

Horse Chestnut Tree at 46 Dartmouth Park Road. Ref 2018/5789/T

This application is made not by the tree's owner but on behalf of insurers of a nearby property, on the basis that the tree contributes to the subsidence at that other property. I have seen copies of the relevant documents and ask the Council please to do two things. First, to put them on its website and allow other local residents 21 days to look at them. Second, to take into account in reaching its decision that there is no credible evidence whatsoever that the tree is causing damage to another property.

Subsidence is a common problem in our area because of the clay soil. The cracks usually open up in summer (especially a hot, dry summer like this year) and close up in winter, albeit not completely. Over-reaction to this situation could lead eventually to the area being denuded of all its mature trees, and it is worth bearing in mind that the Engineering Appraisal Report says the subsidence damage here is "slight" (Category 2).

The chestnut tree at No. 46 is a mature tree of considerable amenity value. Its felling would no doubt have implications (heave, etc.) for the nearby properties built or extended after the tree reached maturity. This tree is called T2 in the Arboricultural Assessment Report (AAR).

There is another chestnut tree (called T5 in the AAR), in the pavement in York Rise adjacent to 23 Laurier Road, which is roughly four times closer to 23 Laurier Road than T2. The Engineering Appraisal Report of 30th October 2018, which took full account of the Site Investigation Report and the botanical identification, clearly implicates this other tree (T5) as the culprit – "... the cause of damage results from clay shrinkage subsidence brought about by the action of roots from the tree located in the public footpath to the right of the property". This is confirmed by the Drainage Investigation Report, which found damage to lines 5, 6 and 7 (which are nearest to T5 and furthest from T2), but no significant damage to lines 1, 2, 3, and 4 (which are nearest to T2).

The AAR recommends that tree T2 (as well as T5) be felled, but no reason is given for this conclusion. The report states "On the basis of our findings, we have considered a practical vegetation management specification", without stating what the findings are to justify the felling of T2. The only relevant finding is that T2's roots are **not** implicated. If T2 were my tree I would certainly not regard this as anything like sufficient reason to allow the insurers onto my property to fell my tree.

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