

## GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

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### WITNESS STATEMENT OF SIOBHAN RUMBLE

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#### I, SIOBHAN RUMBLE WILL SAY AS FOLLOWS:-

1. I make this statement voluntarily to assist the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
2. I understand that I may be called to give evidence at the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry. I hope to be able to assist the Inquiry team in its task of understanding how the fire at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017 began and how it spread in the manner it did, leading to such devastating loss of life.
3. The matters in this statement cover the four years during which I worked for the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organization ("TMO"). While some of the matters discussed are within my direct recollection, I have been provided with documents which I have used to prompt my memory in respect of other matters. I have also not had access to my original documents given the passage of time however I have done my very best to provide a meaningful statement to the Inquiry.
4. I would like to start by giving my most sincere condolences to all those affected by the fire. I worked at the Lancaster West Estate for four years and knew many of the residents personally. The loss of life and the impact on the area is completely devastating.

#### Background and role

5. I was the Area Housing Manager for Lancaster West Estate for the TMO from 19 November 2012 to February 2016.
6. I have worked in the housing management industry for thirty years. I began my career at the London Borough of Southwark and then moved to the Sanctuary

1

Siobhan Rumble







**Modifications to the interior of the building between 2012 and 2016**

16. Between 2012 and 2016 a significant refurbishment project took place at Grenfell Tower. I would describe my involvement in this project as acting as a liaison between the Asset Management and Regeneration Team, who were managing the refurbishment for the TMO, Rydon, who were the contractor undertaking the refurbishment, and the residents.
17. As stated earlier, my background is in housing management and I have no training in or knowledge of design or construction. I did not have any technical input into the regeneration works and I did not attend Programme Board meetings or Grenfell Tower Refurbishment Meetings. I did attend the evening consultation meetings for residents which were arranged by the project team. I also attended regular residents meetings and some project meetings in which I offered my opinion on operational matters relating to the works. Despite my attendance at these meetings I was never involved in the technical decision making.
18. I understand that the Inquiry has a list of issues which it wishes to be addressed in this statement. However I have limited knowledge of the modifications made to Grenfell Tower and the reasons behind these modifications. I have no knowledge of the relevant regulations, legislation, British Standards, guidance and industry practice that applied to these modifications through the period from initial design to completion and approval or the modifications were compliant with them.
19. I have no knowledge of what advice or information was available, and what assessments were made, about the components that comprise the interior of Grenfell Tower, its fire safety, fire resistance and compliance with safety standards. I also have no knowledge of whether specific consideration was given to the combination of the interior components and the fire safety, fire retardancy and compliance with safety standards of the same.
20. I also have no knowledge of what factors or motives influenced decisions about the interior of Grenfell Tower or whether any assessments were carried out to balance such factors or motives with the safety of the residents. As stated above, my







32. I recall that the actions arising from the FRAs which we were asked to complete typically related to matters such as furniture being left in communal areas. ESA's were required to check communal self door closers as part of their inspections and I recall there were a few times where a closer was broken or took too long to close. These would have been picked up by the ESA's and we would have dealt with it immediately.
33. As soon as the ESA's reported back to me that an action had been completed, I would advise Janice Wray and she would mark the action as complete in her database. My impression was that Janice took this work very seriously and was in regular contact with us about FRA actions as she would have to report to a corporate group.
34. I did not review the FRAs completed by Carl Stokes, only those specific actions that were allocated to me by Janice Wray.
35. I have been asked for the purpose of this statement whether I had any specific knowledge of the ways in which Grenfell Tower was intended to be resistant to fire spread. I do not have a technical background and therefore I would have no knowledge of this. I also have no knowledge of what was assumed about the resistance of Grenfell Tower in relation to fire spread.
36. I have no knowledge of what decisions were made about fire safety measures at Grenfell Tower or who made them and when. Other than the system of fire risk assessments and actions I have described above, I have no further knowledge of the chain of decision making in respect of fire safety.
37. I am aware that Grenfell Tower had a "Stay Put" strategy. I am also aware that there was a spreadsheet recording information about vulnerable residents. I knew this because one time when the lift was being refurbished, we visited the vulnerable persons list to see if they needed any assistance. The vulnerable persons list was already in existence when I joined the TMO and could be found electronically on our internal system. Janice Jones or Deon Wilkes would add residents to this list if needed.









46. I recall that TMO staff also visited all of the flats affected by the power surges and recorded any reported damage. These affected residents were contacted by a Lancaster West Estate Officer with details about how to make an insurance claim and given monetary compensation from the TMO for the inconvenience caused by the surges.

#### Communication with residents

47. In my view, during the 2012-2016 refurbishment project at Grenfell Tower there was a significant amount of resident consultation. I have endeavoured to outline specific examples of this below, however, I am confident that more consultation took place than what I can recall.

48. Throughout the project, the TMO regularly produced newsletters to residents which contained information on upcoming events, the background to and progress of the project and the findings of recent resident feedback exercises. I did not draft these newsletters, however, I recall that they contained the contact details for Paul Dunkerton, the Project Manager, Mark Anderson as the Director of Assets and Regeneration and myself as the Area Manager for Lancaster West (for example, **SR/2, '15 July 2012 Grenfell Tower Regeneration Project newsletter': TMO10001394**). These newsletters were initially produced by the TMO, however, when Rydon was appointed the newsletter became a joint venture and a Rydon Liaison Officer called Christina Stephanou drafted them. To the best of my knowledge, each newsletter was hand delivered.

49. We also held resident meetings on a regular basis throughout the regeneration project. I have been shown a document which records that on 29 May 2012 I attended a Grenfell Tower evening meeting with Mark Anderson, Paul Dunkerton, Bruce Sounes and residents of Grenfell Tower (**SR/3, '29 May 2012 Notes from Grenfell Tower evening meeting: TMO10001401**). In this meeting Mark provided residents with a brief on how the regeneration project was to be developed and funded. He then introduced Bruce as being from Studio E architects and a question and answer session followed. The minutes show that this meeting concluded with Mark assuring residents that the questionnaire they had been given



sought information on how residents wanted to be involved and how they would like to move forward with future consultation.

50. I have been shown a project newsletter recording that a resident consultation session occurred in October 2012 (**SR/4, '14 May 2013 Grenfell Tower Regeneration Project newsletter'**:                   ), prior to the Planning Application being submitted at the end of 2012. Following this, my understanding is that the Planners asked the designers to review some aspects of the design and submit a new application. We therefore hosted a further drop in session on 17 June 2013 for Grenfell Residents to meet the Project Team and give feedback on a revised design before it was submitted to Planning for approval in the summer of 2013.
51. We also scheduled a series of Resident Consultation Meetings in the evenings at the EMB Rooms on 19 September, 31 October and 12 December 2013 and hosted a drop in session on 14 August 2013 for residents to come and look at the revised plans and ask questions of the Project Manager Paul Dunkerton, who was available all day. The details of these meetings were published in the regeneration newsletter, including an agenda of matters to be discussed (**SR/5, '30 July 2013 Grenfell Tower Regeneration Project newsletter'**:                   ).
52. In Grenfell Tower evening meetings, we provided residents with project updates and listened to resident concerns about the work. We also discussed particular aspects of the refurbishment with residents, such as heating and windows and answered resident concerns about these matters. At some of these meetings Rydon produced samples of cladding materials, design options for the windows and information on the proposed heating system (for example, **SR/6, 'October 2013 Grenfell Tower Regeneration Project newsletter'**:                   ).
53. The feedback received from residents meetings was circulated to all households in a meeting report, the key points of which were highlight in the regeneration newsletters.
54. I am not aware when the Grenfell Compact was established, however I recall that it arose following an agreement between representatives of the estate and the TMO as to how residents would be involved in decisions affecting their homes.



55. I recall that in around December 2012 we had concern that communications from a select few residents were seeking to represent all residents of Grenfell Tower. We informed residents of this in a Grenfell Tower Regeneration Project newsletter dated 20 December 2012 and encouraged residents to contact us directly with questions and comments (SR/7, '20 December 2012 Grenfell Tower Regeneration Project newsletter': ). We used this newsletter as an opportunity to remind residents that we would continue to communicate with, and listen to, them via individual letters, newsletters, drop-in sessions, evening meetings and one to one meetings should they request one.
56. Below I set out my knowledge of what concerns, warnings and other statements were expressed about the fire safety of Grenfell Tower before, during or after the 2012-2016 renovations.
57. Resident complaints at Lancaster West made their way to us through various channels. There was a specific email address monitored by the Complaints Team which residents could send their complaints to, a Customer Service Centre, a website, a Freephone telephone number and a noticeboard in the Tower. My recollection is that most of the complaints I was aware of arose when a resident would come into the Lancaster West Estate Office in person and request repairs or report anti-social behaviour.
58. I have been asked for the purposes of this statement whether I recall residents complaining of fire safety issues very often. The answer is that complaints of this nature were uncommon. I do recall residents' complaining during the refurbishment project about contractors and residents parking along Grenfell Road and the dumping of bulk rubbish in the communal areas of Grenfell Tower. We appreciated that these two issues did create a potential fire risk and therefore we were very proactive in dealing with them.
59. I have also been asked for the purposes of this statement if I was aware that there was a blog written by the Grenfell Action Group that raised concerns about fire safety at Grenfell. I was aware of this blog.



60. I do recall several blog posts concerning access to Grenfell Tower in early 2013 because they spoke of me personally in a way that I found offensive and inaccurate. Specifically, the Grenfell Action Group complained that vehicular access to Grenfell Tower was restricted due to obstructions arising from the loss of the Lancaster Road carpark during the KALC project (SR/8: TMO10017466). The author of the post wrote that after several unfruitful attempts to engage with me, I was badgered into inviting the local Station Manager from the LFB to visit the Tower on 20 December 2012. The author also wrote that I had ignored requests for the contact details of the Station Officer who attended that day.
61. I remember being very surprised when I read this blog entry because I had gone to great lengths to try and resolve the issue of illegal parking as I understood why residents had concerns. I first tried to discourage people from parking in that location by putting warnings stickers on the windows of their vehicles, however, many of the residents and contractors simply ignored these signs. I then hired a local mechanic to tow the cars whose owners had ignored the warnings, however one of my line managers required that this arrangement cease. After that I felt like I had done everything I could to address this issue.
62. Another blog entry I have been shown was published by the Grenfell Action Group on 24 January 2016 (SR/9, '**24 January 2016 Grenfell Action Group: Grenfell Tower still a Fire Risk**': ). This blog entry included complaints that I had been slow to react to accumulating rubbish in the Tower and had not bothered to remedy it. The TMO's cleaning company called OCS used to clear bulk rubbish from all TMO sites three times a week. Unfortunately, over the weekend when the cleaners did not attend residents would leave their rubbish in the foyer.
63. I considered the blog entry to be unfair because again I had gone to great lengths to address the issue for the residents. I had spoken to the Housing Officer and increased the frequency of inspections in the area to ensure that it was maintained free of obstruction. I had also sat down with Janice Jones to watch the CCTV footage from the Tower and wrote letters to all residents warning them that if they continued to dispose of their rubbish in that way we would invoice them directly as it was not fair that all residents had to pay this through their service charges.



**Fire advice given to residents between 2012 and 14 June 2017**

64. I believe that the stay put policy was widely known however I have no further knowledge of what advice was given to Grenfell Tower residents about fire precautions. The provision of this type of information did not fall into my responsibilities, although I would expect it was provided for by the Health and Safety team. It follows that I am not aware of whether it was periodically reviewed.
65. I have been asked to set my out my knowledge of whether there were evacuation plans in place at Grenfell Tower and if so, what they were. Though it was not my responsibility to inform residents of this type of information, understanding was that the “Stay Put” policy was widely known throughout the residents of Grenfell Tower.

**Conclusion**

66. I make this statement voluntarily to assist the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
67. I understand that I may be called to give evidence at the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry. I hope to be able to assist the Inquiry team in its task of understanding how the fire at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017 began and how it spread in the manner it did, leading to such devastating loss of life.
68. The matters in this statement cover the period during which I worked for the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organization (“TMO”). I have done my very best to provide a meaningful statement to the Inquiry.
69. I would like to again provide my most sincere condolences to all those affected by the fire. I worked at the Lancaster West Estate for four years, knew, and cared about many of the residents personally. The loss of life and the impact on the area is completely devastating.

**I confirm this statement to be true to the best of my knowledge and belief.**

14

Siobhan Rumble



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

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: 8/2/19. \_\_\_\_\_

