

CLIENT

Harrison Reeves

ADDRESS

3 Copse Wood Way Northwood HA6 2TP

SUBJECT MATTER

**APPLICATION TO REMOVE HORNBEAM AND OAK TREE FOLLOWING
RECOMMENDATIONS IN STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS REPORT**

AUTHOR

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DATE 31 March 2021

Introduction and Scientific Analysis of effect of protected trees on house at 3 Copse Wood Way Northwood

The applicant seeks to remove an oak tree (T1 on attached plan) and a hornbeam tree (T2 on attached plan). He has instructed a structural engineer to investigate the cause of the structural damage to his property and the engineer has concluded that the entire property requires underpinning following subsidence. The subsidence has been ongoing for more than 13 years (see report from Pindoria ref KP/2122 dated 26 March 2021). The engineer has recommended that the property should be demolished and rebuilt. Unfortunately following a pre application planning advice for the recommended 'demolition and rebuilding' we have been told by the planning officer that the subject property could not be demolished and should be retained (e mail from Liz Arnold dated 19 Feb 2021 confirmed this). As the property must now presumably remain, and the Structural Engineer has identified the cause of the subsidence as tree root damage, we must now remove the offending trees to prevent further structural failure and to protect my clients property.

There is prima facie evidence (from previous owners consultants) which identified in September 2006 of Oak Tree roots present within two trial bore holes positioned adjacent to the subject house. The nearest oak tree to the property is tree T1. These roots were identified to a depth of 5m under the foundations of the house. An application to remove this very same oak tree was made by the previous owner (See attached application with enclosures dated 21-01-08 under ref 22134/TRE/2008/9). Hillingdon council would only permit the trees reduction refusing to agree to its removal. Remedial repairs were subsequently undertaken to the building following the trees reduction. These repairs have been un-successful and the ongoing subsidence has caused further extensive damage to my clients property which has been estimated to cost circa £200,000 to £250,000 to remedy. On going tree root damage to my clients property caused by trees T1 and T2 is clearly unacceptable and cannot continue.

Identifying the trees subject to TPO 391 that are in the zone for tree root damage

We have been provided with a copy of the Tree Preservation Order relating to the site under reference TPO 391. Hillingdon Councils trees officer has confirmed that this is the only TPO relating to the site.

TPO 391 relates to groups of trees identified as Oak, Hornbeam, Silver Birch, Western Red Cedar, Scots Pine and Cedar. My client commissioned a tree survey to identify the trees within the site and how they might affect its redevelopment as part of the pre application planning advice. The report identified that within the boundaries of the garden to 3 Copse Wood Way there are trees which fall under the control of TPO 391. These are identified in the attached plan prepared by our Tree Surveyors GHA Trees as T1 OAK, T2 HORNBEAM, G7 HORNBEAM (TWO) and T5 HORNBEAM. These five trees are the only trees which are protected by the TPO 391. There are other trees within the boundaries of the garden which may also be removed (to prevent further subsidence) but as these trees fall outside of TPO 391 consent from Hillingdon council is not required and they do not form part of this application.

In order to identify which Protected trees are to be removed we have used the NCBC Standards for Foundation design. These design guides give specific reference to all tree groups and the required

foundation depths depending upon the prevailing sub soil and distance from foundations. In our previously mentioned bore hole sample reports the existing foundations were identified as concrete strip at a depth of 800mm and the sub soil clay with high volume change potential. Clay sub soils of this variety are extremely vulnerable to shrinkage by tree roots and subsidence caused by tree root damage common in Northwood and the surrounding areas.

We have identified that both trees T1 and T2 proximity is so close to the house that they have caused it to subside and there is now a requirement for extensive underpinning of the foundations. The table and charts attached detail the required depth of foundations based on the distance from the various external and internal walls from Trees T1 and T2 (the NHBC guidelines).

In both instances the results conclude that existing foundation depth of 0.8m is inadequate. The range of foundation depth required varies from 1m to more than 2.5m (at this depth special reinforced foundations are required). These calculations use accepted scientific data that both Trees T1 and T2 are sufficiently close to 'prove' the subsidence the engineer has evidenced is beyond all reasonable doubt caused by these trees (as they are nearest to the property). The damage to the building has been evidenced (on public record with the TPO application of 2008) and the Pindoria Structural engineers report of 2021 as subsidence caused by the 'close proximity of trees'.

The removal of these trees (together with others not protected) will go some way to preventing the on going subsidence the property suffers from and will allow the supporting soil strata to stabilise. It is my clients intention to undertake necessary structural repairs to stabilise his property following their removal.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the trees identified on the attached plan labelled T1 and T2 have caused my clients property to subside. This has had a substantial deleterious affect on his property which he has the Common Law right to protect from harm. Should the local authority not permit him to remove the protected trees then I am obliged to put you on notice of a potential claim for damages.