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Sent by email only

Mr Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Councillor Colin Smith
Bromley Civic Centre

Copied to:
Mr Tom Copley
Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development

09/05/2025

Dear Mr Sadiq Khan and Councillor Colin Smith,

We are writing to you as representatives of workers in the fire and rescue service, building safety and housing campaigners, and local residents about our serious concerns with the plans for a high-rise development at Blenheim Shopping Centre in Penge.

The plan to construct a high-rise residential block with a height of 17.7m and only one staircase risks another fire safety disaster.

London Fire Brigade (LFB) has already raised issues with the safety of the proposed building. While the building's height complies with government's building regulations, which states that any new residential building more than 18m high must have two staircases, the LFB's nine-point objection stated that the decision to reduce the block height to only 30cm below the threshold is not 'ethically justified'.

The fire risks are almost identical as a building that is 30cm taller and would not meet the requirements of the regulations. Evacuation at Grenfell was severely hindered by the single narrow stairwell.

Other fire safety concerns raised by LFB, which include a lack of suitable means of escape for occupants in open plan apartments and calls for a second evacuation lift, have been ignored by the developer or remain unresolved.

This is a clear breach of London Plan Policy 2021 D12, which requires all developments to achieve the highest standards of fire safety.

In light of Grenfell and the ongoing building safety crisis, it is unacceptable that Hadley Property Group and Clarion Housing Group are doing the bare minimum to meet fire safety standards.

Allowing this building to proceed sets a precedent for other developers building properties across the country to treat fire safety as an afterthought instead of the top priority.

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry laid bare the impact of poor and reckless decision-making where profit was put before lives. Lessons must be learnt.

Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, declared in the House of Commons on 26 February 2025 that “To have anyone anywhere living in an unsafe home is one person too many. That will be our guiding principle, and it must be that of anyone who wants to build or care for our homes.” These promises must be upheld by politicians at all levels of government.

We urge the Greater London Authority to use its powers to direct Bromley Council to look at these plans again and prevent construction from taking place until they meet the highest standards of fire safety.

Yours Sincerely,

Steve Wright, Fire Brigades Union General Secretary

David Shek, Fire Brigades Union London Executive Council Member

End Our Cladding Scandal

Mrs Ritu Saha, UK Cladding Action Group Co-founder

Justice4Grenfell

Tower Blocks UK

Suz Munna, Social Housing Action Campaign Secretary and Co-Founder

ACORN the Union

London Renters Union Coordinating Group

Martin Wicks, Labour Campaign for Council Housing Secretary

Lee Knights, Penge Preservation Society