

Grenfell Tower Hackitt Review – media coverage April 2018

The Guardian

Architects fear Grenfell review will avoid ban on flammable cladding

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/18/architects-fear-grenfell-review-will-avoid-flammable-cladding-ban>

A screenshot of the Guardian website showing an article titled "Architects fear Grenfell review will avoid ban on flammable cladding". The article is by Robert Booth, dated Wednesday, 18 April 2018, 00:01 BST. The sub-headline reads "Royal Institute of British Architects seeks total ban on the use of combustible cladding". The article features a photograph of a building with smoke rising from it. To the right of the article is a pink advertisement for Vitality Life Insurance, which offers a 40% discount on monthly gym fees. The website's navigation bar includes sections for News, Opinion, Sport, Culture, and Lifestyle, along with a search bar and a "Support The Guardian" button.

Architects have raised fears that a government review of building regulations will stop short of proposing a ban on flammable cladding on apartment towers in the wake of the Grenfell fire.

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), whose members include Richard Rogers and Norman Foster, has expressed fears that neither sprinkler systems nor extra escape staircases would be required, either. It has written to the housing secretary, Sajid Javid, to “raise significant concerns that key changes ... seem to have been overlooked”.

The review is being carried out by Judith Hackitt, former chair of the Health and Safety Executive, who was commissioned in the wake of the June disaster that claimed 71 lives. She is due to report back within weeks. Building owners across England, where over 300 buildings have been identified with similar combustible cladding, are awaiting reforms so they know what to replace the dangerous cladding with.

“We fear that the current set of proposals under consideration overlook simple but critical changes that would provide clarity for professionals and most importantly help protect the public,” said Jane Duncan, chair of the RIBA expert group on fire safety. “Sprinklers, a second means of escape and a ban on flammable cladding for high rise residential buildings are common sense recommendations and a basic requirement in other countries.”

It is widely believed that all three measures could have saved lives at Grenfell.

Building inspectors visited the tower 16 times during its refurbishment from 2014 to 2016 and signed it off as compliant with government fire safety guidance despite it being fitted with

combustible plastic core cladding panels. The highly complex system of building regulations and guidance was quickly identified as a key problem. In December, Dame Hackitt described it as “not fit for purpose” and open to abuse by those trying to save money.

Combustible cladding is being stripped from buildings across the country but Hackitt has indicated that she would resist banning flammable cladding altogether. In a letter to the House of Commons communities select committee, she said: “There is currently a choice between using products of limited combustibility or undergoing a full system test ... For the future, my view is clear that the former is undoubtedly the low-risk option. Where the person undertaking the work chooses the latter option, not only must they ensure that the full system is tested but they must also ensure that potential risks are mitigated by ensuring the system is properly installed and maintained throughout its life cycle.”

Hackitt has said she would not propose a new building regulations system that “tells people what to do” but which “creates a culture where there is a clear focus on building and maintaining safety throughout the lifetime of buildings”.

This approach has led to fears in parts of the construction industry that the complexity which has led to so many problems with the use of combustible cladding will remain and residents will still have to rely on fire engineers and testing specialists, such as the Building Research Establishment, to know if they are safe.

The RIBA notes that Hackitt appears comfortable with limited-combustibility cladding. It thinks that it would be simpler to ban cladding of any type of combustibility altogether.

Clive Betts MP, chairman of the communities select committee, said last month: “It is unacceptable that so many months after the Grenfell fire there remains a lack of clarity on whether combustible materials can be used in the cladding of high rises.”

Javid last week commissioned a separate review of desktop studies of fire risk – a process of assessing the danger posed by fire of a particular building design by analysing the different test results of its components rather than fire testing the whole design.

It is considered by some a shortcut that avoids full testing and Javid said he wanted to look at banning them altogether.

A Ministry of Housing spokesperson said the Hackitt review “is ongoing and it would be inappropriate to prejudge and comment on the outcome of the report”. A spokesperson for Hackitt said: “We expect her final report to be published this spring.”

The Times

Fire review ‘falls short’

Print only, featured on pg 4:

A review of building regulations will fail to bring about the changes needed to prevent a repeat of Grenfell Tower fire, an architects’ body will warn today. The Royal Institute of British Architects has written to Sajid Javid, the housing secretary, with concerns over the review led by Dame Judith Hackitt. It said that basic reforms including banning flammable cladding materials, installing sprinkler systems and ensuring a second escape route in high-rise buildings were not on its agenda.

The Architects' Journal

Royal Institute of British Architects seeks total ban on the use of combustible cladding

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/grenfell-building-regs-review-is-shying-away-from-necessary-changes-warns-riba/10030176.article>



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Grenfell Building Regs review is shying away from necessary changes, warns RIBA

18 APRIL, 2018 • BY RICHARD WAITE



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The RIBA has said it has 'serious concerns' about the direction of the post-Grenfell



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Grenfell Building Regs review is shying away from necessary changes, warns RIBA

The RIBA has said it has 'serious concerns' about the direction of the post-Grenfell review of Building Regulations, warning that its recommendations will not bring about the changes needed

The institute said the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, led by Judith Hackitt and responding to the Grenfell Tower fire, had overlooked the RIBA's calls to ban flammable cladding, fit sprinklers in existing housing blocks and ensure a second means of escape for all high-rise residential buildings.

In December the RIBA criticised Hackitt's interim report, claiming it had shied away from 'introducing immediate and effective changes'.

Now, following the second phase of the review, which included the RIBA's input into two working groups on design, construction and refurbishment and competence, the institute's expert panel says it fears 'the current set of proposals under consideration by Hackitt will not provide clarity for professionals or deliver assurance for the public'.

The RIBA has now written to Hackitt and housing secretary Sajid Javid (*see attached*), urging an immediate consideration of the recommendations laid out by the RIBA before the final report is due in May.

RIBA past president Jane Duncan, who chairs the institute's Expert Advisory Group on Fire Safety, said: 'The RIBA has engaged closely with [Hackitt] and her review and we welcome many of the suggestions made in her interim report to strengthen the building control system.'

The current set of proposals under consideration overlook simple but critical changes

'However, we fear that the current set of proposals under consideration overlook simple but critical changes that would provide clarity for professionals and most importantly, would help protect the public.

'Sprinklers, a second means of escape and a ban on flammable cladding for high-rise residential buildings are common-sense recommendations, and a basic requirement in many other countries. We have written to the secretary of state making clear that there must be a thorough rewriting of the Building Regulations and guidance on all aspects of fire safety, to avoid continuation of the regulatory failings that lead to the Grenfell Tower fire.'

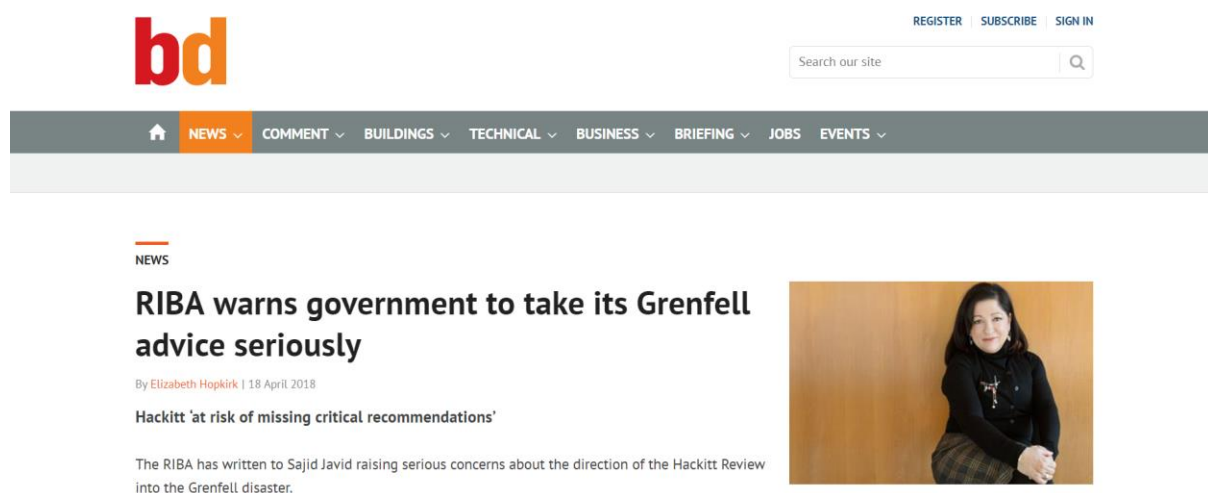
The RIBA's four key recommendations for 'baseline prescriptive requirements'

- External walls of buildings over 18m in height to be constructed of non-combustible (European class A1) materials only
- More than one means of vertical escape from new multiple-occupancy residential buildings over 11m high, consistent with current regulations for commercial buildings (which are arguably lower risk)
- Retrofitting of sprinklers/automatic fire suppression systems to existing residential buildings above 18m from ground level in height as 'consequential improvements' where an existing building is subject to 'material alterations'
- Sprinklers/automatic fire suppression systems in all new and converted residential buildings, as currently required under Regulations 37A and 37B of the Building Regulations for Wales

BD Online

RIBA warns government to take its Grenfell advice seriously

<https://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/riba-warns-government-to-take-its-grenfell-advice-seriously/5093137.article>



The screenshot shows the BD Online website interface. At the top right, there are links for REGISTER, SUBSCRIBE, and SIGN IN. Below these is a search bar with the text 'Search our site' and a magnifying glass icon. A navigation bar contains a home icon and several menu items: NEWS, COMMENT, BUILDINGS, TECHNICAL, BUSINESS, BRIEFING, JOBS, and EVENTS. The main content area features a 'NEWS' section with the article title 'RIBA warns government to take its Grenfell advice seriously' by Elizabeth Hopkirk, dated 18 April 2018. A sub-headline reads 'Hackitt 'at risk of missing critical recommendations''. A short introductory paragraph states: 'The RIBA has written to Sajid Javid raising serious concerns about the direction of the Hackitt Review into the Grenfell disaster.' To the right of the text is a photograph of a woman, likely Elizabeth Hopkirk, sitting and smiling.

RIBA warns government to take its Grenfell advice seriously

Hackitt 'at risk of missing critical recommendations'

The RIBA has written to Sajid Javid raising serious concerns about the direction of the Hackitt Review into the Grenfell disaster.

It is worried that some of its key recommendations will be overlooked in the final report due out next month.

It said: "The RIBA is concerned that the current approach of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety will not result in the lasting change needed to protect the public.

"The government and the construction industry must take the opportunity to reform the way that all buildings are designed, procured, built, managed and maintained to ensure the safety of building users, including in relation to fire safety."

The RIBA's Expert Advisory Group on Fire Safety, set up following the tragedy, is urging the communities secretary to make sure that Dame Judith's report includes a ban on flammable cladding, require sprinklers to be fitted and ensures there is a second means of escape for high-rise residential buildings.

The chair of the RIBA's Expert Group and the institute's immediate past president Jane Duncan expresses worry that the current set of proposals under consideration by Hackitt will not provide clarity for professionals or deliver assurance for the public.

She said: "The RIBA has engaged closely with Dame Judith and her review and we welcome many of the suggestions made in her interim report to strengthen the building control system.

"However, we fear that the current set of proposals under consideration overlooks simple but critical changes that would provide clarity for professionals and most importantly, would help protect the public.

"Sprinklers, a second means of escape and a ban on flammable cladding for high-rise residential buildings are common-sense recommendations, and a basic requirement in many other countries.

"We have written to the secretary of state making clear that there must be a thorough re-writing of the building regulations and guidance on all aspects of fire safety, to avoid continuation of the regulatory failings that lead to the Grenfell Tower fire."

The institute did welcome the suggestions in Hackitt's interim report that there should be clearer definition and allocation of statutory duties, increased independent oversight of construction quality and better building control enforcement.

See the attached pdf for more information.

RIBA's 4 recommendations

The RIBA's four key recommendations for baseline prescriptive requirements to provide clarity for professionals and to protect the public are:

- External walls of buildings over 18m in height to be constructed of non-combustible (European class A1) materials only;
- More than one means of vertical escape from new multiple occupancy residential buildings over 11 metres high, consistent with current regulations for commercial buildings (which are arguably lower risk);

- Retro-fitting of sprinklers / automatic fire suppression systems to existing residential buildings above 18m from ground level in height as “consequential improvements” where an existing building is subject to “material alterations”;
- Sprinklers/automatic fire suppression systems in all new and converted residential buildings, as currently required under Regulations 37A and 37B of the Building Regulations for Wales.

Inside Housing

RIBA writes to government over Hackitt review fears

<https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/riba-writes-to-government-over-hackitt-review-fears-55846>

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has written to Sajid Javid to raise fears that Dame Judith Hackitt’s building regulations review will stop short of recommending key fire safety changes.

In the letter the expert advisory group on fire safety set up by RIBA after the Grenfell Tower fire urges the review to consider banning combustible cladding on high rise buildings and stepping up requirements for sprinklers in new and existing buildings.

Housing secretary Mr Javid commissioned an ‘independent review of building regulations’ last year after the Grenfell blaze.

In its evidence to the review, RIBA called for external walls on buildings over 18m tall to be made of non-combustible, or European class A1, materials only.

It also said retrofitting of sprinklers should be mandatory in existing high rises undergoing refurbishment works, as well as in all new homes.

And it said new blocks of flats taller than 11m should have more than one means of escape.

The influential architects’ body was not given a place on the Hackitt Review’s working group despite requesting input.

Along with other industry organisations, it has previously expressed concern over the direction of the review.

Jane Duncan, immediate past president of the RIBA and chair of its expert advisory group on fire safety, said: “The RIBA has engaged closely with Dame Judith and her review and we welcome many of the suggestions made in her interim report to strengthen the building control system.

“However, we fear that the current set of proposals under consideration overlook simple but critical changes that would provide clarity for professionals and most importantly, would help protect the public.

“Sprinklers, a second means of escape and a ban on flammable cladding for high rise residential buildings are common-sense recommendations, and a basic requirement in many other countries. We have written to the Secretary of State making clear that there must be a thorough re-writing of the building regulations and guidance on all aspects of fire safety, to avoid continuation of the regulatory failings that lead to the Grenfell Tower fire.”

Dame Hackitt’s final report is due in May.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said: “Following the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy we asked Dame Judith Hackitt to undertake an independent review into building and fire safety regulations and report back to us.

“This work is on-going and it would be inappropriate to prejudge and comment on the outcome of the report.”

A spokesperson for Dame Hackitt said: “Dame Judith Hackitt’s review will assess the effectiveness of current building and fire safety regulations.

“We expect her final report to be published this spring.”

THE HACKITT REVIEW

Dame Judith Hackitt’s (above) interim report on building safety, released in December 2017, was scathing about some of the industry’s practices.

Although the full report is not due to be published until later this year, the former Health and Safety Executive chair has already highlighted a culture of cost-cutting and is likely to call for a radical overhaul of current regulations in an interim report.

Dame Hackitt’s key recommendations and conclusions include:

- A call for the simplification of building regulations and guidelines to prevent misapplication
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities in the construction industry
- Giving those who commission, design and construct buildings primary responsibility that they are fit for purpose
- Greater scope for residents to raise concerns
- A formal accreditation system for anyone involved in fire prevention on high-rise blocks
- A stronger enforcement regime backed up with powerful sanctions

Local Government Chronicle

Analysis: Could banning desktop studies lead to better fire safety?

<https://www.lgcplus.com/services/housing/analysis-could-banning-desktop-studies-lead-to-better-fire-safety/7024125.article>

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Analysis: Could banning desktop studies lead to better fire safety?

18 APRIL, 2018 | BY FIONA MCINTYRE

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County accused of lack of candour over '£60m black hole' report

Last week the government launched its long-awaited consultation on proposed changes to its building regulations guidance document, Approved Document B. One option is to ban the use of desktop studies altogether, but is this the right answer? LGC's sister title *New Civil Engineer* takes a closer look.

Government officials have been under pressure to change the guidance since the Grenfell Tower fire last year, as some experts believe the tower's cladding had contributed to the rapid spread of the fire and questions have been raised as to whether and how the cladding was deemed to comply with building regulations. If the cladding was seen to comply with building regulations, it has led experts to ask whether the routes to complying with building regulations are robust enough.

Aluminium composite tiles which were used in Grenfell Tower's cladding combination failed initial fire resistance tests carried out days after the fire had taken place. In July, the cladding combination understood to have been used on Grenfell Tower, ACM cladding with polyethylene filler and foam insulation, with fire breaks and cavity barriers in place, failed a large-scale fire test carried out by the Building Research Establishment. The test was part of a wider programme of cladding tests commissioned by the government.

At the moment there are four ways to comply with part B4 of the building regulations, which relates to fire safety of building facades. While three involve some form of physical test, the fourth route allows a desktop study to be carried out instead.

Dame Judith Hackitt, who is leading a review into building regulations which was set up following the Grenfell Tower fire, said government should "significantly restrict" the use of desktop studies.

In her interim report in December, she said: "The government should significantly restrict the use of desktop studies to approve changes to cladding and other systems to ensure that they are only used where appropriate and with sufficient, relevant test evidence.

"Those undertaking desktop studies must be able to demonstrate suitable competence. The industry should ensure that their use of desktop studies is responsible and in line with this aim."

Two official options were put forward for the consultation. The first is to do nothing, i.e. make no changes to the document. The second is to make amendments to the document which would restrict the use of desktop studies.

But the government also said desktop studies could be banned completely. Launching the consultation, housing secretary Sajid Javid said: “We have listened carefully to Dame Judith Hackitt and we are taking action to strengthen building regulations guidance, which could mean that the use of ‘desktop studies’ are either significantly restricted or banned altogether.”

Is a ban the right answer? Fire Sector Federation built environment workstream chair Tom Roche cautions that desktop studies are an emotive topic, even among industry experts.

“It’s a little bit more complex than just a straight yes or no, there are a lot more dimensions to this that people need to consider,” he says, adding that the outcome – whether a cladding combination or material is deemed safe – must ultimately be the focus of any testing process.

“We’ve got to be clear that these products are safe for the purpose they’re intended to be used in,” he says.

“You have to be guided by that principle: will we deliver something that’s fit for the intended purpose, and doesn’t impact fire safety?”

Roche explains the Fire Sector Federation is still considering its position on allowing desktop studies; while many of its members would agree with banning the use of desktop studies, many would advise against it.

But Specialist Engineering Contractors Association chief executive Rudi Klein feels that a ban on desktop studies could work better than restricting their use.

“Rather than making exemptions, which I think can be used and abused, I’m all for saying, ‘actually, I think we should just do away with them [desktop studies]’”, he says.

However, Klein cautions clear definitions would have to be set for the ban. Using a desktop study to test materials with health and safety implications would not be acceptable; testing an individual material, such as a screw, could be tested with a desktop study as there would be less at stake.

Klein suggests materials could be labelled with what they should be used for, which would help users identify whether a desktop study could be used or not.

“All circumstances are different, aren’t they? All projects are different, all health and safety issues are different,” he says.

“It’s difficult sometimes to have a policy that’s all encompassing and applies to everything. But the trouble is, you start making exceptions and then people will find ways and means of getting round them.”

The consultation on changes to Approved Document B closes on 25 May.

Show House

RIBA warns Hackitt review will does not go far enough

<https://www.showhouse.co.uk/uncategorized/riba-warns-hackitt-review-will-does-not-go-far-enough/>

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RIBA warns Hackitt review will does not go far enough



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The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has raised serious concerns over the direction of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, led by Dame Judith Hackitt, commenced in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire.

The RIBA’s Expert Advisory Group on Fire Safety, set up following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, has written to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid MP, urging an immediate consideration of the recommendations laid out by the RIBA before the final report is due in May.

In the letter to Sajid Javid the RIBA welcomed the suggestions in Dame Judith’s interim report that there should be clearer definition and allocation of statutory duties, increased independent oversight of construction quality and better building control enforcement.

However, the Institute raised significant concerns that key changes to ban flammable cladding, require sprinklers to be fitted and ensure there is a second means of escape for high rise residential buildings seem to have been overlooked.

The chair of the RIBA’s Expert Group and the Institute’s Immediate Past resident Jane Duncan expresses worry that the current set of proposals under consideration by Dame Judith Hackitt will not provide clarity for professionals or deliver assurance for the public.

The RIBA has made four key recommendations for baseline prescriptive requirements to provide clarity for professionals and protect the public:

- External walls of buildings over 18m in height to be constructed of non-combustible (European class A1) materials only;
- More than one means of vertical escape from new multiple occupancy residential buildings over 11 metres high, consistent with current regulations for commercial buildings (which are arguably lower risk);
- Retro-fitting of sprinklers / automatic fire suppression systems to existing residential buildings above 18m from ground level in height as “consequential improvements” where an existing building is subject to ‘material alterations’;
- Sprinklers/automatic fire suppression systems in all new and converted residential buildings, as currently required under Regulations 37A and 37B of the Building Regulations for Wales.

Immediate Past President of RIBA and Chair of the RIBA's Expert Advisory Group on Fire Safety, Jane Duncan said, "The RIBA has engaged closely with Dame Judith and her Review and we welcome many of the suggestions made in her interim report to strengthen the building control system.

"However, we fear that the current set of proposals under consideration overlook simple but critical changes that would provide clarity for professionals and most importantly, would help protect the public. Sprinklers, a second means of escape and a ban on flammable cladding for high rise residential buildings are common-sense recommendations, and a basic requirement in many other countries. We have written to the Secretary of State making clear that there must be a thorough re-writing of the building regulations and guidance on all aspects of fire safety, to avoid continuation of the regulatory failings that lead to the Grenfell Tower fire."

The full briefing document sent to Dame Judith Hackitt and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid MP can be downloaded [here](#).

Planning Resource

Architects flag concerns over post-Grenfell building regs probe

<https://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1462439/architects-flag-concerns-post-grenfell-building-regs-probe>

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Architects flag concerns over post-Grenfell building regs probe

18 April 2018 by Michael Donnelly.

Reports that architects have 'raised fears that a government review of building regulations will stop short of proposing a ban on flammable cladding on apartment towers in the wake of the Grenfell fire' feature in today's newspaper round-up.

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Reports that architects have 'raised fears that a government review of building regulations will stop short of proposing a ban on flammable cladding on apartment towers in the wake of the Grenfell fire' feature in today's newspaper round-up.

New Civil Engineer

Experts call for flammable cladding ban after Grenfell

<https://www.newcivilengineer.com/latest/experts-call-for-flammable-cladding-ban-after-grenfell/10030268.article>



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New Civil Engineer



Fire safety experts have called for a ban on flammable cladding on high rise buildings as concerns are raised over the direction of the post-Grenfell Hackitt Review into building regulations.

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) fire safety expert advisory group said key changes to ban flammable cladding, fit sprinkler systems and ensure there is a second escape exit have been overlooked in the review led by Dame Judith Hackitt.

It comes in the same week that a [damning BRE Global report](#) found that the deaths of 71 people in the disaster could have been avoided if the west London tower block had not been refurbished.

The advisory group recommended that only non-combustible materials are used on buildings taller than 18m, all multiple occupancy buildings more than 11m high should have more than one means of escape, that residential buildings above 18m have sprinklers retro-fitted and that sprinklers are installed in all new high rise homes.

RIBA expert advisory group on fire safety chairwoman Jane Duncan said: "The RIBA has engaged closely with Dame Judith and her review and we welcome many of the suggestions made in her interim report to strengthen the building control system.

"However, we fear that the current set of proposals under consideration overlook simple but critical changes that would provide clarity for professionals and most importantly, would help protect the public.

"Sprinklers, a second means of escape and a ban on flammable cladding for high rise residential buildings are common-sense recommendations, and a basic requirement in many other countries.

"We have written to the Secretary of State making clear that there must be a thorough re-writing of the building regulations and guidance on all aspects of fire safety, to avoid continuation of the regulatory failings that lead to the Grenfell Tower fire."

A report by the London Assembly Planning Committee, published last month, [also called for sprinkler retro-fitting](#) in high rise residential buildings. Grenfell Tower was not fitted with sprinklers during its 2016 refurbishment.

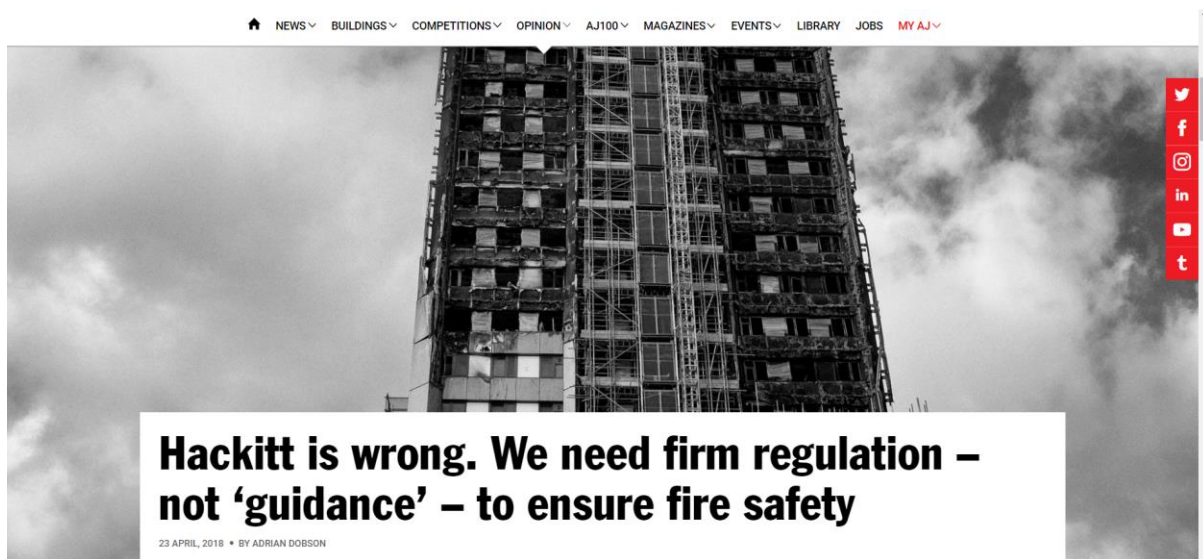
Hackitt's [interim report](#), which was published in December last year, found that the regulatory systems for designing, constructing and managing high rise buildings are "not fit for purpose".

The RIBA advisory group wrote to Hackitt and communities and local government secretary Sajid Javid to make the recommendations. The final report will be published this spring.

The Architects' Journal

Hackitt is wrong. We need firm regulation – not 'guidance' – to ensure fire safety

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/opinion/hackitt-is-wrong-we-need-firm-regulation-not-guidance-to-ensure-fire-safety/10030326.article?blocktitle=Comment&contentID=13641>



The Hackitt review shows that the government urgently needs to fix the Building Regulations with regard to fire safety, writes the RIBA's *Adrian Dobson*

Dame [Judith Hackitt's Independent Review](#) of Building Regulations and Fire Safety is entering the final straight and its recommendations are eagerly awaited by a construction industry still in shock following the [Grenfell Tower fire disaster](#). In her interim report, Dame Judith identified a host of systemic failures, including lack of independent oversight of the quality of construction work and inadequate enforcement of building control, and raised very reasonable questions over the competency of the industry and the role of value engineering in product substitution.

She quite rightly delivered a damning verdict on the overall building control and construction industry eco-system. However, she seems remarkably reluctant to address the obvious core regulatory failure that has been revealed in the aftermath of the tragedy at Grenfell Tower. When so many high-rise residential and complex buildings are no longer deemed fire-safe by their local authorities, there is clearly something wrong with the Building Regulations guidance.

It is now widely accepted that Approved Document B is flawed, but it continues to be used by the industry for want of any replacement and Dame Judith's report seems highly unlikely to tackle this core issue. Indeed she stated, to our great concern, in her interim report:

'A systemic review of the regulations by a non-expert in construction was never going to recommend detailed changes to the technical requirements – this is beyond my area of competence.'

So, an Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety is not going to review the technical requirements and guidance in the relevant Approved Documents. How is this possible or acceptable?

The RIBA's Expert Advisory Group on Fire Safety has argued that we need a [return to baseline prescriptive requirements](#) based on common sense approaches to fire-safe design that have been developed over decades, indeed centuries. We are calling for:

- External wall construction for existing or new buildings with a storey 18m or more above ground to be comprised of non-combustible (European class A1) materials only.
- In all new multiple occupancy residential buildings, a requirement for at least two staircases, offering alternative means of escape, where the top floor is more than 11m above ground level or the top floor is more than three storeys above the ground level storey (as required for commercial buildings in ADB - Vol 2: B1 Section 4).
- Retro-fitting of sprinklers / automatic fire suppression systems and centrally addressable fire alarm systems to existing residential buildings above 18m from ground level as “consequential improvements” where a building is subject to ‘material alterations.’
- Mandatory requirement for sprinklers/automatic fire suppression systems and addressable central fire alarms in all new and converted residential buildings, as currently required under Regulations 37A and 37B of the Building Regulations for Wales.

Dame Judith seems unaccountably set against strong prescriptive guidance and is determined to stick with the complex and messy regime of guidance, testing, desktop studies and fire engineering that constitutes the ambiguous and unworkable eco-system that has been developed by the MHCLG and BRE. In March 2018, in a letter to the Chair of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee she wrote:

‘I believe that only an outcomes-based system can deliver this, as opposed to a system that tells people what to do.’

The relaxation of baseline requirements and an over-reliance on unregulated fire engineering approaches, including desktop studies, has been a key factor that has led to the regulatory and systemic failures that have prompted the Independent Review in the first place.

Surely this is the time for the UK Government to elevate its duty to safeguard the safety of its citizens. It should look beyond the failed systems that it has relied upon historically to develop and interpret its Building Regulations and guidance, and bring in truly independent international expertise. All successful building control systems around the world, including the International Building Code, rely upon a significant element of prescriptive regulation.

In the meantime, architects, as the only independently regulated profession in the construction industry, need to exert pressure wherever they can for projects to adopt the minimum provisions proposed by the RIBA's Expert Advisory Group.

Adrian Dobson is executive director – members of the RIBA

Social Media Highlights



The Guardian @guardian · 16h
Architects fear Grenfell review will avoid ban on flammable cladding



Architects fear Grenfell review will avoid ban on flammable cladding
Royal Institute of British Architects seeks total ban on the use of combustible cladding
theguardian.com

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The RIBA says it has 'serious concerns' about the post-Grenfell review of Building Regulations



Grenfell Building Regs review is shying away from necessary change...
The RIBA has said it has 'serious concerns' about the direction of the post-Grenfell review of Building Regulations, warning that its recommendations
architectsjournal.co.uk

4 5



Building Design @BDonline · 9h
RIBA warns government to take its Grenfell advice seriously dlvr.it/QPvxbp



3 3



Richard Waite @waitey · 5h

Grenfell Building Regs review is shying away from necessary changes, warns RIBA @adriandobson



Grenfell Building Regs review is shying away from necessary change...

The RIBA has said it has 'serious concerns' about the direction of the post-Grenfell review of Building Regulations, warning that its recommendations architectsjournal.co.uk

1 4



Inside Housing @insidehousing · 47m

RIBA writes to government over Hackitt review fears #ukhousing @RIBA



RIBA writes to government over Hackitt review fears

Inside Housing, news, analysis, and comment about the social housing sector in the UK.

insidehousing.co.uk

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Phélim Mac Cafferty @Phelimmac · 50m

.@RIBA is right-outrageous that Conservative govt won't ban flammable cladding & won't insist on sprinkler systems. Cuts & the rush to deregulate have cost too many lives. We desperately need a new robust regulatory framework that puts the safety of tenants first #Grenfell



B&H Greens, BHGreenCouncillors, David Gibson and Tom Druiitt

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RIBA @RIBA · 2h

The @RIBA's Expert Advisory Group on Fire Safety has made four key recommendations for #Hackitt review. Urgent consideration needed from Government #GrenfellTower bit.ly/2JUtz22



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RIBA @RIBA · 6h

We @RIBA fear #Hackitt review will not deliver the changes needed. Read our recommendations #GrenfellTower bit.ly/2JUtz22



11 13



RIBA @RIBA · 5h

Immediate Past President of @RIBA and Chair of the RIBA's Expert Advisory Group on Fire Safety, @JaneDuncan41 on #Hackitt review #GrenfellTower bit.ly/2JUtz22



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