

Memorandum

TO: Amy Young, Planner

FROM: Barry Knox, Senior Landscape Architect

DATE: 13th September 2017

SUBJECT: **LUC-2017-372. APPLICATION FOR REMOVAL OF SCHEDULED TREE T790 NEAR 8 MICHIE STREET. COMMENT FROM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.**

This memorandum is in response to a request for comment on the application to remove a scheduled tree, T790 (NZ Beech), protected in Schedule 25.3 of the Dunedin City District Plan. The tree was also carried over to the Second Generation Plan (2GP) Significant Tree Schedule.

The original STEM assessment was made in 2001 and the trees scored 150. The required "pass" total is 147.

I completed a site visit on 11 September 2017 and undertook the "Amenity Evaluation" part of the STEM. Photographs taken at this time are attached as Appendix 2.

Background

There was recent correspondence on the exact location of T790. The tree is located very close to the boundary between 8 Michie Street and the adjoining road reserve, and a survey plan was completed which shows that the tree is located within the reserve.

Prior to this a Second Generation Plan (2GP) audit of all trees on Schedule 25.3 was completed, and T790 was recommended for carry over to the 2GP Schedule in 2013. In terms of the location, when it had been identified late in 2016 that the tree is outside 8 Michie Street, it was recommended that the 2GP map should be altered to reflect this new information.

For assessment of resource consent applications for removal of significant trees an updated STEM assessment is usually completed by the in-house landscape architect and (in the last year or so), by a consultant arborist. An arborist usually looks at the "Condition Evaluation" section of the revised STEM assessment, but in this case my understanding is that this has not been completed. However, I note that the application has reviewed the current STEM assessment and also includes reports on the condition of T790 from two consultant arborists, Elena O'Neill and Peter Waymouth, so there is considerable recent arboricultural information to draw on.

General Comment

With STEM reports there are two broad assessment categories – arboricultural ("Condition") and "Amenity" – and my role for applications to remove a scheduled tree or group of trees is to comment on the amenity related matters.

The tree's amenity values have two components – the wider community effects, and site specific, local effects.

Overall, it is my opinion that this tree retains particular wider community amenity values which make it a useful addition to the Michie Street streetscape, and these values do not appear to me to have diminished since the original STEM assessment was completed. However, as the AEE outlines in a thorough manner, there are very site localised factors which diminish the overall amenity benefits.

The STEM assessment is mainly designed to assess the wider holistic aspects of tree values, and these values tend to overshadow to some extent the very localised benefits/disadvantages.

From a broader amenity perspective, I consider the tree continues to have merit for inclusion on Schedule 25.3. However, I acknowledge the very real adverse amenity issues for the specific site on which it is located, and it is clear these have increased since the original STEM assessment was completed. As well, I have only completed the part of the STEM which my expertise covers, and I have retained the arboricultural values as originally assessed.

With this approach, the "mark" obtained in my updated STEM is 144, which, assuming no increase in the Condition Evaluation part of the assessment, would result in insufficient points to warrant continued inclusion on the Schedule. The partially updated STEM assessment is attached as Appendix 1.

Wider Community Amenity Benefits

This is a large, significant tree in this urban location. It adds a "softening" visual effect for the local community and provides a natural character element which offsets the less natural impact of built dwellings along Michie Street.

There would be a moderate reduction in the value of community visual amenity if the tree were to be removed. There are other smaller nearby mature trees which assist with providing a "softening" natural impact, and the removal of the beech tree would probably initially be noticed as a negative impact. In time, however, other nearby vegetation would continue to assist with maintaining the natural character. I note that the general area around the subject property is planted with numerous trees and shrubs and there is a moderate to high degree of natural character.

Localised Amenity Effects

T790 in many respects has outgrown the site space it occupies, and its scale is such that it now encroaches too close to the nearby dwelling. There are a number of localised adverse amenity aspects outlined in the application which do not specifically form part of the STEM assessment, but which need to be considered as part of any hearing to consider removing a tree from the schedule.

Concluding Comments

This is still an impressive tree which from a broad neighbourhood perspective improves and enhances the natural character and amenity value of the surrounding urban area. However, with a reassessment of the "Amenity Evaluation" part of the STEM, the new total is just 144, below the accepted pass mark for inclusion on the schedule.

When the "Condition Evaluation" (arboricultural) part of the STEM is reassessed, it seems likely that T790 would either not pass, or be "on the cusp".

If the outcome of a hearing process were to be the removal of T790 from Schedule 25.3, from an amenity perspective this would be able to be partially compensated by other existing nearby vegetation along Michie Street, and within the subject property.

Barry Knox
Landscape Architect

Appendix 1. Updated "Amenity Evaluation" STEM Assessment for T790**STANDARD TREE
EVALUATION FORM**

Reassessment of T790

Note: Condition Evaluation not changed from original

Date	11/9/17					
Tree	NZ Beech	Nothofagus	menziesii			
Address	8 Michie	Street				
Height (m) 3-8	Radius		Diameter (mm) @			
CONDITION EVALUATION						
Points	3	9	15	21	27	Score
Form	Poor	Moderate	Good	Very Good	Specimen	9
Occurrence	Predominant	Common	Infrequent	Rare	Very Rare	15
Vigour & Vitality	Poor	Some	Good	Very Good	Excellent	15
Function	Minor	Useful	Important	Significant	Major	15
Age (Yr)	10 Yrs+	20 Yrs +	40 Yrs +	80 Yrs +	100 Yrs+	21
Subtotal						75
AMENITY EVALUATION						
Points	3	9	15	21	27	
Stature (m)	3-8	9-14	15-20	21-26	27+	15
Visibility (km)	0.5	1.0	2.0	4.0	8.0	9
Proximity	Forest	Parkland	Group 10+	Group 3+	Solitary	21
Role	Minor	Moderate	Important	Significant	Major	15
Climate	Minor	Moderate	Important	Significant	Major	9
Subtotal						69
NOTABLE EVALUATION						
Recognition	Local	District	Regional	National	International	Score
Points	3	9	15	21	27	
Stature						
Feature						
Form						
Historic						
Age 100+						
Association						
Commemoration						
Remnant						
Relict						
Scientific						
Source						
Rarity						
Endangered						
Subtotal						
Total						144

Notes:

- The "Condition Evaluation" remains the same as the original, as this updated STEM has not incorporated any new assessment by an arborist.
- Specifically, the tree is adjudged to have a reduced Amenity value with a STEM re-assessment, as the "Proximity" value was changed from "Solitary" to "Group 3+" (27 to 21).

Amenity Evaluation – Barry Knox

Horticultural assessment – (Remains as for the original STEM. New assessment not undertaken)

Landscape Architect:
Barry Knox

Appendix 2. Photographs of "T907 Taken on 11 September 2017.



Photo 1. View from Michie Street towards the south with T907 in the middle distance. Other vegetation is now in the general vicinity.



Photo 2. View from Michie Street towards the north east with T907 in middle distance.



Photo 3. View within the property towards the north, showing the trunk and the general proximity to the dwelling.



Photo 4. View within the property towards the north – main branches.