

Contract Review

Date of Contract: March 09

Description of contract: Due to on going damage of tree root systems during utility workings in the area, we were requested by the contractor to assist the excavation process by utilising Vacuum Excavation techniques to expose the root system with out damage to enable the utility works to progress

Vac-Ex unit: Mod-Ex 5000 C

VE operatives: 2 no.

Comments: *Chairman, York Natural Environment Trust*

Vacuum Excavation in Tree Root Protection Zones

The York Natural Environment Trust recently had cause to complain about damage to roots of highway trees growing in grass verges in contravention of B.S 5837. This resulted from use of mechanical diggers.

Following our complaints to City of York Council, excavations switched to hand tool techniques but damage continued and a further complaint was made. Within a short time one of your Vac-Ex machines was mobilised, and the improvement was noticeable and immediate and I was able to photograph much of the operation.

The water main was exposed, together with the root systems of eighty years old mature lime trees, which remained intact, with minimal damage. It was then possible, with care that was usually forthcoming from the Utility Contractors, to work between the exposed roots to access and remake junctions on the water main, again with minimal damage to the roots. Moreover, pits that were to be open for more than a short time were sheeted over by your team, to prevent desiccation or freezing of the exposed roots, something that happens all too quickly, especially in warm, windy weather or frosty conditions. This was a nice piece of attention to detail that showed your team knew why they were doing what they were doing.

With mechanical excavation, root damage is unavoidable and often serious. But even the most careful hand tool excavation is likely also to cause tree root damage because roots are usually located only when the spade hits or scrapes them. The damage is then already done. With your Vac-Ex machine, there was no such problem. Exposed roots were left intact and given protection against desiccation by your team until the main contractor was ready to work on the pit in question.

*Keep up the good work
Chairman, York Natural Environment Trust.*

VACUUM EXCAVATION

by John Mee Construction Ltd

Photos:

