
TO:	Jane O’Dea, Associate Senior Planner
FROM:	Luke McKinlay, Landscape Architect
DATE:	07-June-2024
SUBJECT	LUC-2024-171- 27 King Street- LA comments

Kia ora Jane,

This memo is in response to your request for comment on the above application to remove a scheduled tree at 27 King Street (T666 - Pin Oak - *Quercus palustris*).

The original STEM assessment, which was conducted in 2001, resulted in a total score of 156. This score is above the required 145 threshold for inclusion on the schedule.

I have undertaken a site visit to the area surrounding the subject tree to determine the likely effect of the proposed removal of T666 on existing visual and streetscape amenity values and to reassess the existing STEM evaluation. Photographs taken at the time of the site visit are appended to this memo as Attachment 1. Weather conditions during the site visit were slighting overcast, however, there was sufficient visibility to conduct the STEM assessment.

The Proposal

The applicants request to remove the scheduled tree, T666. The reasons for the tree’s proposed removal provided in the application are:

- Safety concerns related to the tree potentially losing a limb and falling on the house;
- Concerns regarding the impact of the tree’s root system on the foundations of the house and plumbing;
- Potential damage to powerlines; and
- Shading;

Site Context

King Street is a residential street in Mosgiel. The subject site is located on the corner of King and Bruce Streets. The surrounding area is zoned General Residential 2 and contains a mixture of stand-alone dwellings and blocks of single-storey flats. There are grass berms on both sides of the street that contain a variety of street trees, including *Prunus* Sp., *Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Acer japonicum* and *Acer capillipes*. Street trees on the eastern side of the street have been pruned beneath overhead powerlines. Surrounding front yards include a mix of planted areas, lawns, vehicle driveways and parking areas. Street-front boundaries are defined by either hedges, mixed informal amenity planting and/or fencing.

The subject tree is located behind a hedge on the King Street boundary of this property, to the northwest of the dwelling.

STEM Assessment

There are three broad evaluation categories to a STEM report – condition (health), amenity (community benefit) and notable evaluation features. This memo considers amenity related matters only. There are no notable evaluation features identified for this tree.

The 2001 council STEM assessment of T666 resulted in a total amenity ‘score’ of 75. It is considered that this amenity evaluation remains largely unchanged.

My re-evaluation of the 2001 STEM is as follows:

- Stature: The height of T666 has been measured at 20m (15 points).
- Visibility: T666 is visible from a distance of at least 1km. Even at this time of year, when this tree is not in leaf, it is visible from Kinmont, which is greater than 1km from the site (refer Appendix 1, figure 4) (9 points).
- Proximity: While T666 dominates several smaller neighbouring trees, including nearby street trees, it is reasonable to assess that this is not a solitary tree, but part of a small cluster - Group 3+ (21 points).
- Role: This criterion assesses a tree or trees’ value in a setting or as part of a composition. It is considered that T666 makes an important contribution to the amenity of the surrounding area, both at the streetscape level and as part of the treescape associated with wider Mosgiel. It is noted that recent multiunit development in parts of Mosgiel zoned GR2 has resulted in the removal of several large trees (unscheduled). As such, there has been a decline in the tree canopy cover of this area. In this context, T666 contributes to the remaining larger tree canopy cover within this part of residential Mosgiel. Due to its stature and location near the street front boundary, T666 is a primary focal feature of the immediate surrounding streetscape. It is a prominent natural feature and acts as a counterpoint to the surrounding built environment. (Important: 15 points).
- Climate: The value of large trees in the urban environment is well established. Both at a micro climatic scale (the benefits of shade, shelter) and at a wider city-scale (air purification, carbon sequestration, stormwater absorption) trees such as T666 have multiple climatic benefits. Even if only considered at a micro climatic level, the impact of a large deciduous tree such as T666 is important (Important: 15 points).

Combined STEM amenity subtotal: **75**

This reassessment confirms that T666 retains amenity values that support its place on the scheduled tree register.

In general, it is considered that T666 is a prominent natural feature that is visible from both surrounding streetscape locations and from more distant hillside locations that overlook Mosgiel, such as Kinmont. Due to its stature and proximity to the street front boundary, T666 is a primary focal feature of the immediate surrounding area. As noted in the report, prepared by consultant arborist, Mark Roberts, this tree is a “near specimen example of the species” and has good vigour and vitality.

It is considered that the loss of this distinctive and prominent tree would have moderate-high adverse effects on existing amenity values.

Kā mihi,

Luke McKinlay
Landscape Architect

Attachment 1: Site Photographs



Figure 1. View towards T666 from south of the site on King Street.



Figure 2. View towards T666 from north of the site on King Street



Figure 3. Close proximity view of T666.



Figure 1: View towards T666 from south of the site on Fairmile Drive, Kinmont (1.38km from the site). Other nearby scheduled trees identified for reference