



**FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL  
PROPERTY CHAMBER  
(RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)**

<b>Case Reference</b>	:	<b>LON/00AW/LDC/2020/0229 P: PAPERREMOTE</b>
<b>Property</b>	:	<b>77-81 Harcourt Terrace, London SW10 9JP</b>
<b>Applicant</b>	:	<b>77-81 Harcourt Terrace Limited</b>
<b>Representative</b>	:	<b>Susan Metcalf Residential Property Management Limited (Managing Agents)</b>
<b>Respondents</b>	:	<b>The various leaseholders listed in the schedule to the application</b>
<b>Representative</b>	:	<b>Unrepresented</b>
<b>Type of Application</b>	:	<b>Section 20ZA Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 – Dispensation from Consultation Requirements</b>
<b>Tribunal Members</b>	:	<b>Judge Donegan</b>
<b>Date of Paper Determination</b>	:	<b>02 February 2021</b>
<b>Date of Decision</b>	:	<b>02 February 2021</b>

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**DECISION**

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**This has been a remote hearing on the papers which has not been objected to by the parties. The form of remote hearing was P: PAPERREMOTE. A face to face hearing was not held due to current lockdown restrictions and all issues could be determined on paper. The documents that I was referred to are in a bundle of 50 pages, the contents of which I have noted.**

### **Decision of the Tribunal**

- (a) **The Tribunal grants prospective dispensation in respect of the proposed recoating of the roof at 81 Harcourt Terrace, as detailed in a quotation from Just Do It Contractors ('JDI') dated 03 November 2020 ('the Works').**
- (b) **No terms are imposed on the grant of dispensation.**

### **The application**

1. The applicant seeks dispensation from the consultation requirements imposed by section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 ('the 1985 Act'). The application concerns the roof at 81 Harcourt Terrace, which forms part of 77-81 Harcourt Terrace ('the Property').
2. The application was submitted to the Tribunal on 25 November 2020 and directions were issued on 02 December 2020. These provided that the case be allocated to the paper track, to be determined upon the basis of written representations. None of the parties has objected to this allocation or requested an oral hearing. The paper determination took place on 09 June 2020.
3. The relevant legal provisions are set out in the appendix to this decision.

### **The background**

4. The Property is a mansion block containing 20 leasehold flats, spread over six floors. The applicant is the freeholder and the respondents are the leaseholders. The Property is managed by Susan Metcalf Residential Property Management Limited ('SML').
5. The roof of the entire Property was recoated by Hilton Abbey Limited ('HAL') in 2014, using a liquid roofing system supplied by Tor Coatings. There have been various leaks into Flat 1, below the roof of 81, since then. Repairs have been undertaken by HAL but the leaks are continuing. Their guarantee period has now ended and the applicant wishes to instruct alternative contractors to recoat the roof above 81. SML have obtained two quotes; namely:
  - JDI (03/11/2020)- £19,153.20
  - G4 Contractors Limited (13/11/2020) - £20,100

Both quotes include VAT and the applicant wishes to instruct JDI, having used them for other work at the Property. There are sufficient reserve funds to cover the cost of the Works, which will be supervised by a building surveyor (Mr Andrew Osborn FRICS).

### **The grounds of the application**

6. The Tribunal was supplied with a digital bundle containing copies of the relevant documents. The grounds were briefly set out in the application form. The applicant contends that the Works are urgent due to the ongoing leaks into Flat 1. Not only are these damaging the interior of this flat, there are also health and safety concerns and a risk of structural damage to the Property. The directors of the applicant company wrote to all leaseholders on 29 October 2020, outlining their proposal to instruct JDI. A majority of leaseholders have agreed this proposal.
7. Paragraph 2 of the Tribunal's directions required the respondents to complete and return response forms by 06 January 2021, stating whether they support or oppose the dispensation application. None of the respondents has opposed the application, identified any prejudice that might arise from the grant of dispensation or proposed any terms as a condition of granting dispensation.

### **The tribunal's decision**

8. The Tribunal grants prospective dispensation for the Works under section 20ZA of the 1985 Act. No terms are imposed on the grant of dispensation.

### **Reasons for the tribunal's decision**

9. The Tribunal accepts that the Works are urgent, given the ongoing leaks into Flat 1. These cannot wait for a full section 20 consultation, which would take three months or more. The applicant has acted reasonably in obtaining two quotes and in writing to all leaseholders.
10. None of the respondents has opposed the application or identified any prejudice that might arise from the grant of dispensation or proposed any terms as a condition of granting dispensation.
11. Having regard to the particular facts of this case it is reasonable to dispense with the section 20 consultation requirements for the Works.
12. This decision does not address the cost of the Works or whether the respondents are liable to contribute to the cost, via their service charges. Nothing in this decision prevents the respondents from seeking a determination of 'payability', pursuant to section 27A of the 1985 Act.

**Name:** Tribunal Judge Donegan      **Date:** 02 February 2021

### **Rights of appeal**

By rule 36(2) of the Tribunal Procedure (First-tier Tribunal) (Property Chamber) Rules 2013, the Tribunal is required to notify the parties about any right of appeal they may have.

If a party wishes to appeal this decision to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber), then a written application for permission must be made to the First-tier Tribunal at the regional office which has been dealing with the case.

The application for permission to appeal must arrive at the regional office within 28 days after the Tribunal sends written reasons for the decision to the person making the application.

If the application is not made within the 28 day time limit, such application must include a request for an extension of time and the reason for not complying with the 28 day time limit; the Tribunal will then look at such reason(s) and decide whether to allow the application for permission to appeal to proceed, despite not being within the time limit.

The application for permission to appeal must identify the decision of the Tribunal to which it relates (i.e. give the date, the property and the case number), state the grounds of appeal and state the result the party making the application is seeking.

If the Tribunal refuses to grant permission to appeal, a further application for permission may be made to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber).

## **Appendix of relevant legislation**

### **Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (as amended)**

#### **Section 18**

- (1) In the following provisions of this Act "service charge" means an amount payable by a tenant of a dwelling as part of or in addition to the rent -
  - (a) which is payable, directly or indirectly, for services, repairs, maintenance, improvements or insurance or the landlord's costs of management, and
  - (b) the whole or part of which varies or may vary according to the relevant costs.
- (2) The relevant costs are the costs or estimated costs incurred or to be incurred by or on behalf of the landlord, or a superior landlord, in connection with the matters for which the service charge is payable.
- (3) For this purpose -
  - (a) "costs" includes overheads, and
  - (b) costs are relevant costs in relation to a service charge whether they are incurred, or to be incurred, in the period for which the service charge is payable or in an earlier or later period.

#### **Section 19**

- (1) Relevant costs shall be taken into account in determining the amount of a service charge payable for a period -
  - (a) only to the extent that they are reasonably incurred, and
  - (b) where they are incurred on the provisions of services or the carrying out of works, only if the services or works are of a reasonable standard;and the amount payable shall be limited accordingly.
- (2) Where a service charge is payable before the relevant costs are incurred, no greater amount than is reasonable is so payable, and after the relevant costs have been incurred any necessary adjustment shall be made by repayment, reduction or subsequent charges or otherwise.

#### **Section 27A**

- (1) An application may be made to the appropriate tribunal for a determination whether a service charge is payable and, if it is, as to -
  - (a) the person by whom it is payable,
  - (b) the person to whom it is payable,
  - (c) the amount which is payable,

- (d) the date at or by which it is payable, and
  - (e) the manner in which it is payable.
- (2) Subsection (1) applies whether or not any payment has been made.
- (3) An application may also be made to the appropriate tribunal for a determination whether, if costs were incurred for services, repairs, maintenance, improvements, insurance or management of any specified description, a service charge would be payable for the costs and, if it would, as to -
- (a) the person by whom it would be payable,
  - (b) the person to whom it would be payable,
  - (c) the amount which would be payable,
  - (d) the date at or by which it would be payable, and
  - (e) the manner in which it would be payable.
- (4) No application under subsection (1) or (3) may be made in respect of a matter which -
- (a) has been agreed or admitted by the tenant,
  - (b) has been, or is to be, referred to arbitration pursuant to a post-dispute arbitration agreement to which the tenant is a party,
  - (c) has been the subject of determination by a court, or
  - (d) has been the subject of determination by an arbitral tribunal pursuant to a post-dispute arbitration agreement.
- (5) But the tenant is not to be taken to have agreed or admitted any matter by reason only of having made any payment.

## **Section 20**

- (1) Where this section applies to any qualifying works or qualifying long term agreement, the relevant contributions of tenants are limited in accordance with subsection (6) or (7) (or both) unless the consultation requirements have been either—
- (a) complied with in relation to the works or agreement, or
  - (b) dispensed with in relation to the works or agreement by (or on appeal from) the appropriate tribunal .
- (2) In this section “relevant contribution”, in relation to a tenant and any works or agreement, is the amount which he may be required under the terms of his lease to contribute (by the payment of service charges) to relevant costs incurred on carrying out the works or under the agreement.
- (3) This section applies to qualifying works if relevant costs incurred on carrying out the works exceed an appropriate amount.
- (4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that this section applies to a qualifying long term agreement—

- (a) if relevant costs incurred under the agreement exceed an appropriate amount, or
  - (b) if relevant costs incurred under the agreement during a period prescribed by the regulations exceed an appropriate amount.
- (5) An appropriate amount is an amount set by regulations made by the Secretary of State; and the regulations may make provision for either or both of the following to be an appropriate amount—
- (a) an amount prescribed by, or determined in accordance with, the regulations, and
  - (b) an amount which results in the relevant contribution of any one or more tenants being an amount prescribed by, or determined in accordance with, the regulations.
- (6) Where an appropriate amount is set by virtue of paragraph (a) of subsection (5), the amount of the relevant costs incurred on carrying out the works or under the agreement which may be taken into account in determining the relevant contributions of tenants is limited to the appropriate amount.
- (7) Where an appropriate amount is set by virtue of paragraph (b) of that subsection, the amount of the relevant contribution of the tenant, or each of the tenants, whose relevant contribution would otherwise exceed the amount prescribed by, or determined in accordance with, the regulations is limited to the amount so prescribed or determined.]

### **Section 20ZA**

- (1) Where an application is made to the appropriate tribunal for a determination to dispense with all of any of the consultation requirements in relation to any qualifying works or qualifying long term agreement, the tribunal may make the determination if satisfied that it is reasonable to dispense with the requirements.
- (2) In section 20 and this section –  
“qualifying works” means works on a building or any other premises, and  
“qualifying long term agreement” means (subject to subsection (3)) an agreement entered into, by or on behalf of the landlord or a superior landlord, for a term of more than twelve months.