

IN A MATTER CONCERNING THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF MARK SCOTT WALLIS

1. I make this statement to the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry in response to a written request for evidence dated 26 July 2019. I make this statement to the Inquiry in my capacity as a former employee of Otis Ltd, a UK lift maintenance business.
2. At the time of the fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, I was employed by Otis Ltd but in practice worked for its subsidiary PDERS. PDERS is an unincorporated trading division of Otis Ltd that, similarly to Otis Ltd, is engaged in the business of lift maintenance.
3. I began working for PDERS in December 2016. I initially began working on the contract PDERS had with J Sainsbury PLC to maintain its lifts and elevators. However, on 1 April 2017 I was invited to work on the contract it had with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation Ltd ("KCTMO"). I held the position of Lead Engineer whilst working for PDERS on the KCTMO contract.
4. Throughout this statement, I refer to and answer a number of questions. Where I refer to such a question, I refer to the questions I have been asked by the Inquiry in its letter dated 26 July 2019.
5. I have been asked to set out the qualifications and experience I have of servicing passenger lifts. In 1990, I commenced working for the Schindler Group as an Apprentice Technician in London. This began with a year spent at Greenwich College obtaining a BTEC in Lift Engineering followed by two years of "on-the-job" training with a Technician at Schindler. I then continued to progress my career with Schindler and got an ONC (Ordinary National Certificate) in Lift Engineering. I was appointed a Senior

Engineer in approximately 1998 and in 2003/2004 I completed a Level 4 NVQ in Lift Engineering, the highest qualification available in the lift engineering industry. I then left Schindler in 2008.

6. I then joined KONE as the Performance Technician responsible for the elevators and lifts at Gatwick Airport before becoming a general Services Supervisor thereafter. In 2010 I joined the Jackson Lift Group as a Service Engineer working on Government Buildings across London before re-joining the Schindler Group in 2014 as a Technician working generally on Escalators and Lifts. I left Schindlers in 2016 before joining Otis Ltd/PDERS.
7. I have been asked to set out the nature of my involvement with the two lifts at Grenfell Tower in respect of (a) planned service visits and (b) repair visits. The lifts at Grenfell Tower were on my "route" along with another 60 or so units on which I was responsible for carrying out regular, routine maintenance. This meant that I was responsible for carrying out the routine, monthly maintenance and service checks that were detailed in the maintenance schedule for Grenfell Tower. As I was assigned to the KCTMO contract in April 2017, I only carried out two monthly maintenance and service checks on the two lifts at Grenfell Tower, on 12 April 2017 and 9 May 2017, before the fire in June 2017.
8. I was also one of the engineers responsible for responding to any call-outs relating to any issues with the lifts at Grenfell Tower. I believe that I responded to two such call-outs prior to the fire.
9. I have been asked what documentation and/or verbal handover concerning the lifts at Grenfell Tower were provided to me before commencing my visits. I have also been asked specifically if an Operation and Maintenance Manual ("O&M Manual") was provided to either myself or Otis Ltd. I have no knowledge of the discussions or documentation passed to Otis Ltd at the outset of the contract with KCTMO. I can, however, confirm that I did not see a copy of any O&M Manual when I began working on the lifts at Grenfell Tower. For me, an O&M Manual would be something prepared by the original lift manufacturers or installers providing information about a lift. From my experience in the industry, I would not expect to be shown an O&M Manual when taking over its routine maintenance. Many of the lifts we service are relatively old and, to the best of my knowledge, few of them come with O&M Manuals. Our training and

experience as lift engineers, and the fact that the vast majority of lifts have the same basic features and maintenance needs, means that an O&M Manual would not in my view be helpful. Wiring diagrams, on the other hand, are helpful.

10. There were wiring diagrams in the Grenfell Tower motor room, which is industry standard. There were also copies of the Thorough Examination test certificates kept in the motor room. These had been carried out by an engineer employed by the building's insurers.
11. I have been asked how frequently I visited Grenfell Tower for planned maintenance/inspections or any other reason; on average how much time I spent per visit and what activities I typically undertook during such visits;
12. In respect of the scheduled maintenance visits, these were conducted on a monthly basis in accordance with the maintenance schedule. During each of the two visits I undertook, I carried out the standard maintenance checklist on each lift at Grenfell Tower and I also dealt with any issues that arose when completing that checklist. The records for the monthly service visits I conducted on 12 April 2017 and 9 May 2017 in respect of lift H090 can be found at Exhibit MW/1: and in respect of lift H091 at Exhibit MW/2: . As can be seen from these records, the monthly service visit included a comprehensive inspection of all significant component parts of the lift at Grenfell. A maintenance check was conducted on the Fire Switch (the switch used by the fire and rescue service to gain control of the lifts in the event of an emergency) but this is not specifically listed in the records because it is not common to every lift serviced by PDERS. For example, some newer lifts are hard-wired directly into the Building Management System and they don't have a separate, physical Fire Switch. I spent approximately two hours on each lift, meaning that my monthly maintenance visit at Grenfell Tower took approximately four hours.
13. The service visit reports at Exhibit MW/1: and Exhibit MW/2: are recorded as having been completed by my fellow engineer Anthony Smart. This is because, while I actually carried out these visits and provided the information for the reports, they were "closed off" by Anthony because at that time I did not have a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant).

14. A PDA was required to enter the information on PDERS' electronic system, and the system would then populate the Service Visit Reports. So the electronic system recorded these visits as having been completed by Anthony but they were carried out by me. This also applies to the two repair visits undertaken on 5 June 2017 and 7 June 2017 recorded by the documents at Exhibit MW/3: . In this regard, I completed these reports on Anthony's PDA when we were both back at base by reviewing the relevant paperwork and inputting the necessary information into his PDA. As mentioned above, they would then be submitted on Anthony's PDA even though I had carried out the maintenance visit and inputted the relevant information on his PDA.
15. In respect of other visits, as outlined above, these would be in response to call-outs regarding issues arising on a day-to-day basis. The length of time spent on site for these visits depended on the nature of the problem leading to the call out. The repairs I undertook on the two instances I was called-out prior to 14 June 2017 related to an issue with the car door/gate operator and then an issue with the landing door/gate lock on the same lift. On both occasions, I was able to remedy the problem and make sure the lift was operational again before leaving site. These visits occurred on 5 June 2017 and 7 June 2017 and a record of my visits can be seen at Exhibit MW/3: .
16. I have been asked if, in light of my experience, I would have expected Grenfell Tower's lifts to be "firefighting lifts". I confirm that, in light of the age of the building, I would not have expected Grenfell Tower to have firefighting lifts. To me, the term "firefighting lift" refers to a lift that has obvious waterproofing and smokeproofing of cables and connections, channels or slopes to drain away firefighting water and smoke head detectors. The lifts at Grenfell Tower did not have these features.
17. I have been asked if, when servicing the lifts at Grenfell Tower, whether I believed them to have the status of firefighting lifts pursuant to Building Regulations and associated guidance/lifts guidance and, if so, why? I confirm that the features of the Grenfell Tower lifts did not meet my understanding of what represents a firefighting lift.
18. I have been asked if I raised any concerns within Otis Ltd, with the KCTMO or otherwise about the lifts not being firefighting lifts. I confirm that I did not raise any such concerns. Otis Ltd, PDERS and their engineers were concerned with the maintenance and servicing of the lifts installed at Grenfell Tower only. The particular type, capabilities and features

of a lift are the responsibility of the building owner and whoever designs the specification of the lift in the first place. I do not believe it was part of our responsibility to comment on the type of lift we were asked to maintain. From memory, I do not think there were any firefighting lifts anywhere on my route when I worked for PDERS on the KCTMO contract.

19. I have been asked if there was any discussion between Otis Ltd engineers or supervisors and other individuals/organisations about whether the lifts were firefighting lifts and compliant with Building Regulations/lifts guidance. I am not aware of any such discussions taking place.
20. I have been asked to describe the steps I would take in inspecting and maintaining (a) the lifts and (b) the Fire Control System including Fire Switches and to make reference to any guidelines, manuals correspondence or other documents when doing so. As mentioned above, the standard maintenance/inspection checklist is stated on the Service Visit Reports at Exhibit MW1: and Exhibit MW2: under the section entitled "Works Completed". This details the majority of the individual elements of the check that would be carried out in respect of the lift. By way of reference to the list, I would make sure that each component listed is in good and proper working order and ensure it was properly and suitably maintained. As explained above, the Fire Control System and Fire Switch is not detailed there because not every lift serviced by Otis Ltd has them.
21. I am aware that there was a decommissioned, non-operational fire switch on the third floor of Grenfell Tower. I think Anthony Smart told me that this was because in 2014 the building was partially refurbished and the ground floor, level 1 and level 2 were turned from offices into residential flats. As such, the "bottom floor" of residential flats moved from the third floor to the ground floor which meant the Fire Switch was also moved from the third floor to the ground floor. Whilst I was aware of the existence of the decommissioned switch on the third floor, all references to "the Fire Switch" in this statement refers to the operational switch on the ground floor of Grenfell Tower.
22. On each of my two service visits before the fire, I specifically remember checking that the Fire Switch was in good and proper working order by inserting what is known as an "express drop release" key into the switch, activating the system and checking the lifts

would immediately move to the bottom floor and their doors would open before ensuring that it could be activated in the manner anticipated i.e. by moving to the chosen floor before the doors would open slowly when the correct buttons are pushed. The express drop release key is a standard key of its type and is of a specific length to drop and connect with the electrical switch inside the unit. A picture of the key used is at Exhibit MW/4:

23. I am able to specifically remember carrying out these checks (both generally on the lifts at Grenfell Tower and in relation to the Fire Control System) as, when I became aware of the fire, the matter was fresh in my mind and my recollection became focused. I realised that it may be necessary for me to recall in detail the checks I had carried out shortly before the fire and I therefore made sure that I would be able to remember them accurately.
24. I have been asked various questions regarding the Fire Control System, including the Fire Switch that operates it, and answer as follows:
 - (a) The Fire Switch is located in between the two lifts, above head height (which is standard practice) on ground floor and controls both lifts. There is only one Fire Switch because the lifts in Grenfell Tower are "duplex". This means that the lifts operate off a single call button and similarly the Fire Switch brings both lifts to the ground floor at the same time. The Fire Switch does not have any other function i.e. it does not operate any other system or fire control measure as there was no integrated fire alarm system in the lifts at Grenfell Tower. As such, the drop release key used to operate the Fire Control System does not have any other function
 - (b) The Fire Switch is connected to the lifts through the electrical system to the CPU which controls the operation of the lifts;
 - (c) There is a small pictograph underneath the Fire Switch demonstrating that a key must be inserted by a Firefighter to activate the switch. There is also a small coloured indicator that shows whether the Fire Switch is activated (red) or not (green).

- (d) There is nothing that would indicate if the Fire Switch was disconnected from the lift system until it was operated. However, if it came to be disconnected then it would be picked up as part of the monthly maintenance visit and taken out of service until it had been re-connected and any faults repaired. I was never aware of the Fire Switch becoming disconnected;
- (e) I have explained the intended functionality of the Fire Switch above. To expand on this, when the Fire Switch is operated both lifts descend to the ground floor immediately without stopping and the doors automatically open at ground floor. To use the lifts after this, the Firefighter must select a floor by pushing the button and then press the door close button. The lift will then stop at the selected floor and the fire service then have to press the door open button. The door will start to open slowly so the fire service can assess if it is safe for the door to open fully. If it is not, the fire service can move to a different floor;
- (f) As explained above, the method of testing was to activate the Fire Switch using the Express key and ensure the lift operated as described above. The testing was be carried out monthly as part of the regular, scheduled maintenance visits.;
- (g) No other maintenance was required on the Fire Switch. I specifically recall it being fully functional when I tested it on both the monthly maintenance visits I undertook.
- (h) I never encountered any difficulties in inserting or turning the express drop release key in the Fire Switch. On rare occasions during my career (I can't remember how many specifically), I have come across fire switches in other properties that have been damaged by Firefighters being heavy-handed when they carried out their own periodic tests of the property's firefighting equipment. You can usually tell if it has been damaged by a firefighter as the internal mechanism of the switch would be bent due to the heavy-handed nature with which the firefighters can handle the switch. I am not aware how often Firefighters are required to carry out these tests, but on the occasions when I came across a Fire Switch that had been damaged in this way I either undertook or arranged for the necessary repair to be carried and I took the lift(s) out of service in the meantime;

- (i) My last visit to Grenfell Tower was for a repair call-out on 7 June 2017. Previous to this, I had undertaken a routine monthly maintenance visit on 9 May 2017, during which I checked the Fire Switch in the manner outlined above. I would not have carried out a test of the Fire Switch during the repair call-out on 7 June 2017, because the call-out did not relate to the Fire Switch.
25. I have been asked to summarise the prevailing nature of the faults/malfunctions/complaints reported in respect of the lifts at Grenfell Tower whilst I was working on them and how they were dealt with. As outlined above, on the two instances that I was called out to repair the lifts at Grenfell Tower outside of the monthly, scheduled maintenance visits, the faults related to the car door/gate operator and landing door/gate lock on lift H090. I remedied the faults during my visits. In light of the fact that I was only required to visit on two separate occasions in response to repair call-outs and only undertook two monthly maintenance checks, I cannot comment on the prevailing nature of faults/malfunctions. I can confirm that during my time working on the lifts at Grenfell Tower there were no reports about the Fire Switch not working.
26. I have been asked if I was aware of any fire safety measures in respect of the lift well or lift cabin and, if so, what role I had in inspecting/maintaining such systems. The only fire safety measures I can recall, other than the Fire Switch at ground floor, were the smoke fillets fitted to the landing doors. As part of the general inspection I undertook during the two service visits, I would have checked to ensure the fillets were fixed and in place so that they allowed the lift doors to close. I did undertake any other inspection or maintenance work on them.
27. I have been asked if I had any concerns about the operation or safety of the lifts at Grenfell Tower and, if so, how and with whom were concerns raised. I can confirm that I did not have any concerns about this.
28. I have been asked how my work at Grenfell Tower was supervised. In respect of supervision by PDERS/Otis Ltd, my recollection is that approximately every 4 months Dave Watkins (Field Manager) or Phil Edwards (Operations Manager) would accompany me on my visits to ensure that I was undertaking the routine maintenance work correctly. They would visually observe and inspect the work I was undertaking

and I think they would sign the log card kept in the motor room to record that they had visited the site. To the best of my recollection, I remember that Phil Edwards had accompanied me on one of the regular maintenance visits to Grenfell Tower before the fire.


29. In terms of any other checks on my work, I am aware that there would also be inspections of the lifts at Grenfell Tower by an engineer employed by the building's insurers, who would complete the Certificates of Thorough Examination that are required by law.

30. In addition to this, Patrick Barrett (Contracts Manager at KCTMO) would visit site and meet with me (as PDERS Team Leader) regularly. Patrick is an electrical engineer by background and received electronic copies of every service visit and repair visit. He met with me weekly to discuss any issues with any of the lifts serviced by PDERS under the KCTMO contract. On a monthly basis, Dave Watkins and Phil Edwards (PDERS Field & Operations Manager) would also attend. Prior to 14 June 2017, I do not recall there ever being any discussions concerning the lifts at Grenfell Tower during these meetings.

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: _____


28/10/2019.