Application to Kirklees Council for the following works on two trees covered by TPO's;

1. Removal of Sycamore **TPO ID: 02/99/t5**
2. Crown Reduction of Horse Chestnut **TPO ID: 02/99/t4**

The Sycamore and Horse Chestnut trees are both situated at 3 Meadow View, Thongsbridge, Holmfirth, HD9 7SY



Fig 1. Map extract taken [Tree preservation orders | Kirklees Council]

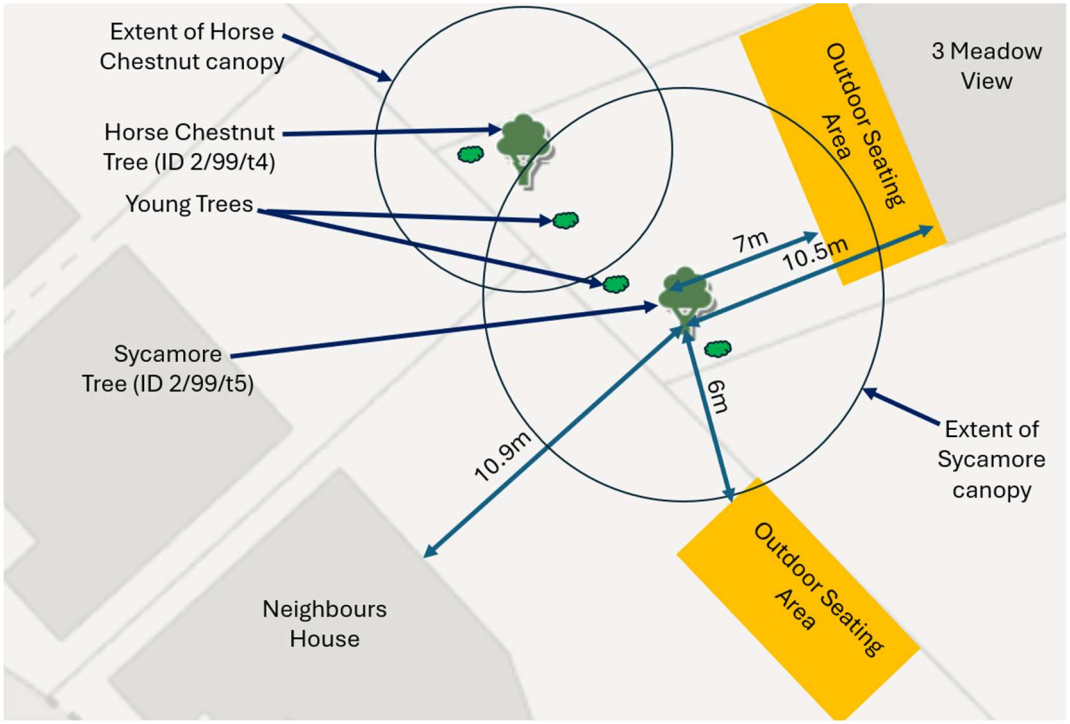


Fig 2. Plan of Sycamore tree (ID 2/99/t5) proximity to houses and outdoor seating areas

In preparation of this application I have sought the professional advice of Patrick Gibson, Lantra Professional Tree Inspector who is a member of the Holme Valley Arboriculture Association.

Sycamore (ID: 2/99/t5)

I am submitting an application for consent to fell a protected mature sycamore on safety grounds. The observed features detailed herein include fungal fruiting bodies identified as Dryad's saddle, cavities associated with old pruning wounds and a history of substantial branch failure, the latest of which was only a few days ago.

The Sycamore is in very close proximity to our house and our neighbours house (opposite) and has substantial branches extending out over garden patios, sheds and play areas (see figures 3 & 4). It is showing significant signs of distress on the main trunk / branches and has shed major branches, the most recent of which occurred during gusty/blustery conditions on the 4th September 2026 (see figures 5 to 8). According to the BBC weather app the winds were up to 40mph, which is light compared to many windy conditions experienced in this area.

A possible reason for the break is that the tree has Dryads Saddle on its trunk, making it structurally weak, see figure 9 & 10 . According to my neighbours who view the trunk from the side where the Dryads Saddle is, the fungus has been present for many years.

An article written by Chris Simpson FArborA in September 2020 Arboricultural Association - Blazing saddles that appears on the Abroriculture Associations website on Ceriporous Squamous (Dryads Saddle) provides some interesting insights;-

> *"Dryad's saddle appears to leave very little behind, at times resulting in open cavities or hollowed stems"*
>
> *"dryad's saddle creates such intense localised decay that structural failure is highly likely, eventually"*

The Sycamore tree has a number of hollows / cavities (see figures 11 - 13) along its main trunk measuring from approximately 15cm to 30cm in diameter. Following advice I measured the depth of two of the lower ones using a 2 foot (610mm) long rod.

This was carried out on the 22nd August 2026 with great care to avoid any internal damage and as soon as any resistance was felt the measurement was taken and the rod removed. As you can see from figures 14 & 15, one measured 300mm and one measured 540mm deep. It is possible these have been expanded by decay but how advanced the decay is along the branches and up the main trunk is difficult to determine, however the recent break is evidence of the weakness inherent in the structure of the tree.

The latest fallen branch is approximately 7m long with a diameter at the break end of approx. 200mm and it landed directly onto the patio area, damaging the furniture, fence and the decking itself. Thankfully no one was in the garden at the time, otherwise the incident could have been far worse.

I am reliably informed by the professional tree inspector that the dark staining on the break that can be seen in figure 7 is a clear sign of decay as is the lighter discoloration and the fine dark lines is where the tree is compartmentalizing the decay. The inspector also commented that there is a lot of epicormic growth on the branches which is usually associated with a stress reaction, therefore the tree attempts to throw out as much leaf as it can do to photosynthesize which and I quote "could be a reaction to the decay".

A much larger branch broke off during the night on the 10th March 2023 (see figures 16-18), under the weight of a light snowfall. This branch landed across 3 gardens as can be seen from the images and caused a greater degree of damage; once again it fell onto the decking area of our neighbours opposite. According to my source the fact that it is "throwing branches he would consider it compromised structurally".

Furthermore the Sycamore tree in question is one of a few local trees subject to TPO's. Previously an adjacent Sycamore tree in my neighbours garden (Meadow House) also on a TPO was removed in 2021 due to disease and the old stump was previously reported to be showing signs of Kretzmaria bloom which I understand could spread to our trees via the soil, water or possibly even air, thereby adding to concerns regarding the status of our Sycamore.

To mitigate the loss of the Sycamore, I propose planting a replacement tree in as close a proximity to the original tree as is practically possible during the first suitable planting season following removal. The replacement would be maintained and replaced if it failed to establish, in accordance with any condition imposed by the council.

This is in keeping with our ongoing management of the garden as we planted 8 young birch / beech trees approximately 17 years prior. Sadly only four of these remain but they are thriving at the time of writing this application.

Horse Chestnut (ID:2/99/t4)

The horse chestnut is also protected by a Tree Preservation Order and is believed to be of a broadly similar age. It currently exhibits reduced growth or apparent dieback in parts of its upper crown (see figures 19 to 22).

The horse chestnut is not proposed for removal, moreover this application is to seek consent for specified crown-management work intended to retain the tree safely and sustainably.

Specifically crown thin by removing no more than 20% of the live secondary and tertiary branch growth, distributed evenly throughout the crown, without removing primary scaffold branches or producing large pruning wounds. Remove dead branches over occupied areas but retain the natural crown outline.

The sycamore is proposed for removal because professional assessment has identified defects and an unacceptable risk that cannot adequately be managed through lesser work. The adjacent protected horse chestnut will be retained and appropriately managed. The four established younger trees will also be retained, protected during removal operations and allowed to develop, and a further replacement tree will be planted to mitigate the loss of the mature canopy.

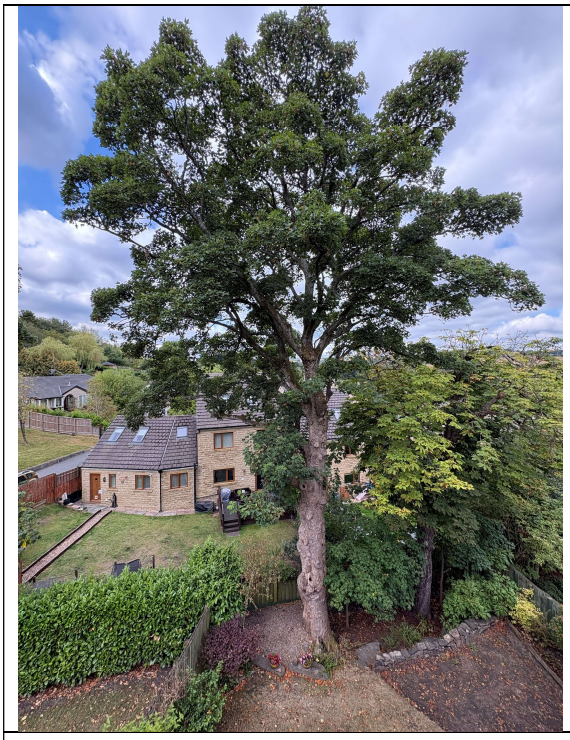


Fig 3. View of Sycamore looking towards neighbours house in Heys Gardens, estimated to be 20 to 25m tall.

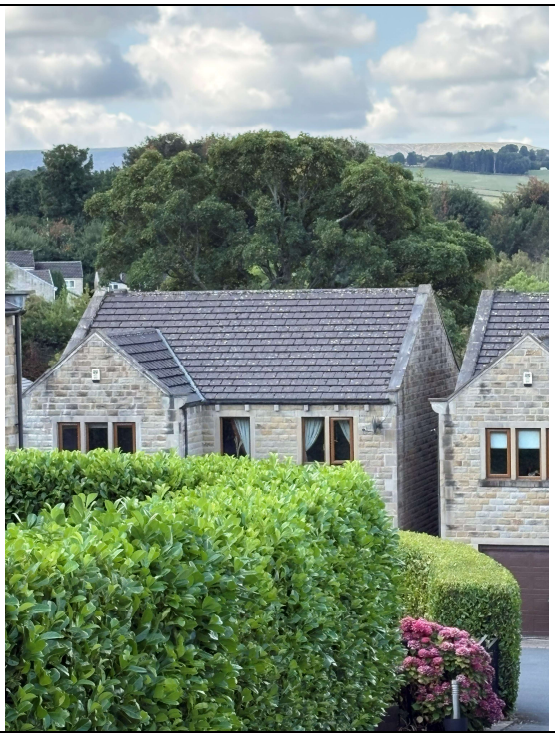


Fig 4. View of Sycamore looking towards our house from mid-way up Meadow View – the tree base 2 stories lower than the back of the house.

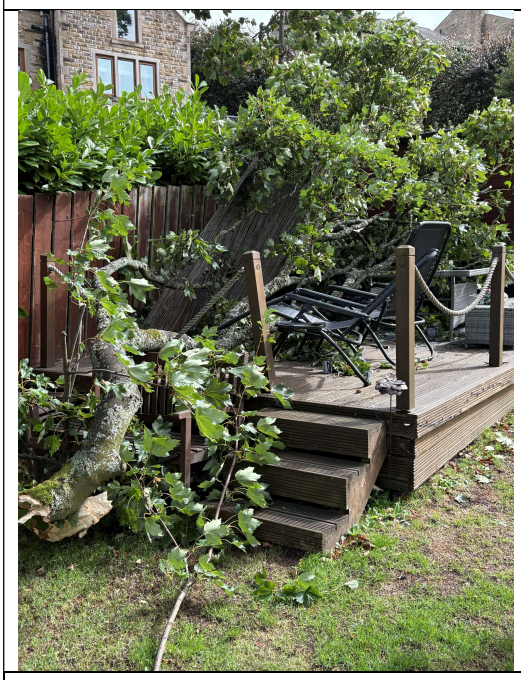


Fig 5. View of large branch from Sycamore in neighbours garden

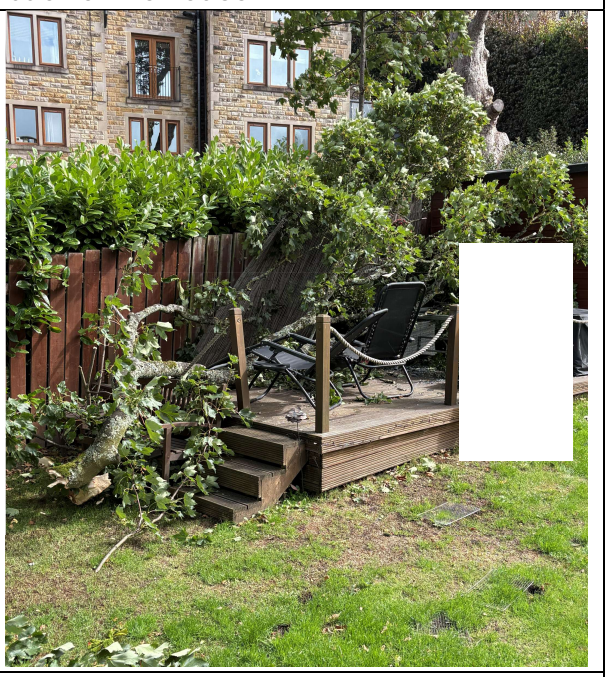


Fig 6. View of large branch from Sycamore in neighbours garden

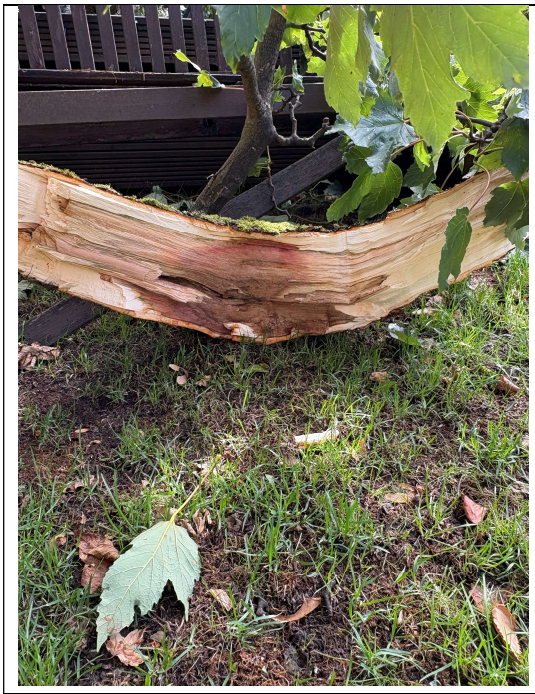


Fig 7. showing the wound end of the latest fallen branch



Fig 8. showing the break from the tree

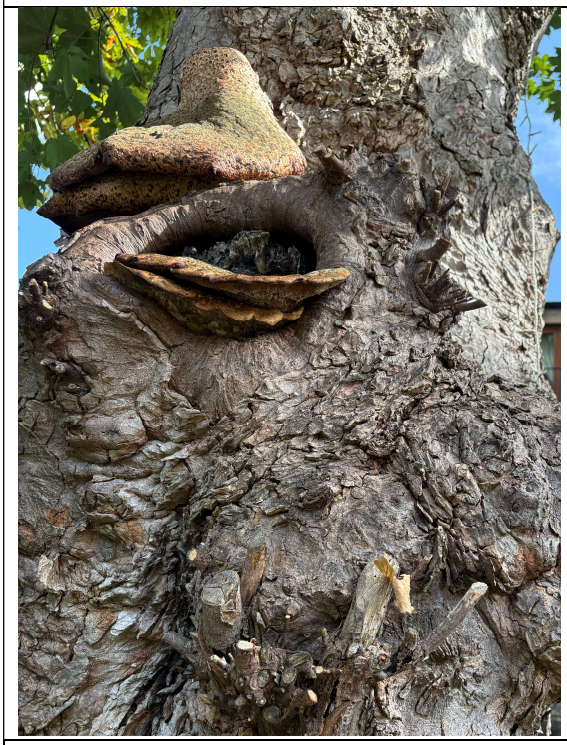


Fig 9. View of Sycamore showing Dryads Saddle in and on tree hollows



Fig 10. View of Sycamore showing Dryads Saddle in and on tree hollows

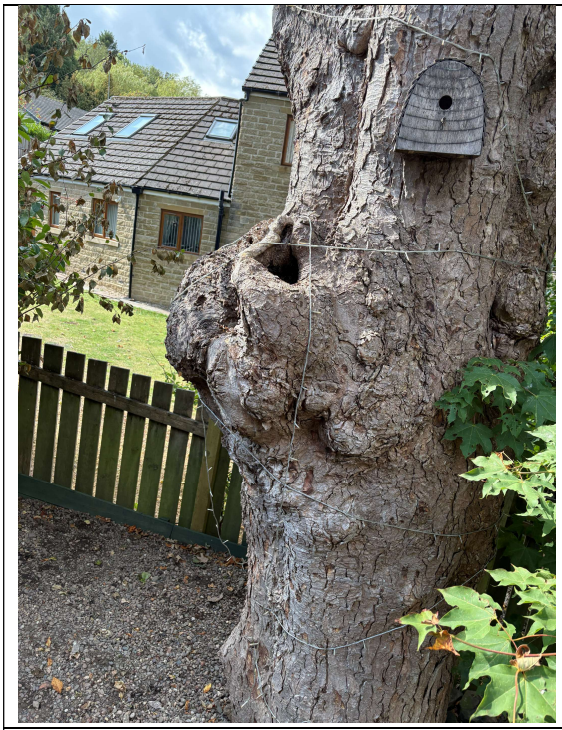


Fig 11. View of Sycamore showing tree hollows

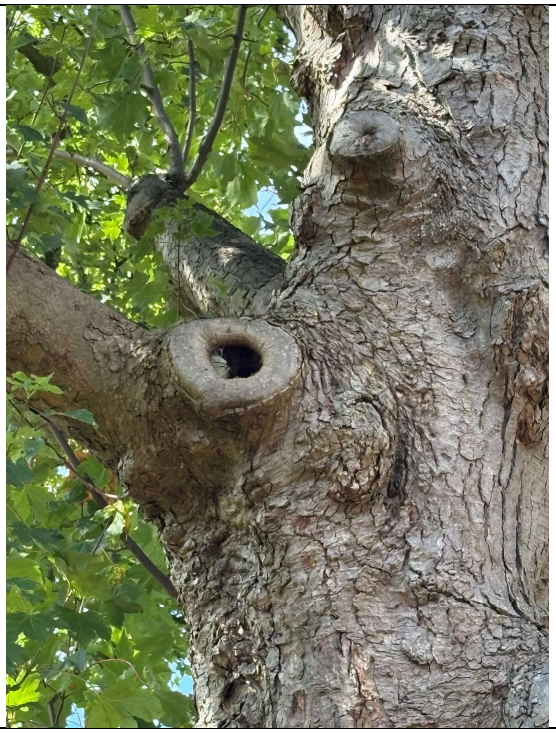


Fig 12. View of Sycamore showing tree hollows



Fig 13. View of Sycamore showing tree hollows



Fig 14. Depth of tree hollow 300mm (measuring rod length 610mm)



Fig 15. Depth of tree hollow 540mm (measuring rod length 610mm)



Fig 16. 10th March 2023 Large fallen branch onto two neighbours properties and over outdoor seating area of neighbour opposite



Fig 17. 10th March 2023 Large fallen branch onto two neighbours properties and over outdoor seating area of neighbour opposite



Fig 18. 10th March 2023 Large fallen branch viewed from neighbours property opposite

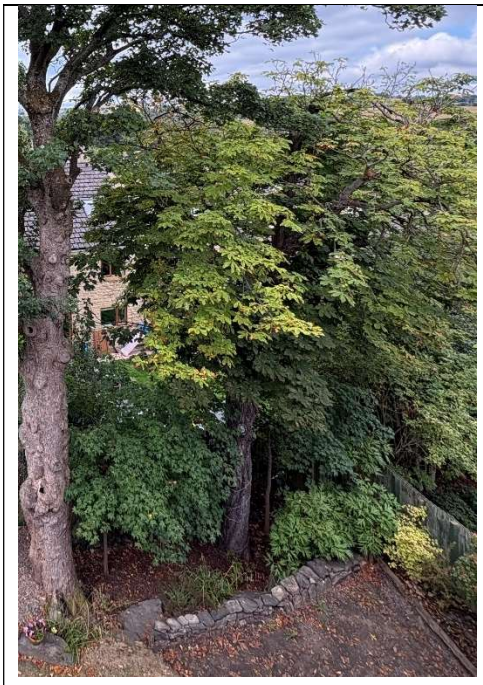


Fig 19. View of Horse Chestnut standing to the right of the Sycamore



Fig 20. View of Horse Chestnut showing dieback in the upper crown



Fig 21. View of Horse Chestnut tree looking from adjacent to the Sycamore



Fig 22. View of Horse Chestnut between neighbouring trees and Sycamore canopy