

Arboricultural Appraisal Report

Subsidence Damage Investigation at:

38 Fircroft Drive
Chandler's Ford
Eastleigh
SO53 2HE



CLIENT:	Trinity Claims
CLIENT REF:	TPEH00436986
MWA REF:	SUB251029-17086
MWA CONSULTANT:	Giles Mercer (BSc Hons)
REPORT DATE:	01/12/2025

SUMMARY

Statutory Controls		Mitigation (Current claim tree works)	
TPO current claim	Yes – T3	Policy Holder	Yes
TPO future risk	No	Domestic 3 rd Party	Yes
Cons. Area	No	Local Authority	No
Trusts schemes	No	Other	No
Local Authority: -	Eastleigh Borough Council		

Introduction

Acting on instructions from Trinity Claims, the insured property was visited on 26/11/2025 to assess the potential role of vegetation in relation to subsidence damage.

We are instructed to provide opinion on whether vegetation is a causal factor in the damage to the property and give recommendations on what vegetation management, if any, may be carried out with a view to restoring stability to the property. The scope of our assessment includes opinion relating to mitigation of future risk. Vegetation not recorded is considered not to be significant to the current damage or pose a significant risk in the foreseeable future.

This is an initial appraisal report and observations/recommendations are made with reference to the technical reports and information currently available and may be subject to review upon receipt of additional site investigation data, monitoring, engineering opinion or other information.

This report does not include a detailed assessment of tree condition or safety. Where indications of poor condition or health in accessible trees are observed, this will be indicated within the report. Assessment of the condition and safety of third-party trees is excluded, and third-party owners are advised to seek their own advice on tree health and stability of trees under their control.

Property Description

The property comprises a two-storey detached house.

External areas comprise gardens to the front and rear.

The site is generally level with no adverse topographical features.

Damage Description & History

Damage relates to the front left-hand corner, the left-hand flank and the rear elevation. Further details of the damage can be obtained from Trinity Claims.

We have not been made aware of any previous claims.

Geology / Soils

The online 1:50 000 scale British Geological Survey (BGS) map for the area records the bedrock geology as Wittering Formation - Sand, silt and clay. Superficial deposits are recorded as River Terrace Deposits, 4 To 5 - Sand and gravel.

Discussion

Opinion and recommendations in this report are made on the understanding that Trinity Claims has identified clay shrinkage subsidence as a cause of building movement and damage.

The BGS soil map indicates the underlying soils may include a clay component susceptible to undergoing volumetric change with changes in soil moisture. Where present, moisture extraction by vegetation has the potential to cause soil shrinkage and consequent subsidence of the building.

Our survey has identified vegetation with the potential to influence soils below foundation level of the building/area of movement.

Based on the information currently available, engineering opinion and our own site assessment we conclude there is damage potentially consistent with shrinkage of the clay subsoil exacerbated by the soil drying effects of vegetation. It is our opinion that the Oak (T3) will be the principal cause of or will be contributing to any building movement and damage related to clay shrinkage subsidence.

If the influence of the trees is to be eliminated, removal is likely to be necessary. Reduction may reduce the amplitude of movement to tolerable levels although this is unpredictable.

Evidence which establishes the role of the oak tree in the damage will be required to justify remedial works.

Where other vegetation recorded presents a potential future risk to building stability, management is recommended (see Table 2).

Consideration has been given to pruning alone as a means of mitigating vegetation influence, however in this case, this is not considered to offer a viable long-term solution due to the species characteristics, size and proximity of the responsible vegetation to the area of damage.

Recommended tree works may be subject to review/change upon receipt of additional information.

Replacement planting may be considered subject to species choice and planting location.

Site Plan



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Plan not to scale – indicative only



Approximate areas of damage

Tree/vegetation locations are based on what could be determined at the time of the survey.

It should be noted that this is not always clear due to lack of access or a restricted view of the trees/vegetation and may be disputed by property owners.

MWA can undertake land registry searches as required.

Table 1 **Current Claim - Tree Details & Recommendations**

Tree No.	Species	Height (m)	Dia (mm)	Crown Spread (m)	Dist. to building (m)	Age Classification	Ownership
T3	Oak (Quercus sp.)	20.75	1080	21	5.85	Older than Property	Unclear Boundary Policy Holder &/or 39 Fircroft Drive SO53 2HE
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning.					
Recommendation		Remove (fell) to near ground level and treat stump to inhibit regrowth.					

Ms: multi-stemmed * Estimated value

T - Tree; TG - Tree group; G – Group; H - Hedge; S - Shrub; SG - Shrub group; C - Climber; W – Woodland; ST - Stump

Table 2 **Future Risk - Tree Details & Recommendations**

Tree No.	Species	Height (m)	Dia (mm)	Crown Spread (m)	Dist. to building (m)	Age Classification	Ownership
T1	Apple	6	300	5.4	3.1	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning.					
Recommendation		Do not allow to exceed current dimensions.					
T2	Cherry (Prunus sp.)	8.75	400 Ms *	9	10	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		No significant recent management noted.					
Recommendation		None at present.					
T4	False Acacia (Robinia)	9.7	250 Ms *	8.5	7.5	Younger than Property	Third Party
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning.					
Recommendation		Do not allow to exceed current dimensions.					
S1	Viburnum	4.4	65 Ms *	1.75	3.5	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		No significant recent management noted.					
Recommendation		Maintain broadly at no more than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					
S2	Magnolia	2	25 Ms *	1.5	2.6	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		Managed shrub(s).					
Recommendation		Maintain broadly at no more than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					

Ms: multi-stemmed * Estimated or approximate value

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Table 2 **Future Risk - Tree Details & Recommendations Cont'd**

Tree No.	Species	Height (m)	Dia (mm)	Crown Spread (m)	Dist. to building (m)	Age Classification	Ownership
SG1	Mixed species shrubs includes choisya, lilac, laurel, cotoneaster, forsythia, pittosporum, hypericum	2 - 5.7	25 - 60	2 - 4.5 *	3.5	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning.					
Recommendation		Maintain broadly at no more than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					
SG2	Cotoneaster x 2	0.75	5 Ms *	0.75	0.5	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		Managed shrub(s).					
Recommendation		Maintain broadly at no more than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					
C1	Wisteria	3.3	60 Ms *	8.5	0.1	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		Managed climber.					
Recommendation		Do not allow to exceed current dimensions.					

Ms: multi-stemmed * Estimated or approximate value

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Distance to building measurements are to the nearest point of the building unless otherwise stated.

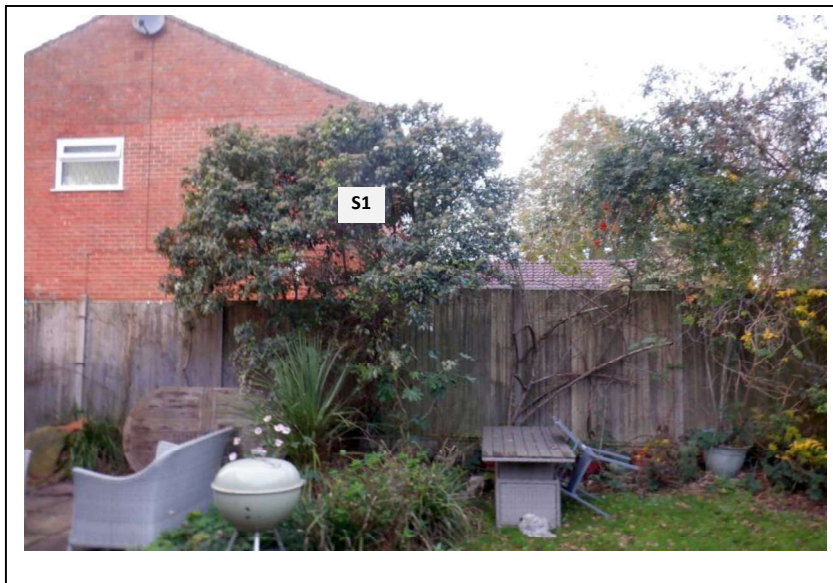
Tree dimensions may be estimated or approximate based on accessibility.

Crown spread values are normally an estimate of the maximum spread but note tree crowns may be asymmetrical.

Photographs



View of T1 & SG1



View of S1



View of T2 & SG1



View of T3



View of T3, T4 & C1



View of SG2 & C1



View of C1, S2 & SG2



View of T3

Management of vegetation to alleviate clay shrinkage subsidence.

All vegetation requires water to survive which is accessed from the soil. Clay soils shrink when water taken up by vegetation exceeds inputs from rainfall, which is at its maximum during the summer months. When deciduous vegetation enters dormancy and loses its leaves, and rainfall increases during the winter months, soil moisture increases and the clay swells. (Evergreen trees and shrubs use minimal/negligible amounts of soil water during the winter).

Buildings founded on clay soils are susceptible to movement as the clay shrinks and swells which when exacerbated by vegetation can result in building movement and cracking to walls.

Where damage does occur, pruning (reducing leaf area) can in some circumstances be effective in restoring stability however, removal of the influencing vegetation (trees, shrubs, climbers) causing the ground movement offers the most reliable and quickest solution in reducing seasonal volumetric changes in the clay, restoring building stability, and for this reason is frequently initially recommended as the most appropriate solution.

Often this is unavoidable due to the size or number of influencing trees, shrubs etc and their proximity to the building. Very heavy pruning of some species to a level required to effectively control its water use can result in the trees decline and ultimately death and is one factor considered when making recommendations for remedial and future management of a tree. Pruning alone, whilst reducing soil moisture uptake is often an unpredictable and unreliable management option in restoring building stability, either in the short or long term.