

DEVELOPMENT FACT SHEET



Technical Reports

1. Structural Engineers Reports

Council may approve the removal of a tree where it is clearly demonstrated that the tree is directly causing or is contributing significantly to damage a significant structure on a site.

Where structural damage is alleged, a comprehensive and conclusive report from a certified structural engineer must be provided. The report must clearly show that the tree is the direct cause of existing identified damage to a significant structure.

If damage is claimed to be as a result of direct root contact, exploratory must digging to be carried out to confirm the presence of roots. All excavation shall be undertaken using minimally destructive methods (e.g. digging using small hand tools or AirSpades) or non-destructive techniques (e.g. a ground penetrating radar). Potentially destructive machinery or tools such as mattocks and crow bars must not be used.

Reports that do not contain the minimum information specified below will not be accepted.

All Structural Engineer's reports must be objective and include the following information:

1. A site address;
2. Author's contact details and qualifications;
3. Statement detailing who (person/s, organisation, company) commissioned the report;
4. Date of inspection;
5. Methodology of investigation techniques used in the preparation of the report (e.g. details of consultation with other specialists such as arborists);
6. A description of the damage;
7. A discussion of findings including supporting evidence (e.g. photographs and findings made from exploratory digging). The alleged damage being caused by the tree must be substantiated based on technical and scientific evidence. Generic statements about damage that may be caused by trees will not be accepted. The report must identify the mechanism of damage to the structure and consider all factors contributing or likely to contribute to the condition of the structure including:
 - a. structural design;
 - b. construction materials;
 - c. the age and condition of the structure;

- d. soil classification and qualities;
- e. quality of drainage and the presence of leaking pipes;
- f. maintenance of the structure;
- g. the size of the tree;
- h. the distance of the tree to the damage; and
- i. any other contributing factors.

8. A discussion of the available abatement strategies and viable solutions to allow for the retention of the tree based on the findings;

9. Site specific recommendations. An explanation of why options are recommended or not recommended must be included;

10. Where appropriate the structural engineer should liaise with a consulting arborist to assist in developing a strategy to retain or protect the tree; and

11. References used in the preparation of the report.

2. Plumbers Reports

Where it is claimed that damage to a plumbing system has occurred due to tree roots, Council recommends that closed circuit television (CCTV) “drain camera” investigation to be carried out by a licensed plumber. Plumber’s reports must be prepared by plumbers who hold current license issued by the NSW Office of Fair Trading. Reports prepared by an unlicensed plumber or reports that do not contain the minimum content specified below will not be accepted.

Plumber’s Reports should include the following information:

1. A site address;
2. Author’s contact details and qualifications;
3. Statement detailing who (person/s, organisation, company) commissioned the plumber to prepare the report;
4. Date of inspection;
5. Methodology of investigation techniques used in the preparation of the report;
6. A copy of the property’s drainage diagram;
7. Details of age, type and depth of the existing pipes or drainage system;
8. Details of the damage alleged and point of entry of the tree roots. CCTV drain camera evidence must be included to show the damage and presence of tree roots within the pipes or drain. The evidence must conclusively show that significant damage has initially occurred as a direct result of the tree;
9. A discussion of alternative repair methods (including pipe modification, line redirection and relining or resleeving). Options for reparation that may permit retention of the tree/s must be discussed in the report; and
10. Site specific recommendations based on the observations made. An explanation of why options are recommended or not recommended must be included.