

Dear Tree and Landscape Officer, Planning Officers and Camden Councillors,

RE: LETTER OF OBJECTION

Planning Application 2022/0419/T

for

Proposal to remove trees at 8 Doughty Street WC1N 2PL

I am writing to object to this application.

I have lived in Doughty Street for almost 40 years and these trees are in my back garden. I can only echo the reasons given in all the other objection letters to this application citing the ecological, historical and psychological benefit that these trees bestow to the neighbourhood.

My understanding is that the Egypt Exploration Society who own 4 Doughty Mews are planning the extensive redevelopment of their premises to create a more educational, interactive and inclusive environment and are about to embark on a multi million pound fundraising drive to this end. I fully support the EES in this exciting project and have helped by giving them full access for their surveys.

However, following the previous failed application to remove the trees in 2020, I was surprised to find another application has been made without the additional work, as requested by the tree officer in the rejection letter, for ongoing monitoring of movement in the EES building and an exploration of options that would enable the trees to be retained.

In response to this, work carried out by consultants employed directly by the community show that:

1. 4 Doughty mews is currently structurally sound.
2. There are engineering solutions that would allow for the trees to be retained.
3. Minor alterations to the rear wall of the building necessary to accommodate the trees being retained into the future would certainly be less extensive and costly than the amount of remedial work to no. 4, and possible adjacent buildings, that would be required if the trees were removed.

Moreover, I believe that the EES should view the constraints that the trees bestow as an opportunity to commission an exciting, even award winning, architectural design that shows off these magnificent specimens. There are many precedents: from the historical, such as the houses of Frank Lloyd Wright, to the multiple contemporary eco urban designs springing up in major cities all over the world incorporating trees, gardens and green roofs, like the Bosco Verticale in Milan, built in a bid to simultaneously combat climate change and look beautiful.

There are also many recent renovations of museums and historic buildings that not only preserve, but highlight and reveal, the layers of history in their fabric, for example the Grade II listed Old Sessions House, just down the road in Clerkenwell.

The EES could embrace the chance to create an extraordinary place that people will want to visit and in so doing, attract a more diverse audience. As a custodian of relics from the past it would behave the EES to preserve the precious history that is currently in its possession.

These trees provide shade for us in the summer and fun playing and collecting the leaves in the autumn. In the spring birds come to nest and the trees provide a haven for wildlife throughout the whole year, from squirrels to magpies, from wrens to jays. They give us oxygen and take away the CO2 so damaging to us all in this crowded part of central London.

These mature trees are probably over 170 years old and are large enough to be seen from the surrounding streets and so can be enjoyed by everyone in our community. All local and government initiatives currently extol all the good things that trees give us, both recommending retaining the ones we have, and increasing their numbers.

It seems to me premature to permit the removal of these amazing trees when they are in perfect health and designs have not been explored to retain them into the future and exploit their potential for everyone to enjoy.

Belinda Webb
8 Doughty Street



A building built around a tree
Isabel Roberts House, Chicago by Frank Lloyd Wright, 1908



Eco Urban Architecture
Bosco Verticale, Milan by Boeri Studio, 2014



Revealing and highlighting the past
18th Century Grade II listed former Courthouse, Old Sessions House, Clerkenwell,
refurbished by Satila Studios, 2014