

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2024/2742/T	carolina gonzalez-carvajal	26/07/2024 10:28:54	COMMNT	I would like to strenuously object to the proposed works to chop down two magnificent old trees that have been part of the Doughty Mews skyline for over 200 years. Residents of Doughty Mews previously supplied information from an arborist and surveyors that the problems that the trees were causing to the property could be dealt with with minimum expense and effort and without cutting them down. This was never properly considered, even though it was accepted as true by the Owner's own surveyors. It is an act of vandalism to cut down the trees and the resulting heave from cutting them down will cause damage to the existing houses on the mews. There is a terrible irony that The Great Plant at Brunswick park not five minutes from the mews has been recently so carefully protected by Camden and yet our two planes are to be cut down. Camden has recently showcased plans to improve the air quality in the area through extensive landscaping plans. Nothing they can put in will give the benefits that these two magnificent trees already give to the community and the world famous childrens hospital on our doorstep. The Owner already has a means to address the issues that they say the trees are causing they should do just that.
2024/2742/T	Elizabeth Seward	26/07/2024 16:37:16	COMNOT	I would refer to the many previous submissions with regards to these two Plane trees, and will not repeat the still valid objections here. I understand that some circumstances have changed with respect of the occupation of the building in Doughty news whose owners are requesting this demolition. However, I would restate the belief of many local people, and of professional evidence already seen by the council, that the complaints of damage to the Mews can be mitigated by less drastic measures than the felling of these two important trees.i do hope that the Council will be brave enough to revisit the permission previously given.
2024/2742/T	Kate Forster	26/07/2024 17:10:28	OBJ	Along with my sister, Antonia Forster, I am the leasehold owner of Flat 5, Pemberton House at 3-4 Doughty Street. We would like to object in the strongest terms to the removal of these two trees. That such a regressive step should be contemplated (nevermind previously approved)is reprehensible. Venerable trees such as these should be preserved however inconvenient that might be to expansionist building plans. Those plans should be altered to allow these trees the space they need to continue to thrive and to provide all of the benefits of which we are all well aware. Further, I query whether due consideration has been given to the consequences of the removal of such large trees bearing in mind the massive root structure which must exist below ground. This must be a concern to the whole terrace of which my building is part. Any subsidence could be catastrophic.

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2024/2742/T	CATHERINE SLESSOR	28/07/2024 21:08:40	OBJ	REF: 2024/27242/T

I write, yet again, to object in the strongest possible terms to the renewal of permission to remove two plane trees in the garden of 8 Doughty Street.

The trees are veteran specimens, estimated to be between 200-250 years old and in good health. At six storeys tall, they can be seen from flats in Doughty Street, Doughty Mews, Guilford Street, Millman Street and Northington Street, and by the public walking through Doughty Mews and John's Mews. Their impressive scale and beautiful seasonal foliage brings huge pleasure all year round. I also have excellent views of the trees from my garden.

To remove such magnificent specimens would be to irrevocably alter a deeply cherished local landscape. Section 5.64 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2011 states that: 'The mature trees across the Conservation Area are a valuable part of the streetscape and make a positive contribution to its character and appearance.' Removing trees of such size and vintage also goes against the tenets of the Mayor's London Plan, which aims to increase tree canopy cover by 5% by 2025 to mitigate the effects of climate change. It also notes that: 'Individual veteran trees should be given protection as once lost they can never be replaced.'

The trunk of one tree is physically pressing into the rear wall of no. 4 Doughty Mews, one the three properties belonging to the Egypt Exploration Society (EES), causing minor cracks. These have been assessed by structural engineer Price & Myers as 'aesthetic' rather than 'structural'. This situation has persisted for many years. On this basis, the EES has applied twice to have both trees removed. Firstly, in December 2020 (2020/5587/T), which attracted over 70 objections from councillors and local residents on ecological and quality-of-life grounds. At that time, Camden Council rejected the application and made both trees the subject of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).

Secondly, in February 2022 (2022/0419/T), which attracted over 250 objections, including a petition signed by 94 people. This time, despite noting that 'the council shares the view of those who have submitted objections with regard to the significance of the trees', Camden removed the TPOs, mindful of potential liability. To assist it in its decision-making process, the council commissioned its own independent assessment by engineers CampbellReith. This took the form of an evaluation of structural engineers' reports previously supplied by the EES and a group of objectors. CampbellReith concluded that the tree trunk was indeed causing limited cosmetic damage, but that a simple, cost effective solution could be adopted to repair the wall by creating a recess, so the tree was no longer impacting on it. It also noted that 'The tree has not caused structural damage and there is a risk that removing the tree might undermine the overall stability of the structure.'

Planning Officer Nick Bell's recommendation in a Delegated Report dated 30 March 2022, stated: 'It is recommended that the One Housing Group, whom the council understands to be the owner of the trees, works with the affected property owner to find a solution that allows for the retention of the trees and that a full assessment be undertaken to ascertain what impact, if any, the removal of the trees would have on the surrounding properties.'

The proposed redevelopment of the Doughty Mews site by the EES (ref: 2023/2928/P), which was granted planning permission earlier this year, provides an opportunity to consolidate and improve

Application No: Consultees Name: Received:

Comment: Response:

the relationship between the trees and the EES properties for the long term, benefitting both the neighbourhood and the EES, as it plans for the future. The most obvious solution is to rebuild the affected wall to incorporate a recess, as has been suggested, which could be easily accomplished in the course of the development works. However, the proposals outlined in planning submission conspicuously failed explore this or any other options for keeping the trees.

To date, the EES has proved reluctant to engage with a local group of construction professionals committed to reaching a viable solution that would retain the trees. Instead, it has consistently and vexatiously lobbied for the trees' removal. The pervading impression, from EES communications and, more overtly, at a meeting with neighbours on 7 December 2022 which I attended, was that the EES has absolutely no interest in the ecological and amenity arguments for their retention. Rather, the trees are perceived as a costly nuisance. Reference was made to the challenge of roof and gutter maintenance, allegedly made more onerous and expensive by the presence of the trees, despite the fact that their maintenance is the responsibility of One Housing. In his most recent letter to neighbours, dated 10 July 2024, EES Director Carl Graves asserts that 'the trees are literally destroying our home', which is blatant hyperbole.

It seems to suit the EES to see the removal of the trees and its proposed redevelopment as entirely separate issues. But it is obvious that in this case, buildings and trees are connected - physically, structurally, historically and civically - and a solution needs to be found that reconciles both. It also raises the question of effective civic oversight and how local councils are supposed to provide it, balancing the needs of individual institutions to pursue development ambitions while maintaining the quality of neighbourhood and city life.

Camden Council should not be subject to pressure from the EES simply for taking action to safeguard two outstanding historic trees, a move supported by the overwhelming majority of local residents, councillors and the public. It is quite shocking to think that a charitable cultural organisation, dedicated to exploring and preserving history, has displayed such a dismaying lack of concern for living history and the environment in the context of a global climate emergency.

Therefore, I urge the council not to renew permission to remove the trees and instead, give them the protection such beautiful and venerable specimens rightfully deserve by reinstating the Tree Preservation Orders.

Yours faithfully,

Catherine Slessor
