



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

Case Reference : **LON/00BB/LDC/2022/0082
P: PAPERREMOTE**

Property : **Sycamore Court, 228 Romford
Road, London E7 9HB**

Applicant : **Abacus Land4 Limited**

Representative : **Ms Cheryl Cato - D&GBM
(Managing Agents)**

Respondents : **The leaseholders listed in the
schedule to the application**

Representative : **Unrepresented**

Type of Application : **Section 20ZA Landlord and Tenant
Act 1985
Dispensation with consultation
requirements**

Tribunal member(s) : **Judge Donegan**

**Date of Paper
Determination** : **28 November 2022**

Date of Decision : **28 November 2022**

DECISION

This has been a remote determination 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 because it was not practicable, and all issues could be determined on paper. The documents that I was referred to are in a bundle of 70 pages, the contents of which I have noted.

Decision of the Tribunal

- (a) The Tribunal grants retrospective dispensation under section 20ZA of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (‘the 1985 Act’) for emergency repairs to the flat roof dormer and associated works at Sycamore Court, Romford Road, London E7 9HB (‘the Property’).**
- (b) No terms are imposed on the grant of dispensation.**
- (c) The applicant shall send a copy of this decision to each of the respondents, either by email, hand delivery or first-class post. It shall also display a copy in a prominent place in the common parts of the Property. It must send an email to the Tribunal by 05 December 2022, confirming the date(s) when this was done.**

The application

1. The applicant seeks dispensation from the consultation requirements imposed by section 20 of the 1985 Act.
2. The application is dated 28 February 2022 and directions were issued on 05 October 2022. The case was 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 28 November 2022.
3. The relevant legal provisions are set out in the appendix to this decision.

The background

4. The Property is a purpose-built block containing 12 flats. The applicant company is the freeholder. The respondents are the leaseholders of the 12 flats and are all members of this company. The Property is managed D&GBM.
5. D&GBM arranged emergency repairs and associated works to the flat roof dormer in October 2021, as water was cascading into the communal stairwell at the Property. They served a notice of intention on the respondents on 01 October 2021 and obtained two estimates for the repairs. The cheapest tender was from BML Building Services Limited (‘BML’) for £6,748 plus VAT. Due to the urgent nature of the work, D&GBM did not serve a statement of estimates. Rather, they instructed BML to press on with the repairs/works. They notified the respondents of the repairs/works in a letter dated 27 October 2021.

The applicant seeks dispensation from the statutory consultation requirements for these repairs/works.

6. The only issue for the Tribunal is whether it is reasonable to dispense with the statutory consultation requirements. **This application does not concern the issue of whether any service charge costs will be reasonable or payable.**

The grounds of the application

7. The grounds are contained in the tribunal application and were summarised in a letter from D&GBM dated 14 November 2022. Copies of this letter, the Tribunal application, a sample notice intention, and lease, both estimates, BML's invoices and 'before and after' photographs of the flat roof (showing the defects and subsequent repairs) were included in the determination bundle. In brief, D&GBM contend the repairs/works were urgent due to the health and safety risks from the cascading water in the communal stairwell. They instructed BML without serving a statement of estimates to mitigate these risks.
8. Paragraph 2 of the directions gave the respondents an opportunity to object to the dispensation application by completing and returning reply forms and serving statements, setting out their grounds of opposition. No objections have been received by the tribunal.

The Tribunal's decision

9. The Tribunal grants retrospective dispensation for the emergency repairs to the flat roof dormer and associated works, as undertaken by BML. No terms are imposed on the grant of dispensation.

Reasons for the tribunal's decision

10. The Tribunal accepts the repairs/works were urgent, given the health and safety risks from the cascading water in the communal stairwell. A full s.20 consultation would have taken three months or longer and would have considerably delayed the repairs/works. D&GBM acted reasonably in obtaining two estimates and then instructing BML, without undertaking a full consultation.
11. There has been partial consultation in the form of the notice of intention and the letter to the respondents dated 27 October 2021. None of the respondents have contested this application or identified any prejudice that might arise from the grant of dispensation or proposed any terms as a condition of granting dispensation.

12. Having regard to the particular facts of this case and the guidance in *Daejan Investments Limited v Benson [2013] UKSC 14*, it is reasonable to dispense with the full s.20 consultation requirements.
13. This decision does not address the cost of the repairs/works or whether the respondents are liable to contribute to this 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:** 28 November 2022

Rights of appeal

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 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.

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.