Arboricultural Appraisal Report

Subsidence Damage Investigation at:

56 Cromwell Avenue
London
N6 5HL



CLIENT:	Crawford & Company
CLIENT REF:	1890162
MWA REF:	SUB260528-18889
MWA CONSULTANT:	Andy Clark
REPORT DATE:	28/06/2026

SUMMARY

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

Introduction

Acting on instructions from Crawford & Company, the insured property was visited on 18/06/2026 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 three-storey semi-detached house of traditional construction, previously subdivided into self-contained flats.

External areas comprise gardens to the front and rear.

The property occupies a relatively level but elevated site that sites higher than the road at the frontage and slopes slightly uphill beyond the rear.

Damage Description & History

Damage relates to the front sections of the building. Further details of the damage can be obtained from Crawford & Company.

We have not been made aware of any previous claims.

Site Investigations

Site investigations were carried out by CET on 12/03/2026, when two trial pits were hand excavated to reveal the foundations, with a borehole sunk through the base of the trial pit to determine subsoil conditions. A remote borehole was also excavated. A drains survey was also undertaken.

Foundations:

Ref	Foundation type	Depth at Underside (mm)
TP/BH1	Concrete	1000
TP2	Concrete – presumed underpin	USF not found – TP abandoned at 1200mm

Soils:

Ref	Description	Plasticity Index (%)	Volume change potential (NHBC)
TP/BH1	MADEGROUND: medium compact to compact brown silty sandy clay with brick pieces to 1700mm	28	Medium
BH2 [remote]	MADEGROUND: medium compact brown silty sandy clay with brick pieces to 1200mm	32	Medium

Roots:

Ref	Roots Observed to depth of (mm)	Identification	Starch content
TP/BH1	1700	Ilex spp. and Acer spp.	Present
TP2	1200	No samples retrieved	N/A
BH2	1200	Prunus spp.	Present

Ilex spp. are hollies.
Acer spp. are maples, including sycamore, Norway maple, and Japanese maples.
Prunus spp. include blackthorn, cherry, cherry-laurel, Portuguese laurel, peach, plum, and related species.

Drains: The drains have been surveyed and defects have been identified, however leaking drains are concluded not to be a cause of the current damage.

Monitoring: Level monitoring commenced on 13/01/2026 with two subsequent readings available at the time of writing.

Discussion

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

Site investigations and soil test results have confirmed a plastic clay subsoil susceptible to undergoing volumetric change in relation to changes in soil moisture.

Roots were observed below foundation depth in TP/BH1 and to 1200mm in the remote BH2 and recovered samples have been positively identified (using anatomical analysis) as Ilex spp., Acer spp. and Prunus spp.

The Ilex spp. and Acer spp. roots retrieved from TP/BH1 will be the from the T1 Sycamore and either the Holly of TG1 group or the Holly of the Third Party TG2 group. The Prunus spp. roots will be from the Purple-leaved Plum of TG3 group.

Irrespective of the identification of recovered root samples, 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 recorded at Table 1 below.

Level monitoring has recorded uplift of the building frontage of up to 4.0mm, indicative of the recovery {swelling] of the plastic clay soils as they rehydrate from a shrunken dehydrated state.

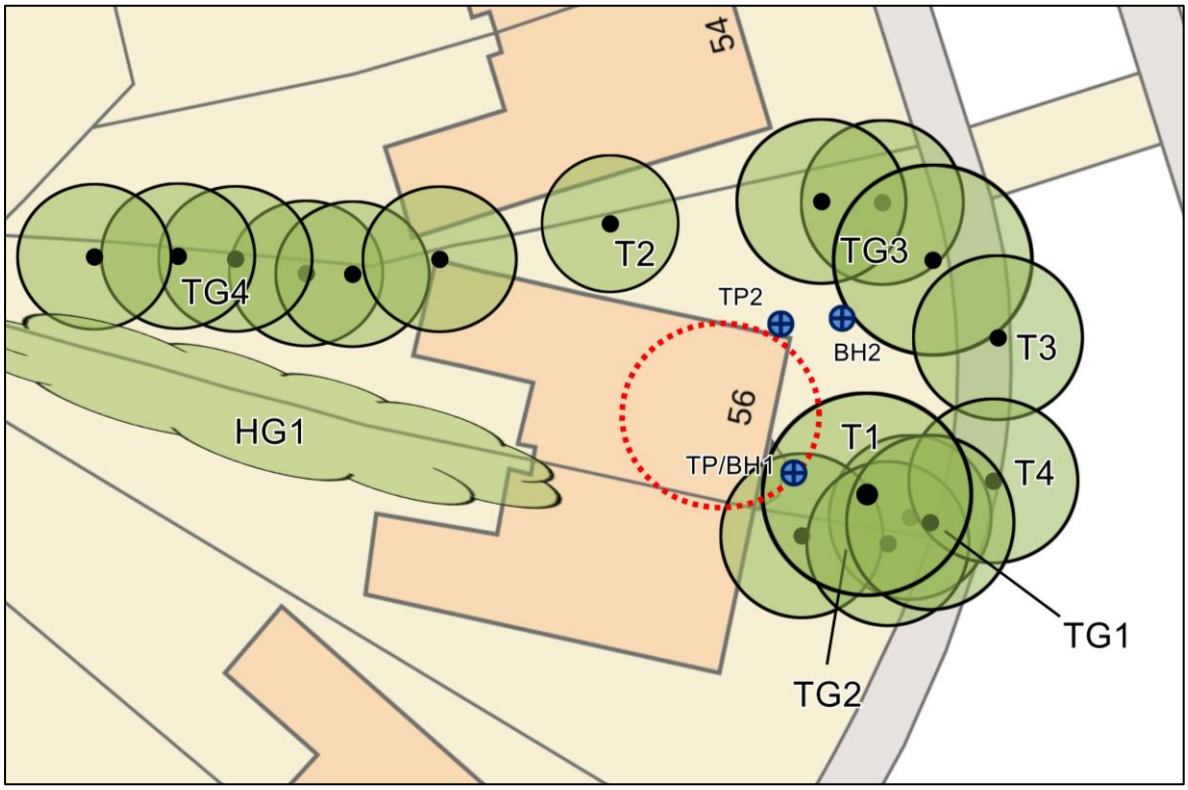
Based on the information currently available, engineering opinion and our own site assessment we conclude there is damage consistent with shrinkage of the clay subsoil exacerbated by the soil drying effects of vegetation.

If an arboricultural solution is to be implemented to mitigate the influence of the trees/vegetation considered to be responsible for the movement/damage, works set out at Table 1 below are recommended.

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 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



© Crown copyright and database rights 2026. Ordnance Survey AC0000822731.

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
T1	Sycamore	15.5	330 *	9.0	3.8	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		No significant past management noted.					
Recommendation		Remove (fell) to near ground level and treat stump to inhibit regrowth.					
TG1	Elder and Holly group	10.0 *	Up to 230 Ms	6.0	5.4	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		No significant past management noted.					
Recommendation		Remove (fell) all to near ground level and treat stumps to inhibit regrowth.					
TG2	Cherry and Holly group	Up to 9.0	Up to 150 Ms *	Up to 6.0	2.0	Younger than Property	Third Party 58 Cromwell Avenue N6 5HL
Management history		No significant recent management noted.					
Recommendation		Remove (fell) Cherry to near ground level and treat stump to inhibit regrowth. Maintain remainder broadly at no larger than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					
TG3	Mixed spp. group of mostly Purple-leaved Plum, Elder and Viburnum with Mahonia and Holly	5.0 - 10.0	Up to 230 Ms *	7.0	6.5	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		No significant recent management noted to dominant trees. Understorey shrubs appear regularly trimmed.					
Recommendation		Remove (fell) all except managed shrubs to near ground level and treat stumps to inhibit regrowth. Maintain currently managed shrubs at broadly no larger than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					

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
T2	Bay	10.0	120 Ms *	6.5	3.3	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		No significant recent management noted.					
Recommendation		Remove (fell) to near ground level and treat stump to inhibit regrowth.					
T3	Lime (Common)	11.0	390	6.0	10.0	Younger than Property	No registrations Local Authority assumed
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning - previously pollarded at approx. 8.0m.					
Recommendation		No works required at present (subject to review if movement persists).					
T4	Lime (Common)	11.0	410	6.0	9.6	Younger than Property	No registrations Local Authority assumed
Management history		Subject to past management/pruning - previously pollarded at approx. 8.0m.					
Recommendation		No works required at present (subject to review if movement persists).					
TG4	Mixed spp. group of mostly Cotoneaster, Ash and Philadelphus with Sycamore next to building	Up to 7.5	Up to 170 Ms *	Up to 6.5	1.0	Younger than Property	Policy Holder
Management history		No significant recent management noted.					
Recommendation		Remove (fell) Sycamore to near ground level and treat stump to inhibit regrowth. Maintain remainder broadly at no larger than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					

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

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
HG1	Mixed spp. hedgerow of mostly Birch, Rose, Hornbeam with Ivy and Clematis	Up to 7.5	Up to 100 Ms *	Up to 6.0	2.0	Younger than Property	Third Party 58 Cromwell Avenue N6 5HL
Management history		No significant recent management noted.					
Recommendation		Maintain broadly at no larger than current dimensions by periodic pruning.					

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.

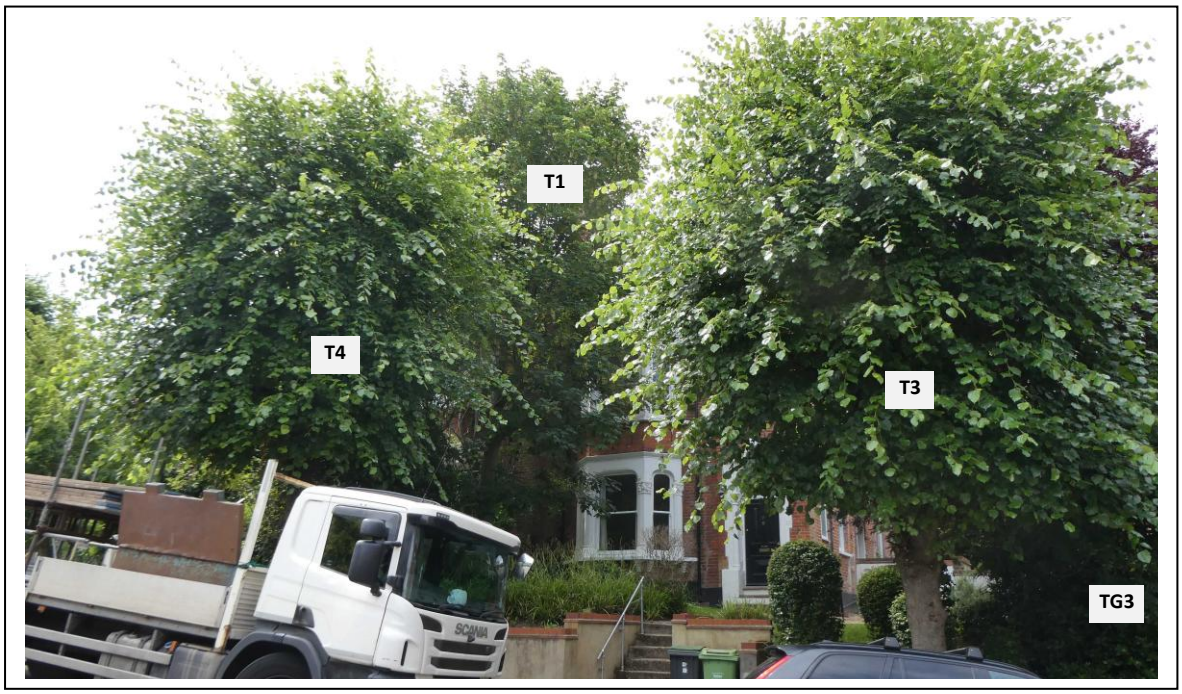
Photographs



View of T1 Sycamore and TG1 Elder and Holly group



View of TG3 group



View of T3 Lime and T4 Lime with T1 Sycamore and TG3 group 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.