



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

Case Reference : **HAV/45UB/LDC/2026/0059**

Property : **31 St Richards Road, Portslade BN41 1PA**

Applicants : **Anna Biernacka-Tavares & Annamaria Busia**

Respondents : **The Leaseholders of 31 St Richards Road,
Portslade BN41 1PA**

Type of Application : **To dispense with the requirement to
consult lessees about major works section
20ZA of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985**

Tribunal Member : **Mr D W Cotterell FRICS**

Date of Decision : **13 August 2026**

DECISION

Summary of the Decision

1. **The Applicants are granted dispensation under Section 20ZA of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 from the consultation requirements imposed on the landlord for remedial works to the roof of 31 St. Richards Road, Portslade BN41 4PA (the Property) provided that the Landlord serves a copy of this decision on all of the leaseholders.**

The application and the history of the case

2. The Applicants seek dispensation under Section 20ZA of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 from the consultation requirements imposed on the landlord by Section 20 of that Act. The application was received on 7 April 2026.
3. The Property is described as a detached building divided into two flats of residential accommodation. The ground floor has a 2-bedroom flat, and the first floor has a 2-bedroom maisonette. The Property is estimated to be around 75 years old. The Applicants are co-owners of the upstairs flat and hold a 50% equity share of the freehold.
4. The Applicants explain in their application that:
 - a. The proposed remedial works relate to the urgent repair to a leaking roof.
 - b. The leaks were in 3 separate locations.
 - c. 2 of the leaks were close to electrical installations, the other was close to the fire alarm.
 - d. One involved water dripping towards an electrical socket.
 - e. Delta roofing inspected the defects and advised the applicant that the works were urgent, the nature of the works that were necessary including stopping water ingress and remedying the associated defective areas.
 - f. The works have already been carried out on 16 / 17 February 2026.
 - g. Whilst formal notice of the proposed works was communicated before the works proceeded the formal statutory consultation process was not followed.
 - h. The applicants seek retrospective dispensation due to the urgency of the works required
5. The Tribunal gave directions on 7 July 2026 that respondents should complete a reply form and return it to the Tribunal and to the Applicant; and, if they opposed the application to include a statement setting out why, evidence of what they may have done differently (if the Applicant had to comply with the full statutory consultation process) and to provide copies of all documents to be relied upon, if such were not already included in the Applicant's bundle.

6. The Tribunal determined that the application would be decided on the papers without a hearing in accordance with rule 31 of the Tribunal Procedure Rules 2013 not having received an objection on that point.
7. The Tribunal has not been notified of any objections.
8. The Tribunal has given careful consideration to the information provided to it.

The Law

9. Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (“the Act”) and the related Regulations provide that where the lessor intends to undertake major works with a cost of more than £250 per lease in any one service charge year the relevant contribution of each lessee (jointly where more than one under any given lease) will be limited to that sum unless the required consultations have been undertaken or the requirement has been dispensed with by the Tribunal. An application may be made retrospectively.
10. Section 20ZA provides that on an application to dispense with any or all of the consultation requirements, the Tribunal may make a determination granting such dispensation “*if satisfied that it is reasonable to dispense with the requirements*”.
11. The appropriate approach to be taken by the Tribunal in the exercise of its discretion was considered by the Supreme Court in the case of Daejan Investment Limited v Benson et al [2013] UKSC 14.
12. The leading judgment of Lord Neuberger explained that a tribunal should focus on the question of whether the lessee will be or had been prejudiced in either paying where that was not appropriate or in paying more than appropriate because the failure of the lessor to comply with the regulations. The requirements were held to give practical effect to those two objectives and were “*a means to an end, not an end in themselves*”.
13. The factual burden of demonstrating prejudice falls on the lessee. The lessee must identify what would have been said if able to engage in a consultation process. If the lessee advances a credible case for having been prejudiced, the lessor must rebut it. The Tribunal should be sympathetic to the lessee(s).
14. Where the extent, quality and cost of the works were in no way affected by the lessor’s failure to comply, Lord Neuberger said as follows: “*I find it hard to see why the dispensation should not be granted (at least in the absence of some very good reason): in such a case the tenants would be in precisely the position that the legislation intended them to be- i.e. as if the requirements had been complied with.*”
15. The “*main, indeed normally, the sole question*”, as described by Lord Neuberger, for the Tribunal to determine is therefore whether, or not, the Lessee will be or has

been caused relevant prejudice by a failure of the Applicant to undertake the consultation prior to the major works and so whether dispensation in respect of that should be granted.

16. The question is one of the reasonableness of dispensing with the process of consultation provided for in the Act, not one of the reasonableness of the charges of works arising or which have arisen.
17. If dispensation is granted, that may be on terms. 14. The effect of *Daejan* has been considered by the Upper Tribunal in Aster Communities v Kerry Chapman and Others [2020] UKUT 177 (LC), although that decision primarily dealt with the imposition of conditions when granting dispensation and that the ability of lessees to challenge the reasonableness of service charges claimed was not an answer to an argument of prejudice arising from a failure to consult.

Decision

18. The application explains that the works were required as an emergency measure and to prevent further damage being caused and the Tribunal accepts that explanation.
19. The Tribunal is satisfied that it is reasonable in the circumstances for consultation regarding the proposed remedial works to be to be dispensed with on this application, because the Tribunal does not consider that the Leaseholders will be prejudiced by the proposed works being carried out.
20. In reaching its decision the Tribunal has taken account of the fact that no objections have been received, and because the leaseholders may still challenge the reasonableness and the charges for the works in due course.
21. The Tribunal therefore directs that the dispensation is conditional upon the Applicant or their agent sending a copy of this decision to all leaseholders so that they are aware of the same.
22. For completeness the Tribunal confirms in making this determination that it makes no findings as to the liability to pay or the reasonableness of the estimated costs of the works.

RIGHTS OF APPEAL

1. A person wishing to appeal this decision to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) must seek permission to do so by making written application to the First-tier Tribunal at the Regional office which has been dealing with the case. Where possible you should send your application for permission to appeal by email to

rpsouthern@justice.gov.uk as this will enable the First-tier Tribunal Regional office to deal with it more efficiently.

2. The application must arrive at the Tribunal within 28 days after the Tribunal sends to the person making the application written reasons for the decision.
3. If the person wishing to appeal does not comply with the 28-day time limit, the person shall include with the application for permission to appeal a request for an extension of time and the reason for not complying with the 28-day time limit; the Tribunal will then decide whether to extend time or not to allow the application for permission to appeal to proceed.
4. The application for permission to appeal must identify the decision of the Tribunal to which it relates, state the grounds of appeal, and state the result the party making the application is seeking.
5. Either party seeking to appeal a decision are referred to form RPPTA.