

**From:** Robert Sakula <robert@ashsak.com>

**Sent:** 05 February 2022 12:31

**To:** Planning Planning <Planning@camden.gov.uk>

**Subject:** 8 Doughty Street WC1N 2PL, 2022/0419/T, felling of two London plane trees

Dear Camden

This is the second application in as many years to fell two beautiful mature London plane trees. I am writing, as an architect and a local resident of 40 years, to object to the proposed felling of these two trees in the garden of 8 Doughty Street, two doors away from my home. These trees are important because:

- They are old and slow growing. Replacing them will take more than 100 years.
- They are a rare survival of significantly sized trees in this corner of east Bloomsbury.
- They host wildlife.
- They counter pollution.
- They counter climate change.
- They are beautiful and much loved by many in the neighbourhood, as well as by visitors exploring this historic part of London.

It seems incredible that Camden would acquiesce in the loss of trees at a time like this. Yet the reason why it might do so is that it cannot see any alternative, given that the applicant's reason for felling is that the trees threaten an adjoining property. That property was previously on the market for some time, and it was not sold because of nervousness about the trees. One surmises that the reason for wishing to fell the trees is because they are obstructing the sale of the property in question.

However, as an architect and landscape designer with four decades of experience of co-locating buildings and trees, I can state that, with the right advice and proper management, trees and buildings can happily co-exist for decades and even centuries.

A nearby example is the Coram Campus. Twenty years ago Coram wished to demolish the buildings there, which had cracking caused, it was said, by the large nearby plane trees. They had an engineers' report saying that there was no alternative. In the end, partly helped by local protest, wiser counsel prevailed and today trees and buildings are both doing fine.

In the present case, a strategy could be developed for enabling the trees to exist side by side with the adjacent building. It would be an engineering solution enabling the trees to continue to grow without further impinging on the building's structure, while stabilising the building from further movement. Probably it would involve some rebuilding of the property's rear wall.

Therefore we recommend that Camden refuse this application pending the following:

1. Further investigation and monitoring of structural movement, if any.
2. Reports from an independent engineer and arboriculturalist, assessing options for retaining the trees and stabilising the building.

It would be a failure of governance if these two fine trees were sacrificed simply to expedite the sale of a property. Their importance is wider than the two ownerships involved. These owners should be tasked as stewards to successfully nurture the trees in the decades to come.

Yours sincerely

Robert Sakula

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