



**FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL
PROPERTY CHAMBER
(RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)**

Case Reference : **LON/00AN/LDC/2022/0250**

Property : **193 Munster Road London SW6 6BY**

Applicant : **Long Terms Reversions (Torquay) Ltd**

Representatives : **Ms Gemma Welsh, Parkfords Property Management**

Respondents : **The 8 leaseholders listed in the schedule attached to the application.**

Type of Application : **Application for the dispensation of consultation requirements pursuant to S. 20ZA of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985**

Tribunal Member : **Mr Duncan Jagger MRICS**

**Venue of
Determination** : **10 Alfred Place, London WC1E 7LR**

**Date of
Determination and
Decision** : **14th March 2023**

Decision

Decisions of the Tribunal

- (1) The Tribunal grants the application for the dispensation of all or any of the consultation requirements provided for by section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Section 20ZA of the same Act).
- (2) The reasons for the Tribunal's decision are set out below.

The background to the application

1. The property is **,193 Munster Road London SW6 6BY** which is a four storey Victorian Mansion block containing 8 purpose built self contained flats.
2. The tribunal did not inspect the property as it considered the documentation and information before it in the trial bundle enabled the tribunal to proceed with this determination.
3. This has been a paper hearing which has been consented to by the parties. The documents that were referred to are in 12 separate sections with a covering email dated 1st March 2023 from Caesar D'mello of Parkford's stating '*I am unable to put together a PDF bundle*' This really falls short of the Tribunals expectations and we find it difficult to believe it was not possible to prepare a paginated bundle. This clearly does not comply with the Directions dated 18th January 2023 whereby Section 4 states The Applicant/landlord shall then by 1 March 2023:
 - *Prepare a single, digital, indexed and paginated Adobe PDF bundle of all relevant documents for use in the determination of the application. If this is not possible, they should notify the tribunal's case officer immediately.*
4. However, despite these misgivings, the contents of the documents have been recorded and accepted.
5. The Applicant seeks dispensation under section 20ZA of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 ("the 1985 Act") from all the consultation requirements imposed on the landlord by section 20 of the 1985 Act, (see the Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI2003/1987), Schedule 4.) The request for dispensation concerns urgent works to undertake roof repairs to the flat roof following water ingress to the top floor flat (flat G)

6. Section 20ZA relates to consultation requirements and provides as follows:

“(1)Where an application is made to a leasehold valuation tribunal for a determination to dispense with all or any of the consultation requirements in relation to any qualifying works or qualifying long term agreement, the tribunal may make the determination if satisfied that it is reasonable to dispense with the requirements.

*(2) In section 20 and this section—
“qualifying works” means works on a building or any other premises, and “qualifying long term agreement” means (subject to subsection (3)) an agreement entered into, by or on behalf of the landlord or a superior landlord, for a term of more than twelve months.*

....

(4)In section 20 and this section “the consultation requirements” means requirements prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State.

(5)Regulations under subsection (4) may in particular include provision requiring the landlord—

(a) to provide details of proposed works or agreements to tenants or the recognised tenants’ association representing them,

(b) to obtain estimates for proposed works or agreements,

(c) to invite tenants or the recognised tenants’ association to propose the names of persons from whom the landlord should try to obtain other estimates,

(d) to have regard to observations made by tenants or the recognised tenants’ association in relation to proposed works or agreements and estimates, and

(e) to give reasons in prescribed circumstances for carrying out works or entering into agreements.

7. The Directions on 18th January 2023 required any tenants who opposed the application to make their objections known on the reply form produced with the Directions. The Tribunal is not aware that there has been objections

The decision

8. By Directions of the tribunal dated 18th January 2023 it was decided that the application be determined without a hearing . No objections to the application were received b
9. The tribunal had before it various documents provided by the applicant that contained the application, grounds for making the application, the leases, and the tribunal Directions

10. **The issues**
11. The only issue for the Tribunal to decide is whether or not it is reasonable to dispense with the statutory consultation requirements. **This application does not concern the issue of whether or not service charges will be reasonable or payable.**
12. Having read the evidence and submissions from the Applicant and having considered all of the documents and grounds for making the application provided by the applicant, the Tribunal determines the dispensation issues as follows.
13. Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (as amended) and the Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (England) Regulations 2003 require a landlord planning to undertake major works, where a leaseholder will be required to contribute over £250 towards those works, to consult the leaseholders in a specified form.
14. Should a landlord not comply with the correct consultation procedure, it is possible to obtain dispensation from compliance with these requirements by such an application as is this one before the Tribunal. Essentially the Tribunal must be satisfied that it is reasonable to do so.
15. In the case of *Daejan Investments Limited v Benson* [2013] UKSC 14, by a majority decision (3-2), the Supreme Court considered the dispensation provisions and set out guidelines as to how they should be applied.
16. The Supreme Court came to the following conclusions:
- a. The correct legal test on an application to the Tribunal for dispensation is:

“Would the flat owners suffer any relevant prejudice, and if so, what relevant prejudice, as a result of the landlord’s failure to comply with the requirements?”
 - b. The purpose of the consultation procedure is to ensure leaseholders are protected from paying for inappropriate works or paying more than would be appropriate.
 - c. In considering applications for dispensation the Tribunal should focus on whether the leaseholders were prejudiced in either respect by the landlord’s failure to comply.

- d. The Tribunal has the power to grant dispensation on appropriate terms and can impose conditions.
- e. The factual burden of identifying some relevant prejudice is on the leaseholders. Once they have shown a credible case for prejudice, the Tribunal should look to the landlord to rebut it.
- f. The onus is on the leaseholders to establish:
 - i. what steps they would have taken had the breach not happened and
 - ii. in what way their rights under (b) above have been prejudiced as a consequence.

16. Accordingly, the Tribunal had to consider whether there was any prejudice that may have arisen out of the conduct of the applicant and whether it was reasonable for the Tribunal to grant dispensation following the guidance set out above.

17. The tribunal is of the view that, taking into account there were no objections, it could not find prejudice to any of the eight leaseholders of the property by the granting of dispensation relating to the essential roof repairs needed to prevent water ingress and damage to the top floor flat confirmed in an email from KBF Property Services Ltd dated 30th November 2022. It is confirmed in the Application the leaseholders were given notice of the works to be carried out on the 2nd December 2022. .

18. The Tribunal was mindful of the fact that the works to be undertaken by the applicant are supported by managing agents although no detailed estimates have been provided. Therefore dispensation is wholly appropriate.

19. The applicants believe that the works are vital in order to maintain the fabric of the building and prevent extensive water ingress to the upper floor flat via the leaking flat roof covering. On the evidence before it the Tribunal agrees with this conclusion and believes that it is reasonable to allow dispensation in relation to the subject matter of the application. It must be the case that the applicant must ensure that the building is maintained in accordance with the terms of the various leases. The remedial works to the roof should therefore be carried out as a matter of urgency, hence the decision of the Tribunal.

20. Rights of appeal made available to parties to this dispute are set out in an Annex to this decision.

21. The applicant shall be responsible for formally serving a copy of the tribunal's decision on all leaseholders named on the schedule

attached to the application. Furthermore, the applicant shall place a copy of the tribunal's decision on dispensation together with an explanation of the leaseholders' appeal rights on its website (if any) within 7 days of receipt and shall maintain it there for at least 3 months, with a sufficiently prominent link to both on its home page. Copies must also be placed in a prominent place in the common parts of the buildings. In this way, leaseholders who have not returned the reply form may view the tribunal's eventual decision on dispensation and their appeal rights. The Tribunal requests the applicant to confirm to the Tribunal this has been carried out.

Name: Mr D Jagger MRICS

Date: 14th March 2023

ANNEX - RIGHTS OF APPEAL

1. If a party wishes to appeal this decision to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) then a written application for permission must be made to the First-tier Tribunal at the Regional office which has been dealing with the case.
2. The application for permission to appeal must arrive at the Regional office within 28 days after the Tribunal sends written reasons for the decision to the person making the application.
3. If the application is not made within the 28 day time limit, such application must include a request for an extension of time and the reason for not complying with the 28 day time limit; the Tribunal will then look at such reason(s) and decide whether to allow the application for permission to appeal to proceed despite not being within the time limit.
4. The application for permission to appeal must identify the decision of the Tribunal to which it relates (i.e. give the date, the property and the case number), state the grounds of appeal, and state the result the party making the application is seeking.