



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

Case Reference : **CAM/26UG/LDC/2026/0016**

Property : **Grange Court, Grange Street, St Albans,
Hertfordshire AL3 5NE**

Applicant (Landlord) : **Grange Court Residents St Albans
Limited**

**Representative
(Managing Agent)** : **Collinson Hall (Tracy Hunter – Head of
Block Management)**

**Respondents
(Leaseholders)** : **Mr T Hobson & Eleonora Pionto de Moura Flat 1
Mrs C Jacobi Flat 2
Mr M & Mrs A Russell Flat 3
Mr D Bennett & Ms R Partridge Flat 4
Mr Nigel Bell Flat 5
Miss Charlotte Maude Houlden Flat 6
Ms R Partridge Flat 7
Miss Georgina Olivia Jean Caddy Flat 8
Mr Gavin Michael & Ms Lorraine Karen Finch Flat 9**

Type of Application : **To dispense with the consultation
requirements referred to in Section 20 of the
Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 pursuant to
Section 20ZA**

Tribunal : **Judge JR Morris**

Date of Application : **16 February 2026**
Date of Directions : **3 March 2026**
Date of Decision : **27 April 2026**

DECISION

Decision

1. The Tribunal is satisfied that it is reasonable to dispense with compliance with all the consultation requirements of Schedule 4 Part 2 to the Service Charges (Consultation etc) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1987).
2. The Applicant or its Representative shall serve a copy of the Tribunal's decision on dispensation, together with the relevant appeal rights attached, to the Leaseholders.

Reasons

The Application

3. On 16 February 2026 the Applicant's Representative, who is the Applicant's Managing Agent, applied for dispensation from the statutory consultation requirements in respect of qualifying works which are to repair a the roof at the Property.
4. The Property is a three storey block of 9 two bedroom flats, three flats on each floor situated in its own grounds, probably built in the 1930s. The building has brick elevations to the front, sides and rear under a felt flat roof.
5. The Applicant's Representative stated on the Application form that there had been a significant ingress of water into Flat 8 and 9 to such an extent that the lintel in the kitchen of flat 9 had collapsed. A & D Roofing Services Limited had been instructed to complete temporary works to stop the ingress. The Managing Agents had obtained an estimate for the works which came to £4,050.00 including VAT. There being only 9 flats this resulted in the unit charge being more than £250.00. Therefore, the repairs are "qualifying works" and the consultation procedure under section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 was required or dispensation granted, for the full cost to be met by the service charge. Since both the Managing Agents and Leaseholders considered the work to be urgent the Agents as the Applicant's Representatives applied for dispensation.
6. Directions were issued on 3 March 2026 which stated that the Application would be determined on or after 14 April 2026 based on written representations and without an inspection, unless either party made a request for an oral hearing by 24 March 2026. No request was received.
7. The Directions required the Applicant's Representative to send by 10 March 2026 to each of the Respondent Leaseholders, by hand delivery or by first class post and by email, if practicable, copies of:

- i. The application form without the list of leaseholders' names and addresses;
- ii. The Directions;
- iii. A clear concise description of the relevant works for which dispensation is sought;
- iv. an estimate of the cost of the relevant works, including any professional fees and VAT;
- v. Any other evidence relied upon; and

To file with the tribunal confirming that this had been done and stating the date on which this was done.

- 8. On 4 March 2026 the Applicant's Representative confirmed that this Direction had been complied with.
- 9. If the Respondent Leaseholders wished to oppose the Application the Directions required them to do so via an attached reply form by 24 March 2026. No forms or representations were received from the Leaseholders.

The Law

- 10. Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 limits the relevant service charge contribution of tenants unless the prescribed consultation requirements have been complied with or dispensed with under section 20ZA. The requirements are set out in The Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (England) Regulations 2003. Section 20 applies to qualifying works if the relevant costs incurred in carrying out the works exceed an amount which results in the relevant contribution of any tenant being more than £250.
- 11. The consultation provisions appropriate to the present case are set out in Schedule 4 Part 2 to the Service Charges (Consultation etc) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1987) (the 2003 Regulations). The Procedure of the Regulations are summarised in Annex 2 of this Decision and Reasons.
- 12. Section 20ZA allows a Landlord to seek dispensation from these requirements, as set out in Annex 2 of this Decision and Reasons and this is an Application for such dispensation.
- 13. References to "tenants" includes "leaseholders" and vice versa.

Submissions & Evidence

- 14. The Applicant's Representative provided a bundle to the Tribunal which included:
 - A copy of the Original Lease, the covenants of which are understood to be common to all the Leases, together with:

- A copy of a Deed of Variation which substituted clauses relating to insurance and right of entry by the Lessee to other parts of the building to comply with the terms of the Lease.
- A copy of a Deed of Surrender of the Original Lease incorporating a Lease granting a term of 999 years in substitution, the title absolute having been vested in the Applicant under Title HD436122.
- Application to the Tribunal,
- Tribunal Directions,
- Applicant's confirmation regarding compliance with Directions,
- Cost Estimate

These together set out the Applicant's case.

15. The new Lease dated 29 June 2009 is between the Applicant and each of the respective Leaseholders who pursuant to Clause 4.4 of the Lease shall be granted leases on similar terms. The relevant covenants are as follows:

a) Clause 1 - Definitions

The Common Parts means those part of the Building and surrounding grounds which are no included in leases of any of the flats of an within the Building including and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing:-

1.1.6.3 the exterior structure foundations roofs balconies patio areas and fire escapes around and appurtenant to the building

b) Clause 3 - Tenant's Covenants

The Tenant covenants with the Landlord: -

3.1 To pay the rents

To pay the rents reserved as herein provided without any deduction

c) Clause 4 - Landlord's Covenants

4.6 To Repair the Common Parts

4.7 To repair and maintaining:

4.6.1 all structural and external walls and parts of the Building including for the avoidance of doubt the roof...

d) The First Schedule - The Demised Premises

[As described}

2. Excluding:-

2.1 the roof

2.2 any chimney stacks or other structures upon the roof

e) The Fourth Schedule – Rents

3. The Service Charge in accordance with the Fifth Schedule hereof

- f) The Fifth Schedule – The Service Charge - Part I
 1. The Tenant shall pay to the landlord by way of service charge a contribution (“the service charge”) of one ninth of the costs expenses and payments and liabilities incurred or to be incurred or provided for by the landlord in any accounting period as hereinafter defined in respect of the matters set out in Part II of this Schedule
- g) The Fifth Schedule – The Service Charge - Part II
 1. The maintenance repair redecoration renewal replacement rebuilding amendment cleansing upholding supporting painting or other treatment of all external and structural parts of the |building (including internal load bearing walls and joists) and the Common Parts...

16. The statement by the Applicant’s Representative in the Application Form said that no section 20 consultation process had been completed and that they were keen to avoid the process due to the urgency of the roof repair and their desire to stop the water ingress into Flats 8 and 9 as soon as possible.
17. A copy of the quotation from A & D Roofing Services limited was provided which stated that the water is becoming trapped where there is a join in the felt and is getting underneath. The contractor said that area can be overlayed with a liquid resin system to rectify the problem. The work was divided between flats 8 and 9.

Flat 8 - The work is to:

- Cut the felt where the water is trapped water to vacuum the water out and dry the area with gas gun. The contractor would then supply and lay new RESTEC Flexitec liquid resin over the area to cover the felt laps to make them watertight. Approximate area 20 linear metre lengths.
- Create a new water flow to allow water to drain into the guttering and apply RESTEC system.
- Install new lead flashing above the window

Cost £2,920.00 including VAT

Flat 9 – The work is to:

- Supply 16 ft access scaffolding tower to window and roof area
- Cut out old silicone to window and apply new high grade silicone
- Chase out brickwork and install new lead flashing above window
- Chimney to be chased out to perimeter and install new lead flashing to all sides

Cost £1,130.00 including VAT

Determination

18. In making its decision the Tribunal had regard to the decision of the Supreme Court in *Daejan Investments Ltd v Benson and others* [2013] UKSC 14. In summary, the Supreme Court noted the following:
- 1) The main question for the Tribunal whether the landlord's breach of the section 20 consultation requirements resulted in the leaseholders suffering real prejudice.
 - 2) The financial consequence to the landlord of not granting a dispensation is not a relevant factor.
 - 3) The nature of the landlord is not a relevant factor.
 - 4) Dispensation should not be refused solely because the landlord seriously breached, or departed from, the consultation requirements.
 - 5) The Tribunal has power to grant a dispensation as it thinks fit, provided that any terms are appropriate.
 - 6) The Tribunal has power to impose a condition that the landlord pays the tenants' reasonable costs (including surveyor and/ or legal fees) incurred in connection with the landlord's application under section 20ZA.
 - 7) The legal burden of proof in relation to dispensation applications is on the landlord. The factual burden of identifying some "relevant" prejudice that they would or might have suffered is on the tenants.
 - 8) The Supreme Court considered that "relevant" prejudice should be given a narrow definition; it means whether non-compliance with the consultation requirements has led the landlord to incur costs in an unreasonable amount or to incur them in the provision of services, or in the carrying out of works, which fell below a reasonable standard, in other words whether the non-compliance has in that sense caused prejudice to the tenant.
 - 9) The more serious and/or deliberate the landlord's failure, the more readily a Tribunal would be likely to accept that the tenants had suffered prejudice.
 - 10) Once the tenants had shown a credible case for prejudice, the Tribunal should look to the landlord to rebut it.
19. From the above the Tribunal finds it has a limited jurisdiction in respect of this type of Application. The questions for the Tribunal is how did the lack of consultation prejudice the Leaseholders and in determining whether there is prejudice, the question is what would the Respondents have done if the consultation, of which they were deprived, had taken place and how would it have changed matters. The Tribunal considered the following in making its decision.
1. Are the works permissible under the lease?
20. The Tribunal found that the Lease was a long lease. Under Clause 4 of the Lease the Landlord Applicant must carry out the repairs set out in Part II of the Fifth Schedule which includes keeping the roof in good repair. The Fourth Schedule

states that these repairs are to be paid for from the Service Charge which under Clause 3 the Leaseholders covenant to pay. Therefore the Tribunal found that the Applicant was obliged to carry out the qualifying works and the Respondents were obliged to pay for them through the Service Charge.

2. Were the works necessary and 3. Were they urgent?

21. The Tribunal considered whether the works were necessary. From the description of the works in the Application form and the evidence adduced by way of the quotation the Tribunal finds that works were necessary and urgent. No evidence was adduced by the Leaseholders to suggest otherwise. The urgency of the works was a particular factor which vitiated against a consultation under section 20 as damage would continue to be caused by the delay in remedying the leak.

4. How was the contractor selected the works carried out and the cost determined?

22. A consultation would have given the Leaseholders an opportunity to nominate a different contractor, who may have suggested the works be greater or lesser in scope or that a different methodology be used which could have affected the cost, either increasing or decreasing it. The Tribunal found that the works were carried out by a contractor who provided a clear quotation which itemised the work to be done and the cost. No evidence was adduced by the Leaseholders to suggest that the contractor was not independent of the Landlord or that the works could have been carried out by a different contractor at lower cost or by a more effect method.

5. Were the leaseholders informed or aware of the works notwithstanding the consultation procedure was not carried out and have they had an opportunity to make representations?

23. The Tribunal found that the nature of the works meant that at least the Leaseholders of Flats 8 and 9 were likely to be aware of the works and anxious to have them carried out to avoid further damage to their flats. Although there was no consultation prior to the works, the Application has given an opportunity to the Leaseholders to identify an alternative contractor with cheaper quotations, or instruct a surveyor or similar professional to suggest a different scope of works or recommend a different methodology. In the event the Respondent Leaseholders did not adduce such evidence.
24. The Tribunal is satisfied that it is reasonable to dispense with compliance with all the consultation requirements of Schedule 4 Part 2 to the Service Charges (Consultation etc) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1987).
25. The Leaseholders should note that this is not an application to determine the reasonableness of the works or their cost. If, when the service charge demands in respect of these works are sent out, any Leaseholder objects to the cost or the

reasonableness of the work or the way it was undertaken, an application can be made to this Tribunal under section 27A of the Act, if the matter cannot be settled by agreement. A landlord can also seek a determination as to the reasonableness of the cost of the work.

26. The Applicant shall serve a copy of the Tribunal's decision on dispensation, together with the relevant appeal rights attached, to all Leaseholders.

Judge JR Morris

Annex 1 – Right of Appeal

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

Annex 2 – The Law

1. Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 limits the relevant service charge contribution of tenants unless the prescribed consultation requirements have been complied with or dispensed with under section 20ZA. The requirements are set out in The Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (England) Regulations 2003. Section 20 applies to qualifying works if the relevant costs incurred in carrying out the works exceed an amount which results in the relevant contribution of any tenant being more than £250.
2. The consultation provisions appropriate to the present case are set out in Schedule 4 Part 2 to the Service Charges (Consultation etc) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1987) (the 2003 Regulations). The Procedure of the Regulations and are summarised as being in 4 stages as follows:

A Notice of Intention to carry out qualifying works must be served on all the tenants. The Notice must describe the works and give an opportunity for tenants to view the schedule of works to be carried out and invite observations to be made and the nomination of contractors with a time limit for responding of no less than 30 days. (Referred to in the 2003 Regulations as the “relevant period” and defined in Regulation 2.)

Estimates must be obtained from contractors identified by the landlord (if these have not already been obtained) and any contractors nominated by the Tenants.

A Notice of the Landlord’s Proposals must be served on all tenants to whom an opportunity is given to view the estimates for the works to be carried out. At least two estimates must be set out in the Proposal and an invitation must be made to the tenants to make observations with a time limit of no less than 30 days. (Also referred to as the “relevant period” and defined in Regulation 2.) This is for tenants to check that the works to be carried out are permitted under the Lease, conform to the schedule of works, are appropriately guaranteed, are likely to be best value (not necessarily the cheapest) and so on.

A Notice of Works must be given if the contractor to be employed is not a nominated contractor or is not the lowest estimate submitted. The Landlord must within 21 days of entering into the contract give notice in writing to each tenant giving the reasons for awarding the contract and, where the tenants made observations, to summarise those observations and set out the Landlord’s response to them.

3. Section 20ZA allows a Landlord to seek dispensation from these requirements, as follows –

(1) Where an application is made to a leasehold valuation tribunal for a determination to dispense with all or 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.

(3) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that an agreement is not a qualifying long term agreement—
if it is an agreement of a description prescribed by the regulations, or in any circumstances so prescribed.

(4) to (7)... not relevant to this application.