investment. If after investigation tree roots are found to have caused damage to buildings and fences, there are strategies that can be employed to remedy the situation:

- Tree removal is the first course of action but is not desirable for two reasons: Firstly, residents have said they would like more street trees not less in the LGA. Secondly, tree removal may reverse the water levels in the soil causing them to expand and lift shallow footings. This is especially apparent if the tree is older than the damaged building (Cameron, 1985) and in areas where there is more clay in the soil than in the Waverley LGA.

- Other strategies include underpinning the footing with an engineered concrete pad or protecting the footing by installing a root control barrier or by compacting the soil to 95 per cent near the house.

![Image 10: Concrete kerb, gutter and footpath replaced with bitumen to minimise damage to tree roots](image)

Council’s current Drain Blockage Policy - adopted in 2003 - governs policy and procedure in the event of claims by residents that Council tree roots are causing a blockage of drains on private property (see Appendix). As in all matters of public liability Council requires the property owner to prove Council liability. Clear procedures are outlined for progressing remedial work and for claiming the cost of such work from Council (if not carried out by Council staff).

Remedial action on existing street trees should be taken to anticipate conflicts with public and private property and personal injury. Trees that create public liability problems are generally either dangerous or potentially dangerous, may be developing weak limbs, are about to fruit or else are at the end of their Safe Useful Life Expectancy (SULE).

To anticipate such problems, Council’s Street Tree Database should anticipate street trees that are at the end of their SULE and/or are potentially dangerous. The database should be updated on an ongoing basis with reference made to the assessment criteria listed below.