



APps13693-47-200522-LBC.docx

20<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Elizabeth Beaumont  
London Borough of Camden  
London  
N1C 4AG

Dear Elizabeth

### **8 DOUGHTY STREET, LONDON WC1N 2PL**

Further to your email of 22 March 2022, we write with regard to our review of the applicant's information relating to the above property. We understand that the applicant wishes to remove two London Plane trees, which appear to have caused the displacement of a wall to 4 Doughty Mews.

We note that no physical inspections or site visits have been undertaken at this stage and our comments relate solely to a review of the information received in emails from Camden – one on 10 March 2022 and the other on 6 April 2022, namely:

- Report by William J Marshall and Partners dated 1 July 2020
- Report by William J Marshall and Partners dated 10 January 2022
- Report by R Howorth & Co dated 3 March 2022
- Report by Price & Myers dated March 2022
- Objection to Planning Application 2022/0419/T by the Doughty Tree Group dated 5 March 2022
- Report by Tamla Trees dated 12 November 2021

### **Existing Condition**

It is reported that some damage to the rear wall of 4 Doughty Mews is present due to two large London Plane trees being in direct contact with the wall. It is understood that cracks and bowing about 75mm deep within the wall have formed as a result of natural growth of these trees over a very long period of time. The trees appear to have reached their maturity and are expected to grow at a slow pace, adding approximately 5mm per year to their diameter, according to the report by R. Howorth & Co. The wall appears to be of masonry construction and some 1.5 storeys high.

### **Engineering assessment by William J Marshall and Partners (on behalf of the applicant)**

William J Marshall and Partners provided two reports for the applicant, with the second providing an update on the first. They identified that cracking and movement of the wall was due to tree growth and that there was the risk of further damage if the trees were retained. They warned however that tree removal would have to be carefully planned for a number of reasons - the wall is potentially gaining some support from the trees, decay of the roots post removal could cause subsidence, and conversely, the removal of the trees could cause heave. They concluded that structural remedial works were required, including additional support for the foundations and that further site investigation should be carried out to allow the design of such work.

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**Structural engineering assessment by Price & Myers (on behalf of the objectors)**

The report produced by Price & Myers contests that the existing rear wall is stable albeit they note that local deformation is present in the wall. They state that the impact of the trees is minimal and only cosmetic remedial works are required, should strengthening of the wall be provided at this stage. The ground floor wall, due to its thickness of 440mm, continues to provide sufficient load transfer from above. It is suggested that a recess is made in the wall to accommodate the tree growth and a precast concrete or brickwork lintel constructed above the area of bowing, recessed into the wall to support the outer half of the wall. The survey concludes that minor cracks identified during inspection should be classified as Burland category 2, i.e. aesthetic as opposed to structural.

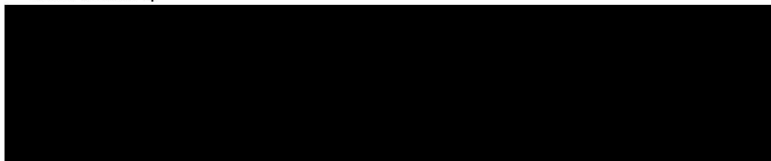
The report goes on to mention that during an inspection the wall was discovered to be leaning about 30mm inward, which is found to be a common occurrence in period buildings. It has been noted that the wall remains intact as it is laterally restrained by the floor slabs, adjacent party walls, staircase and roof. No further evidence was seen to indicate the leaning of the structure is progressive.

**Conclusions**

1. It is apparent from photos and survey findings that the damage, i.e. cracks, occurred in the area where the tree is pushing into the wall. Therefore, it does appear that the growth of the tree is the most likely cause of the damage.
2. The solution provided by Price & Myers involves creating a recess in the wall where it is in contact with the tree and then introducing a precast concrete or brickwork lintel just above the recessed area to pick up the brickwork above. This will remove the pressure from the tree on the wall.
3. The introduction of a recess is a commonly adopted solution and one that we may have suggested. The load from the wall above the recess transfers to the lintel, allowing the structural integrity of the wall to be retained. It is however, not clear how far the lintel needs to extend past the recess and what bearing is required for the supports within the Price & Myers report. This should be clarified with the engineer.
4. The solution provided is simple, practical and does not require major refurbishment works to be done to the structure except for cosmetic repairs. The tree has not caused structural damage to the wall and there is a risk that removing the tree might undermine the overall stability of the structure. The tree growth is reported to be slow and the recess should accommodate that growth for a considerable time. However, as has been repeatedly stated in the engineers reports, the wall movements are to be regularly monitored and re-evaluated, with remedial action taken should it be necessary.

We trust that this provides the information you requested and are happy to discuss this further as required.

Yours sincerely



**ANAR PATRICK**  
For and on behalf of **CAMPBELL REITH HILL LLP**