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ARBORICULTURAL

Mr & Mrs Coles
5 Coultas Road
Chandlers Ford
Eastleigh
SO53 5BA

Our Ref: 231571 - Let 1

1 December 2023

Dear Mr & Mrs Coles

Re: Tree issues at 5 Coultas Road, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 5BA

I write with regard to my recent work instruction concerning a single tree at your property. You asked me to review its condition and make appropriate management recommendations.

I visited the site on 6 September 2023 to assess the tree and during my visit I took a number of photographs, some of which I have appended to the end of this report for reference. I understand from our discussions that you are concerned regarding the likelihood that the tree is causing structural damage to your property and you subsequently provided me with a structural engineer's report (document reference, 'TDB/45631/tdb') which references the tree.

I noted that the tree is located to the east of your house, close to the common boundary, but positioned on land owned by your neighbour. Its location is identified on the appended tree plan as tree T1 and I can confirm it is a beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*), with a stem diameter of around 57cm measured at 1.5m above ground level and a height of approximately 23m. The tree is twin (co-dominant) stemmed at around 2.5m above ground level and I noted areas of bark-to-bark contact between the stem union (photograph 1) and a noticeable lateral broadening of the main tree stem below the union (photograph 2). I also noted that the tree appears to have been pruned in the past, with multiple old and occluding wounds on its main stem with a corresponding lack of lower branching.

It has been documented that twin stemmed trees with tight forks and bark-to-bark contact have a higher failure propensity than single stem trees, or indeed twin stemmed trees with no bark-to-bark contact. Principally, this is related to incremental changes in stem diameters forcing the union apart. This can be particularly concerning during adverse weather events (which are becoming increasingly common), such as high winds, when the loading on tree stems can be quite high. It has also been documented that lower stem branching has a mechanical dampening effect on trunk movement. Consequently, the lack of lower branching and reduction in dampening is particularly concerning, particularly when further increases in tree height are factored in.

The position of the tree adjacent to your house places it and potentially members of your family (or indeed visitors) within falling distance should the stem union fail and a large part of the tree detach itself. This has the potential to cause death or severe injury to anyone unfortunate enough to be struck by falling tree debris, or indeed cause significant structural damage to your home if this was hit by part of the tree.

I note the comments in the engineer's report regarding the close proximity of the tree to the nearby walls (paragraph 6.1), the implications of the tree in terms of wall foundation failure due to tree root action (paragraph 6.2), the ongoing issues should the wall be rebuilt with the tree in situ (paragraph 6.4) and the possibility that the tree may have implications for the foundations of your home (paragraph 6.5).

On consideration of the condition of the tree, along with the structural engineer's comments, my opinion is that the tree should be felled. I understand that it is the subject of a confirmed Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and so you will need to apply to the council for its permission to remove it. I feel that the loss of the tree should be acceptable to the council to maintain acceptable levels of risk and I would be happy to make the tree work application on your behalf. However, please be advised that the council do have the option of refusing consent, in which case you do have the right to appeal their decision.

The tree is set back a little way from the public highway, but it is nonetheless visible from the road and so its loss would have some implications in the locality. However, there is a larger and more prominent beech tree located to the front of your dwelling, with an additional backdrop of trees further to the north. Consequently, I feel that these trees will help buffer the loss of tree T1 to the extent that any visual implications arising from its removal are likely to be somewhat limited.

In summary, the tree is growing in a restricted space adjacent to your property and has been implicated in direct damage to adjacent walls and potential indirect damage to building foundations. The tree has a significant structural defect, with a documented propensity for failure and the tree is within striking distance of your dwelling and any occupants. Consequently, my recommendation is that the tree is removed and that a tree work application is made to the council in this respect.

Yours sincerely



Barrie Draper BSc (Hons) Arb TechCert(ArborA) CertArb(RFS)
Arboricultural Consultant

Attached: 1: Photographs
2: Tree Plan

Photographs



Photograph 1: Tree T1 with tight fork and bark to bark contact



Photograph 2: Tree T1 with lateral stem broadening below union

Tree Plan

