



Subsidence damage to a building - particularly a house - can be a worrying experience for the occupier. The causes of subsidence are numerous and often complex, ranging from leaking drains to underground mine workings and from landslip to clay shrinkage. Trees that are present may or may not be part of the problem, depending on a variety of factors.

Where trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order or are situated within a Conservation Area, the Development Department has a responsibility, on the one hand, to protect trees in the interests of public amenity and on the other hand, to seek to ensure that no individual suffers undue loss or distress from damage resulting from this. Balancing these responsibilities can prove complex and relies on consideration of all material facts of the particular case.

In the first instance you should contact your building insurer, who will normally appoint a specialist loss adjuster and structural engineer to carry out investigations. Below is a list of the key information that Leeds City Council normally requires to support a subsidence related tree works application, to make an informed decision about the most appropriate course of action:

- the age of property and that of any extension or major alterations
- the ownership of the tree(s)
- the nature of problem e.g. cracking, deformation, etc.
- historical defect monitoring information, if available
- type and depth of existing foundations
- log of subsoil composition to approximately 3m below ground level
- evidence of tree root presence below foundation level
- evidence that roots belong to suspected trees
- measurement of subsoil shrinkage potential at and below foundation formation level
- plotting and water-tightness testing of drain runs close to building
- a plan showing accurate locations of relevant site features including buildings, drains and trees on and/or adjacent to the site and of the borehole sampling locations

Precise information requirements may vary with individual circumstances, but early consultation with a consultant structural engineer and a qualified and experienced arboricultural consultant is advisable. We regret that the City Council cannot enter into disputes between adjoining landowners on liability for damage or ownership of trees.

For further information in relation to protected trees, contact Ed Lusk (0113) 247 8152 (west Leeds) or Richard Lapish (0113) 247 8149 (east Leeds).

Where damage is believed to be being caused by Council owned trees, you should contact Learning & Leisure Services forestry team officers, telephone (0113) 237 5221 or write to Forestry, The Farmhouse, Red Hall Lane, Leeds LS17 8NB