

Arboricultural Appraisal Report

Subsidence Damage Investigation at:

19 Leaside Avenue
London
N10 3BT



CLIENT: Sedgwick
CLIENT REF: 10935870
MWA REF: SUB251128-17331
MWA CONSULTANT: Andy Clark
REPORT DATE: 17/12/2025

SUMMARY

Statutory Controls		Mitigation (Current claim tree works)	
TPO current claim	No	Policy Holder	Yes
TPO future risk	No	Domestic 3 rd Party	No
Cons. Area	Yes	Local Authority	None at present
Trusts schemes	No	Other	No
Local Authority: -	London Borough of Haringey		

Introduction

Acting on instructions from Sedgwick, the insured property was visited on 16/12/2025 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 mid-terrace house of traditional construction.

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 bay window and associated areas of the front elevation, where cracking indicates downward movement. Further details of the damage can be obtained from Sedgwick.

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 London Clay Formation-Clay, silt and sand. Superficial deposits are recorded as being Lowestoft Formation-Diamicton. BGS records for this area also include historic borehole logs which record soils with a clay component.

Discussion

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

The BGS soil map indicates the underlying soils include or are likely to include a clay component susceptible to undergoing volumetric change with changes in soil moisture. 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, the most significant of which are set out at Table 1 below.

Based on the information currently available, engineering opinion and our own site assessment we conclude there is damage consistent with shrinkage of the clay subsoil exacerbated by the soil drying effects of vegetation.

If an arboricultural solution is to be implemented to mitigate the influence of the trees/vegetation considered to be responsible for the movement/damage, we recommend that the nearby shrubs of the SG1 group and the T3 Laburnum are removed in the first instance.

The Local Authority owned T4 London Plane and T5 London Plane are also likely to have an involvement, however the trees have recently been pollarded which will have provided a short-term reduction in their soil moisture uptake. Where movement persists however, or where evidence comes to light to confirm the involvement of T4 and T5 removal may need to be considered.

Where other vegetation recorded presents a potential future risk to building stability, management is recommended (see Table 2). Recommended tree works may however be subject to review/change upon receipt of additional information.

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.

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	Laburnum with Dogwood understorey	6.0	140	5.5	4.2	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning - previously crown reduced.					
Recommendation		Remove (fell) both to near ground level and treat stumps to inhibit regrowth.					
T4	London plane	8.0	540	3.5	7.0	Younger than Property	Local Authority
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning - very recently pollarded at current dimensions.					
Recommendation		No works required at present (subject to review if movement persists).					
T5	London plane	8.0	530	5.0	7.6	Younger than Property	Local Authority
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning - very recently pollarded at current dimensions.					
Recommendation		No works required at present (subject to review if movement persists).					
SG1	Mixed spp. shrub group of mostly Ceanothus, Pittosporum, Aucuba, Pampas, Rose, Hypericum and Cabbage Palm with herbaceous understorey	1.0 - 2.5	Up to 60	Up to 2.0	0.8	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning - appears regularly pruned.					
Recommendation		Remove (fell) Ceanothus, Pittosporum, Aucuba, Pampas and Rose [to right of bay window] to near ground level and treat stumps to inhibit regrowth. Maintain remainder broadly at no larger than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					

Ms: multi-stemmed * Estimated value

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	Birch	12.5	340 *	6.5	3.7	Younger than Property	Third Party 21 Leaside Avenue N10 3BT
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning - very recently crown reduced/pruned.					
Recommendation		Maintain broadly at no larger than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					
T2	Horse Chestnut	7.5	600 *	6.5	11.9	Younger than Property	Third Party 20 Collingwood Avenue N10 3ED
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning - previously pollarded at approx. 5.0m.					
Recommendation		Maintain broadly at no larger than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					
S1	Ceanothus	2.0	50	1.5	0.4	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning - appears regularly pruned.					
Recommendation		Maintain broadly at no larger than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					
SG2	Flowering cherry with understorey of Lilac, Holly, Rose and Camelia	1.5 - 4.5	Up to 120	Up to 5.5	2.1	Younger than Property	Third Party 27 Leaside Avenue N10 3BT
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning - previously crown reduced / pruned.					
Recommendation		No works required at present (subject to review if movement persists).					

Ms: multi-stemmed * Estimated or approximate value

T - Tree; TG - Tree group; G – Group; H - Hedge; S - Shrub; SG - Shrub group; C - Climber; W – Woodland; ST - stump
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 SG1 group



View of T3 Laburnum with T5 London Plane stem to foreground and SG1 group to right of frame



View of T4 London Plane and T5 London Plane with T3 Laburnum and SG1 and SG2 groups visible beyond

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.