

**GRENFELL TOWER
PUBLIC INQUIRY**

**Witness Statement of
GRAHAM STALLWOOD**

**I, GRAHAM STALLWOOD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND
BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT, will say:**

1. I make this Witness Statement further to receipt of Document Request No. 6 from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry dated 26 October 2018.
2. The matters contained in this statement are generally matters which I believe to be true having discussed the Inquiry's Document Request No. 6 with the relevant officers from the RBKC Building Control Department or are derived from records including computer records maintained by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea ('the Borough' or 'the Council'), and to which I have access and with which I am familiar and which I believe to be accurate. Where matters are within my personal knowledge, I have said so.
3. I attach to my Witness Statement an Index of the Exhibits to which I refer in the following paragraphs of my statement.
4. By way of its letter dated 26 October 2018, the Inquiry has asked 5 questions in relation to the Full Plans application submitted to RBKC Building Control in respect

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of the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower between 2012 – 2016. I address those questions below.

My role at the Borough

5. After training in planning at undergraduate and postgraduate level I became a chartered town planner in October 2001. I have worked for the Borough since 14 November 2011. I joined as Head of Development Management leading the teams advising on and deciding planning applications and planning enforcement matters, with the associated support and administrative teams.
6. In September 2013 following a restructure and the retirement of the Head of Building Control, John Allen, Building Control Manager, reported to me. I reported to Jonathan Bore who was Executive Director of Planning and Borough Development. In that role, my involvement with RBKC Building Control was at a strategic level as part of a wider department. The Building Control Manager was the qualified lead technical specialist responsible for taking action and operating all legislative and administrative procedures in relation to building control and regulation.
7. Following further management changes, in January 2014 the Conservation, Design and Arboriculture team also came under my management and the support and administrative teams no longer reported to me. My job title became Head of Development Management and Conservation. The support and administrative staff joined other similar functions in the Planning and Borough Development Directorate to create a dedicated support team for the whole directorate.
8. On 1 July 2015, after Jonathan Bore's departure from the Borough, I was promoted to Executive Director of Planning and Borough Development. This is my current role. When I was promoted, John Allen, Building Control Manager, reported to Luke Perkins on a temporary basis until 29 March 2016 when Beverley Kuchar was employed as Head of Development Management and Conservation to replace me.

Luke Perkins and Beverley Kuchar both reported to me in those roles. As Executive Director of Planning and Borough Development, my involvement with RBKC Building Control is at a strategic level and principally around strategic direction of the service, finance and relationships with other Council functions.

Background to the Full Plans Application

9. I was not the officer responsible for processing the Grenfell Tower Building Control Full Plans application. John Hoban, Senior Building Control Surveyor, was appointed as the surveyor for the application. John Hoban retired from the Council on 31 March 2017. The application number assigned by RBKC Building Control to the application was FP/14/03563 and I will refer to the application by that application number in this statement.
10. I understand that the Inquiry's questions relate to building control application number FP/14/03563.
11. I have been shown a letter dated 5 August 2014 sent by RBKC Building Control to Studio E Architects Ltd which acknowledges receipt of application FP/14/03563. I exhibit this letter as **GS/1**.
12. I have also been shown a letter and an LDSA/ACA/LFEPA Joint Consultation Proforma dated 11 November 2014, and a letter and an LDSA/ACAI/LFEPA Joint Consultation Procedure proforma dated 5 February 2016 all for application FP/14/03563. I exhibit these documents as exhibits **GS/2 – GS/5**.
13. It is my understanding from reading those documents that the Full Plans application was made by Studio E Architects Ltd as agent for Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation on 5 August 2014.

14. Further, I have seen a Completion Certificate dated 7 July 2016 which was issued by RBKC Building Control in respect of application FP/14/03563. I exhibit this document as **GS/6**.
15. I therefore understand the Inquiry's questions to address the time period from August 2014 to July 2016.

How has it come to pass that the full planning application (including supporting documents) for the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower have been lost?

16. I am not aware of any suggestion that the full planning application for the site made available to the Inquiry has any information missing. I have therefore taken this question to mean "How has it come to pass that the building control full plans application (including supporting documents) for the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower have been lost?"
17. Until the issue of the completion certificate there would most likely have been a paper file for application FP/14/03563 containing information that was not stored electronically by RBKC at the time. This file would have included existing and proposed plans, structural details and any other documents forming part of the application. Upon the issue of the completion certificate the process was for the documentation, which the application surveyor would consider suitable to keep as a record after the completion of the building work and which was not already stored electronically, to be scanned. At the time of this application this information was scanned at the end of the process.
18. I understand that at the time of application FP/14/03563 it was not common practice for the application form to be included for scanning by surveyors. This was because all the information contained on the application form had already been inputted into the Acolaid computer system when the application was received.
19. Some documents relating to building control application FP/14/03563 including site note inspections, email correspondence between the building control surveyor and the architect/contractors, design drawings, consultation correspondence with the

London Fire Brigade and means of escape documentation are held electronically from the beginning of the application and have been disclosed to the Inquiry.

20. I explain below in detail the attempts that have been made to find the paper file for application number FP/14/03563 or its scanned equivalent.
21. In summary, my understanding is that as part of the process of issuing a Completion Certificate, GS/6, Mr Hoban prepared the paper file for scanning and passed the file to the RBKC Building Control administrative team.
22. Ordinarily, the file would then have been sent to an external scanning company Data Planit for scanning. The scanned file would have been returned to RBKC Building Control and saved in the digital archive. The physical file would have been destroyed by the scanning company.
23. It is my understanding that Data Planit does not have a record of receiving the file for application number FP/14/03563 and therefore does not have a record of scanning or returning the digital file to RBKC Building Control. I exhibit as GS/13 and GS/14 emails dated 14 June 2017 from Data Planit. Data Planit has also confirmed that it has not deleted any RBKC building control files sent to them for scanning.
24. Further, it is my understanding that relevant documents contained in the mailbox of RBKC Building Control (building.control@rbkc.gov.uk) have recently been reviewed and there is no record of the full plans application form having been received electronically from Studio E.

How many other full planning applications from the same period have been lost?

25. Consistent with paragraph 16, I have taken this question to mean “How many other building control full plans applications from the same period have been lost?”
26. As a result of Document Request No. 6, RBKC has carried out an audit of all full plans applications where RBKC Building Control issued a completion certificate in the period between 7 January 2016 and 7 December 2016. There were 95 such applications. The audit shows that 34 scanned files are held by RBKC Building

Control, 46 are still retained in paper form in the rolling racking and there are 15 instances where there is no paper or electronic file except for the records which were already in electronic form. Of the 34 scanned files only 2 contain the application form.

27. Therefore, the Grenfell Tower application FP/14/03563 is one of 15 applications in that period where there is no paper or electronic file, except for records that were already in electronic form.

What processes were in place at the material time to store documents of this kind? Please cover where and in which system these applications would be stored, how they would be named, and how they would be retrieved.

28. At the time application FP/14/03563 was made, RBKC Building Control accepted applications in both paper form and by email. Full plans applications were generally made using standard proforma which I exhibit as **GS/7**. Application forms were sometimes submitted with a copy of the plans, or with the plans to follow.
29. Applications which were received by email would usually be sent to the general RBKC Building Control mailbox (building.control@rbkc.gov.uk) because usually a developer would not know which surveyor was assigned to their development. Similarly, applications which were received in paper form would not usually be addressed to a specific surveyor.
30. The applications would be received by the Building Control administration team and submitted hard copy documentation would be placed into a paper application file and placed in the central filing area.
31. The information contained within the proforma would be entered by the Building Control administration team on the Acolaid system. This entry of information would generate a file for the application on the Acolaid system and the application would be assigned a reference number.

32. In the case of the Grenfell Tower building control full plans application, there is a file on the Acolaid system. I exhibit a screen shot of the first page of the record for FP/14/03563 as it appears on the Acolaid system as **GS/8**. The application was assigned a unique application number, FP/14/03563 and the Building Control Manager assigned a surveyor, Mr Hoban.
33. I have been shown a screen shot of an action dated 5 August 2014 on the Acolaid record for FP/14/03563 (I exhibit this as **GS/9**) which contains the following details:
- a. Case No: FP/14/03563
 - b. LocAddress1: Grenfell Tower, Grenfell Road, London, W11 1TH
 - c. Officer: John Hoban
 - d. ActionNotes: Meaningful Response: requested details of the works john e hoban
34. This suggests that an application form was received by RBKC and its details added into the Acolaid system. It is highly unlikely this information would have been submitted by a different method. The acknowledgement letter was sent by email to the agent confirming receipt of the application and identifying the surveyor assigned to the project. The action (ActionNotes: Meaningful Response) created by the Surveyor identifies that at the time of the submission of the application, additional information (likely drawings) was required to be submitted. Further documents would have been submitted by the agent at various points in the project often by email, for example, in response to changes to the proposal or queries from RBKC Building Control. An email from Studio E of 24 September 2014 which I exhibit at **GS/10** shows this happening as does an email from Rydon to RBKC Building Control on 6 March 2015 attaching further drawings which I exhibit at **GS/11**. I understand that a Building Control chronology has been provided to the Inquiry which records these and other examples of further documents and drawings being provided.
35. At the time of this application, the surveyors would keep a paper file for full plans applications. My understanding is that RBKC Building Control kept a paper file for

application number FP/14/03563 which would have been stored in an open roller racking system on site at Kensington Town Hall.

36. Generally, following the issue of a completion certificate by RBKC Building Control, it was the surveyor's responsibility to 'weed out' the paper file and hand the file to the Building Control administration team to send for scanning.
37. In the process of weeding out a file, I understand that surveyors would remove content which was not considered important for archiving purposes. In most cases, as demonstrated in the audit of files I refer to in paragraph 26, this would include the full plans application form because the information on the form would have been entered into the Acolaid system. Therefore, the form itself would not necessarily have been sent for scanning. Other documents which may have been removed from the file could, for example, have included correspondence or superseded drawings. The surveyors who worked for RBKC Building Control were professionally qualified and were expected to be able to decide which documents it was necessary to keep in each file.
38. I have reviewed other full plans applications from the time and the information scanned after the files had been weeded was generally existing and proposed plans, supporting technical information, any certificates or approvals and correspondence between the surveyor and the applicant, applicant's representatives and consultees. Two of the 34 scanned files reviewed in the audit referred to at paragraph 26 above contained the application form.
39. Once a file was considered ready for archiving by the surveyor it would be passed to the Building Control administrative team. In July 2016, the officers involved in those duties were Terrent Beggs, Afshan Mirza, and Fabiana Teixeira. The team was line managed by Ana Roig, Support Team Leader who reported to Jago Williams, Head of Support and Systems, who reported to me. Operationally, the team worked directly for the Building Control Manager, John Allen, who reported to Beverley Kuchar, Head of Development Management and Conservation, who reported to me.

40. I have been shown an email from Jon Ross, solicitor representing Mr Hoban to Mark Thompson, DWF in which it is stated that Mr Hoban kept a paper file for application FP/14/03563 and undertook a weeding process just prior to producing the building regulations completion certificate. I exhibit this email **GS/12**. It is my understanding from this email correspondence that in the case of application FP/14/03563, Mr Hoban undertook the process of weeding the paper file and passed it to the RBKC Building Control administrative team.
41. The process for scanning files was that the Building Control administrative team would arrange for the files passed to them by surveyors to be collected by a scanning company. The scanning company would take the paper file to their premises, scan the documents into a single PDF and return the scanned file to the department. The scanned file would be returned on a CD-ROM which could contain more than one file at a time. The scanned file would be uploaded to the digital archive and the CD-ROM destroyed. The paper file would be destroyed by the scanning company.
42. At the relevant time, the scanning company used by RBKC Building Control was Data Planit, registered company no. 02929090.
43. In the case of the file for application FP/14/03563 I understand that Data Planit has confirmed that it does not have a record of receiving the file. I exhibit at **GS/13** and **GS/14** communication from Data Planit in this regard.

What oversight was in place to ensure these processes were followed?

44. I understand that the Data Planit operative completed a receipt form confirming the number of files collected when collecting the application files for scanning, and the number of files contained on the CD-ROM was checked when returned. This approach would identify if any application files had not been scanned and returned in electronic form.

What has been done in an effort to locate the missing documents?

45. There have been various searches to try to locate documents namely on the morning of the fire, in response to disclosure requests from the Public Inquiry, following an MPS Police Preservation Letter and on receipt of Document Request No. 6.
46. On the morning of the fire, 14 June 2017, John Allen who was RBKC Building Control Manager, returned to the office. I exhibit at **GS/15** an email from John Allen referring to this. Mr Allen had been at the site acting as the dangerous structures surveyor. He would not have been able to access the archive or document management system remotely.
47. I understand that the physical archive, which is an open roller rack and is not locked, was subsequently searched on 14 June 2017 by Terrent Beggs from the building control administration team. Afshan Mirza from the same team checked for a scanned file. They were unable to find a copy of the file either in the physical archive or a scanned copy. This was the first time that a search of the digital and physical archives had been undertaken.
48. I have seen an email that shows Mr Beggs subsequently contacted Data Planit at 11:37 on 14 June 2017 to request a copy of FP/14/03563 be sent to him urgently. At 12:32, Brad Rimmell from Data Planit responded stating that he was confident Data Planit had not received the file. He intended to undertake a further check and would respond again after that check (GS/13).
49. At 16:50, Mr Rimmell responded further confirming that Data Planit had not received file FP/14/03653. He stated that there was a file with Grenfell Tower's address in the planning files but that this did not contain FP/14/03653 (GS/14). The digital planning files referred to were checked on 15 November 2018 and do not contain the missing information. The file referred to in Mr Rimmell's email was a planning enforcement file and not a building control file.
50. A further search of the digital and physical archives was subsequently undertaken by Mr Williams prior to the first disclosure of documents by DWF to the Inquiry on 31 October 2017.

51. Mr Williams searched the Acolaid system, including the Acolaid Document Management System (DMS) and found that a scanned copy of the file had not been uploaded to the Acolaid system. He also searched the digital archive, where scanned copies of paper files are kept, for a copy of the file but was not able to find it.
52. Following this, he searched the physical archive, file by file and shelf by shelf but was unable to locate the file.
53. In June 2018, in response to an MPS Police Preservation Letter, Mr Hoban was contacted, via his solicitor, and was asked to provide information about the location of the file. I have exhibited that email as GS/12. The email states that “at the end of the project, just prior to producing the building regulations completion certificate, the paper file was weeded (as per instruction) and then put in a filing drawer with the rest of the weeded building regulation files”. This was the end of Mr Hoban’s involvement with the file.
54. I understand that DWF received a document request from the Inquiry (Document Request no. 4 dated 3 July 2018. On receipt of this request, Mr Williams was asked by DWF to undertake a further search of the physical and digital archives. He searched both the roller racking, digital archive and DMS again and was unable to find a copy of the file.
55. Following receipt of Document Request No. 6, I understand that Michael Robertson undertook a further search of the physical archive on 16 November 2018 and Afshan Mirza undertook a search of the digital archive on 16 November 2018 as requested by the Inquiry in its letter dated 26 October 2018. Neither of these additional searches found the missing file. Mr Williams also searched the roller racking and the drawers in the office where the building control team had been based in June 2017; the paper file for application FP/14/03563 was not located.
56. I am also aware that electronic searches have been undertaken over the documents that have been provided by RBKC to DWF and that these have been separately described to the Inquiry in the Second Disclosure Statement. I understand that the full plans application file has not been found.

57. I understand that the Acolaid system includes an audit trail of actions taken on individual cases and a report which identifies any records deleted from the system. I have been shown a report from the Acolaid system which shows the audit trail for actions completed on the system from 14 to 20 June 2017. This report does not contain any actions relating to FP/14/03563. I exhibit this report as **GS/16**. I have also seen a report produced from the Acolaid system which shows all deleted records for the same period. This report also shows no record of deletion relating to FP/14/03563. I exhibit this report as **GS/17**.
58. I have also been shown a copy of the data extracted from the Acolaid system which shows there was no activity on the FP/14/03563 file from 14 to 20 June 2017. I exhibit this data as **GS/18**.
59. I understand that following collection of the RBKC Building Control mailbox targeted searches were undertaken on 9 November 2018. In total, these searches returned 347 documents and that a copy of the full plans application was not found.
60. Systematic review of the mailbox following application of DWF's Inquiry Search terms also not did yield a copy of the full plans application.
61. The targeted searches were as follows:
- a. All documents with a PrimaryDateTime between 01.08.14 – 31.08.14;
 - b. All documents containing the terms: "FP/04/00796" OR "BN/08/00452" OR "FP/14/03563" OR "FP/14/03564" OR "FP/13/03565" (no date range applied);
 - c. All documents containing the terms: *Grenfell Tower Grenfell Road W11 1TH* (no date range applied);
 - d. All documents containing the phrases: "you will need to submit two copies of the plans" AND "two working days before work starts" (no date range applied).

62. I understand further searches of the Council's systems have been undertaken on the instruction of the Director of Law and under the supervision of the Director of Audit, Fraud, Risk and Insurance. I exhibit at **GS/19** a report setting out the results of those searches.
63. Finally, I also understand that the Director of Law has commissioned an independent forensic IT investigation. I exhibit at **GS/20** the Terms of Reference of that investigation.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

I am willing for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and to be published on the Inquiry's website.

Full name: Graham Stallwood

Position or office held: Executive Director Planning and Borough Development

Signed:



Date:

23 NOVEMBER 2018

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GS/	Document	Date	Inquiry URN	FORT No.
1	Letter acknowledging receipt of application FP/14/03563	05.08.14	RBK00027424	FORT02120449
2	Letter from RBKC Building Control to LFEPa	11.11.14	RBK00027560	FORT02121101
3	LDSA/ACAI/LFEPa Joint Consultation Procedure proforma	11.11.14	RBK00027561	FORT02121071
4	Letter from RBKC Building Control to LFEPa	05.02.16	RBK00027423	FORT02120446
5	LDSA/ACAI/LFEPa Joint Consultation Procedure proforma	05.02.16	RBK00027422	FORT02120456
6	Building Control Completion Certificate	07.07.16	RBK00002987	FORT00494446
7	Example of full plans application proforma	10.09.14	Uploaded via Egress	FORT00299030
8	Screen shot of first page of Acolaid record FP/14/03563		Uploaded via Egress	
9	Screen shot of action dated 05.08.14 of Acolaid record FP/14/03563		Uploaded via Egress	
10	Email from Studio E to RBKC Building Control	24.09.14	RBK00003811	FORT01225913

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