

Application ref: 2020/5587/T  
Contact: Nick Bell  
Tel: 020 7974 5939  
Email: [nick.bell@camden.gov.uk](mailto:nick.bell@camden.gov.uk)  
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**Development Management**  
Regeneration and Planning  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE

Phone: 020 7974 4444

[planning@camden.gov.uk](mailto:planning@camden.gov.uk)  
[www.camden.gov.uk/planning](http://www.camden.gov.uk/planning)

Arborhelp  
13 Bowness Road  
Bexleyheath  
DA7 5AA

Dear Sir/Madam

## **DECISION**

Town and Country Planning Acts 1990 (as amended)

### **OBJECTION TO SECTION 211 NOTICE OF WORKS TO TREE/S IN A CONSERVATION AREA**

Address:

**8 Doughty Street  
London  
WC1N 2PL**

Description:

REAR GARDEN: 1 x Plane (T1) - Fell to ground level & poison stump.  
1 x Plane (T2) - Fell to ground level & poison stump.

The Council has considered your notification of intended works to trees dated 01 December 2020 and decided to **OBJECT** for the following reasons:

Reasons for objection:

- 1 The s.211 notification is for the removal of two London plane trees from the rear garden of a residential property that is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The notification alleges that the trees are causing damage to a neighbouring property. Neither tree is subject to a tree preservation order.

The two large, mature London plane trees are in excess of 20m tall and have been managed by crown reduction. The trees are similar in size and form, they are co-dominant with asymmetric crowns and form one aerodynamic mass due to their close proximity. The trees appear to be in at least fair condition both structurally and physiologically. The stem of T1 is in contact with the rear elevation of no. 4 Doughty Mews.

Both trees significantly contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area and provide a high level of amenity to the public. 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." The removal of the two plane trees would be harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The trees are highly visible from the public realm and are visible from Doughty Mews, Doughty Street, Northington Street and John's Mews, including from more than 200m away at the southern end of John's Mews.

London plane trees perform a valuable function of capturing airborne particulate matter with the downy underside of their leaves. 2016 is the most recent year for which an accurate air pollution model is available for mean NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels. This study shows that both Doughty Street and Doughty Mews fail the annual mean objective for NO<sub>2</sub> levels with between 43 and 46 microgrammes per cubic metre. The trees are less than 100m from a primary school.

A letter from a structural engineer was submitted with the notification. The second paragraph of the letter refers to investigations that are yet to be undertaken. The letter states that "*...we have not had access to carry out a detailed inspection of the rear wall of the Property and further investigations will need to be carried out in due course.*"

The same letter states in section 12 that "*The arrangement and extent of the cracks on the wall of No.4 is generally unchanged from August 2017*". Section 17 states "*Formal monitoring of the cracks with tell-tails is required to determine if there is ongoing movement*". Section 22 states "*Trial pits should also be excavated to determine the extent and depth of root growth below the foundations on No.4, and possibly the adjacent properties*".

These investigations are essential to accurately assessing the damage and its cause. This information could then inform design and/or engineering solutions to address the damage which could allow for the trees to be retained. Solutions which involve the retention of the trees appear not to have been explored. No consideration appears to have been made for the impact of removing the trees on neighbouring properties, it is recommended that a full assessment of heave potential is undertake.

The Council received in excess of seventy objections to the notification that shows there is considerable public interest in the trees and support for their retention.

It is recommended that further investigations are undertaken and solutions explored that allow for the trees to be retained. If further investigations show that the trees cannot reasonably be retained the Council may have to approve their removal.

A tree preservation order has been served to protect the amenity the tree provides and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

**A Tree Preservation Order has been served on the tree/s and no work should be carried out without the prior consent of the Council.**

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DPope', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Daniel Pope  
Chief Planning Officer

It is important to us to find out what our customers think about the service we provide. To help us in this respect, we would be very grateful if you could take a few moments to complete our online survey at the following website address: [www.camden.gov.uk/dmfeedback](http://www.camden.gov.uk/dmfeedback). We will use the information you give us to help improve our services.