

## David Nimmo EngTech GFireE

### CASE STUDY

**Education and Qualifications:** ONC in Metallurgy; Five 2-week Fire Safety Officer modules from the Fire Service College; a number of fire safety courses from the London Fire Brigade

**Which Institution are you a member of?** Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE)

**Grade of membership:** Graduate

**Job title:** Senior Surveyor (Fire Safety Specialist)

**Employer:** London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

**Length in current job:** 6 years

#### **Please provide a brief outline of your career so far:**

I left school at 18 with one A-level and five O-levels. I attained a post as a trainee metallurgist and studied for my ONC. I married my wife in 1971 (we are still married) and the financial implications of starting a family meant that when an opportunity arose for me to join the London Fire Brigade I applied. I passed the induction tests for the initial three months of training at Southwark Training Centre and then passed out to join Chelsea Fire Station Red Watch in May 1973.

Over the next 31 years, I progressed through the ranks, reaching Station Manager before taking early retirement in 2004. Not retired for long, I soon found myself working as a fire and safety officer for the London Fire and Rescue Service, advising on the high profile Heathrow Terminal 5 project. When this contract finished in 2008, I joined the building control department of Hammersmith and Fulham Council; a role that I still hold today.

#### **What do you most enjoy about your job?**

In a world where architects and their clients are constantly challenging the standards of fire safety, I am able to use my experience and knowledge in all aspects of fire safety in buildings. These can range from small domestic open plan proposals to large multi-storey builds e.g. 600 bedroom post graduate student accommodations; large shopping complexes such as Westfield London; large residential complexes such as Fulham Reach and Chelsea Creek and the constantly changing BBC premises. The joint meetings involving architects, fire engineers, and local fire and rescue services are always challenging, informative and a constant learning experience.

#### **What is the greatest challenge you face in your job?**

One of the greatest challenges I face is ensuring that I



keep up to date with all of the changes in the British Standards and associated guidance affecting fire safety. I regularly receive proposals from architects who make reference to a test or a recent survey that claims to support their means of achieving adequate fire safety and therefore need to know whether these are valid, accurate and legal.

#### **Please describe a typical working day:**

Throughout the day I have to be prepared to be approached by any of the borough departments for fire safety advice on various projects, which include housing, planning, health and safety. I also deal with the necessary fire safety related paperwork on the various applications, discuss current projects with other members of the Building Control Team and review any booked site visits.

Visits can include assisting building control officers with any jobs that have fire safety challenges as well as on-site meetings with other borough departments to resolve their difficulties. I also attend pre-arranged site meetings with architects and their clients while the Fire and Rescue Service often request joint meetings to resolve Fire Safety Order related difficulties.

#### **What is your greatest achievement to date?**

For me, successfully overseeing the extremely challenging Heathrow Terminal 5 Project, from its start on-site in early 2003 to its opening in 2008, was a major achievement. I was able to use this experience for my successful application for EngTech registration;

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another achievement that I am very proud of. I am very honoured to have been part of, and then subsequently led, this fire safety team at London Fire Brigade from 2003 to 2008.

### What attracted you to gain professional registration as an EngTech?

I did not have any professional qualifications that were recognised outside the fire brigade environment and I felt that my considerable knowledge and experience in fire safety required some form of recognition. Gaining professional registration as an Engineering Technician with the Engineering Council certainly confirms this.

### How has gaining EngTech helped with your career?

It has provided recognition of my experience and expertise and helped me gain initial contact with potential clients.

### What advice would you give someone considering professional registration as an EngTech?

Many of us are not aware of our worth in this environment! I would encourage any person within the fire safety arena to assess their input over their career as they may find that they have the necessary knowledge and experience to apply for professional engineering registration as an EngTech.

### How does your employer benefit from you being professionally registered as an EngTech?

It helps to demonstrate to their customers and clients that their workforce is competent in the fire safety arena.

### Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

Retired!!

### What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I go to the gym twice a week and enjoy a number of other activities including cycling, walking, wine making, beer festivals and helping and encouraging my five grandsons with their schooling.

I also support and assist my eldest grandson (19) with his mechanical technician apprenticeship at Mercedes Cars and his associated City & Guilds qualifications.

I am currently working on a long project to restore a 1972 Convertible Mach 2 Ford Mustang.

David Nimmo EngTech GIFireE  
Registered: 2010

