the switch that the fire service could use in an emergency to take control of the lifts) because none of these call outs were related to any issue with the Fire Control Switch.

15. I would assume that the service engineer for the area would have tested the Fire Control Switch during the monthly service visits, which is what I did with the lifts on the southern route. I would also assume that the engineer carrying out Thorough Examinations on KCTMO's insurers' behalf would have done likewise, and for the fire service to have carried out a similar test whenever they visited Grenfell Tower to check fire safety.

"Fire fighting lifts"

16. I am not sure exactly what the Inquiry considers to be the definition or features of a "fire fighting lift", but from my experience I would not class the Grenfell Tower lifts as fire fighting lifts and I would not have expected the Grenfell Tower lifts to be fire fighting lifts.
17. Most of the high rise residential buildings that I have attended as an engineer have not had fire fighting lifts. They have had what I would describe as "fire control lifts"; in other words, lifts whose only significant fire fighting feature is a Fire Control Switch and the functionality that goes hand in hand with a Fire Control Switch. From memory, all the lifts I serviced on the southern route were fire control lifts and there were no fire fighting lifts.
18. Fire fighting lifts, on the other hand, are configured differently in that, for example, their electrical systems and connections are waterproofed (IP rated), the trunking in the shaft is set back by 1 metre, there might be a gully drain arrangement in front of the lift doors to divert water away from the shaft, and there will also be a 3-way communication system between the car, the lobby and the motor room, as well as other features.
19. I did not believe it to be my role to query with KCTMO why the lifts at Grenfell Tower were not fire fighting lifts. Nor did I think it unusual. Most of the high rise residential buildings I have visited have "fire control lifts"; they were not fire fighting lifts.
20. I cannot recall the lift wells or cabins at Grenfell Tower having fire safety features such as pressurisation systems, smoke detectors, or smoke extraction.
21. I did not have any concerns about the operation or safety of the lifts at Grenfell Tower.

Supervision and checking of work

22. In terms of how my work at Grenfell Tower was supervised or checked, it is my recollection and understanding that: PDERS' managers would audit all engineers every quarter, checking the work we were doing on site and also making sure we had the right safety equipment; PDERS' Senior Technician, Grant Berry, would also carry out sample checks; and Patrick Barrett of KCTMO would phone me regularly, although this was in relation to my own route in the south of the borough. I do not recall if any of the PDERS checks coincided with any of the call out visits I carried out at Grenfell Tower in 2016 or 2017, and I do not recall anything being raised with me regarding the Grenfell Tower lifts.

Fire control subsystem and Switches

23. I am not sure exactly what the Inquiry means by "fire control subsystem and Switches", but if it means the Fire Control Switch and its associated connections and infrastructure, I can comment as follows.
24. Having not serviced these lifts, I cannot recall exactly where the Fire Control Switch was for the Grenfell Tower lifts but I would think it would be between or next to the lift doors at ground floor level.
25. Similarly, I cannot recall whether and how the Fire Control Switch was connected to the lifts, or anything else about it. As mentioned above, I never inspected or tested the Fire Control Switch.

The contents of this statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I am content for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and published on the Inquiry's website.

Signed: _____ 

Dated: _____ 30/9/19