

APPENDIX 3: COUNCIL OFFICER EVIDENCE

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ROBERTS
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May 11, 2018

RE: LUC-2018-208 Application to remove significant tree T854

Amy Young
Planner, City Planning
Dunedin City Council
P O Box 5045,
Dunedin 9058

Dear Amy,

As per your May 2, email request, I have conducted a site visit to number 53 Nichols Road Momona, to inspect significant tree T854 listed on Schedule 25.3 as a Monkey Puzzle (*Araucaria araucana*). The purpose of the visit was to assess the condition of the tree, specifically in relation Application LUC-2018-201 [to remove a significant tree T854 Monkey puzzle].

My report is as follows.

Site Address:	53 Nichols Road Momona [Property No: 5121776]
Client:	Amy Young, Planner, City Planning. Dunedin City Council
The Proposal:	Assess tree T854 in relation Application LUC-2018-201
Assessment date:	May 11, 2018

1 Arboricultural condition assessment and observations

- 1.1 The tree was visually inspected from ground level on the morning of May 11, 2018. The inspection took place from outside the property and the weather was clear and calm at the time of the visit.
- 1.2 The tree sits approximately 7 meters inside the eastern boundary of number 53 Nichols Road, and approximately 16 meters from number 55 Nichols Road [images one and two]
- 1.3 In general, at the time of the assessment, the tree looked to be in good health and have vitality within the normal range for the species and age.
- 1.4 I estimated the tree to be approximately 25 meters tall, with approximately 16 meters of 'clear' trunk [image three].
- 1.5 The species naturally loose lower branches, and the clear trunk appeared to be as a result of natural process more so than as a result of pruning activities
- 1.6 The trees had good trunk taper and root flare, and the root plate appeared to be stable.
- 1.7 The tree exhibits a natural form for its age, and the tree as is a near specimen example of the species
- 1.8 Overall, the tree appeared to free from obvious defects that suggest imminent failure.

- 1.9 *Araucaria araucana* are not native to the area and for the tree to be the size that it is would suggest that it is one of the original introduced plantings. The tree is possibly associated with Momona School (established in 1899) or connected to one of the farms in the Henley Co-operative Dairy Company which was operating in the area from about 1915.
 - 1.10 At the time of the assessment, the buildings and structures on number 53 Nichols Road were being removed and an excavator was on site removing what appeared to be foundations. There was a temporary fence erected around the tree, sitting roughly under the dripline [image three]. There was no sign of excavation or demolition activities taking place within the Tree Protection Zone [the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) for individual trees is calculated based on trunk diameter (DBH), measured at 1.4 metres up from ground level. The radius of the TPZ is calculated by multiplying the tree's DBH by 12 and is measured as a radius from the centre of the trunk at ground level].
- 2 Assessment Matters in the operative plan for the tree 15.6.1 Effect of Modification
- 2.1 The health and quality of the tree;
 - 2.1.1 At the time of the assessment the health and quality of the tree were exceptional
 - 2.2 The effect of any proposed pruning, trimming or other modification to the tree.
 - 2.2.1 The proposed effect of removing the tree would be terminal (the tree would no longer exist)
- 3 Assessment Matters in the operative plan for the tree; 15.6.2 Reasons and Alternatives
- 3.1 Reasons for carrying out such proposed work as provided by the applicant;
 - 3.1.1 1) Health and Safety. *a) The tree is very old and contains many dead branches, which along with cones and seeds, regularly drop from the tree. These are falling 15-20 meters and are a danger to anyone under that tree...*
 - i) The tree looked to be in good health and have vitality within the normal range for the species and age. I saw nothing to suggest that the tree's age was detrimentally affecting the health, structural integrity or stability of the tree
 - ii) Dead branches and cones can be removed/pruned from the from the tree. If the dead branches and cones were removed from the tree the danger associated with them falling would also be removed.
 - 3.1.2 1) Health and Safety. *b) ... [loss of shelter]... has left the monkey puzzle tree more exposed and hence at risk from strong winds. ... it has the potential to fall on passing traffic or fall back onto the new house.*
 - i) The tree is effectively a free-standing tree, it stands approximately 70 meters from the sheltering trees to the west and 20 meters from the sheltering trees to the north. The shelter provided by the trees 70 meters away to the west would have been minimal, and because the tree extends above the height of the shelter to the north there is effectively no shelter provided by those trees.
 - ii) Because the tree is effectively a free-standing tree it has been exposed to wind and has adapted to the conditions that it grows in. I saw nothing to suggest that the tree's exposure was detrimentally affecting the health, structural integrity or stability of the tree
 - iii) Nichols Road is a rural low-volume road, the chances of the tree falling and simultaneously impacting passing traffic are low
 - iv) Property No: 5121776 [53 Nichols Road Momona] is a section approximately 70X50, meters if the new house was constructed

outside the fall distance of the tree (i.e. further away from the tree that the tree is tall) then the chances of the tree falling and impacting the new house would be extremely low.

3.1.3 1) Health and Safety. *c) ... we do not want the risk of this tree falling on our new house or on us, or on our...*

- i) Property No: 5121776 [53 Nichols Road Momona] is a section approximately 70X50 meters if the new house was constructed outside the fall distance of the tree (i.e. further away from the tree that the tree is tall) then the chances of the tree falling and impacting the new house would be extremely low.
- ii) I saw nothing to suggest that the tree's age or exposure to the wind was detrimentally affecting the health, structural integrity or stability of the tree
- iii) Dead branches and cones can be removed/pruned from the from the tree. If the dead branches and cones were removed from the tree the danger associated with them falling would also be removed

3.1.4 2) Fit for purpose. *The tree has lost all of its lower branches and foliage and is no longer representative of a 'true to form; Monkey Puzzle tree.*

- i) The tree exhibits typical form for its age and is a near specimen example of the species. The image provided by the applicant on page 12 of the application is of a juvenile tree. As the tree matures lower branches are naturally lost and trunk takes on a typically clear appearance.

3.1.5 3) Safeguarding our investment. *... The size of the section and positioning of other existing buildings does not allow us to move the house, far enough, away from this tree to make it safe if the tree falls.*

- i) At the time of the site inspection, there were no existing buildings on the site.
- ii) Property No: 5121776 [53 Nichols Road Momona] is a section approximately 70X50 meters if the new house was constructed outside the fall distance of the tree then the chances of the tree falling and impacting the new house would be extremely low
- iii) I saw nothing to suggest that the tree's age or exposure to the wind was detrimentally affecting the health, structural integrity or stability of the tree

3.2 Reasons for carrying out such proposed work as provided by the applicant; Assessment of Effects on Environmental (AEE)

3.2.1 a) *Our proposal will enhance the environment as the house will be much more pleasant to look at...*

- i) At the time of the site inspection there were no existing buildings on the site therefore I am unable to comment on the look of the new or existing house or their environmental attributes

3.2.2 b) *... people do not get to appreciate the tree as they drive past...*

- i) If the tree is removed as per the application, then the tree will no longer be there for people to appreciate as they drive past. I am unsure how to comment on this point

3.2.3 c) *We intend professionally landscaping our new house to make it aesthetically pleasing and improve the environment, for us as land owners, but also for our neighbours and the general public.*

- i) I was not provided with any detail on the intended landscaping, therefore I am unable to comment on the environmental attributes of the intended landscaping. There is comment by the applicant re '*planting native trees and tussocks to beautify our new house*', elsewhere in the application. This comment does not seem to be directly addressing the loss of vertical habitat provided by the T854. At the time of the site visit, most of the planting visible on Google earth images [Image 2] had been removed.

3.2.4 d) *Removing the tree will make for a safer environment for both road users (many people walk this road) and for our family. Currently the tree is dangerous... This tree has a very high nuisance factor and removing it will improve the environment.*

- i) Nichols Road is a rural low-volume road, the chances of the tree falling and simultaneously impacting passing traffic vehicle or foot are low
- ii) I saw nothing to suggest that the tree's age or exposure to the wind was detrimentally affecting the health, structural integrity or stability of the tree. If the dead branches and cones were removed from the tree the danger associated with them falling would also be removed.
- iii) I am unable to comment on the '*nuisance factor*' - and the comment that removing the tree will '*improve the environment*' seems to be a personal opinion. '

3.2.5 e) *The Monkey Puzzle is very old and seems to be slowly dying... Removing an old unsightly tree and planting a new species will enhance the general environment*

- i) The tree looked to be in good health and have vitality within the normal range for the species and age. I saw nothing to suggest that the tree's age was detrimentally affecting the health, structural integrity or stability of the tree.
- ii) I am unable to comment on how '*Removing an old unsightly tree and planting a new species will enhance the general environment*' as there is no information on the size, type and number of new species that are to be planted.

3.2.6 f) *The trunk is very close to the existing driveway... this area is where we would like to place our new driveway... continual falling debris from the tree will prevent us from placing the new driveway in this position...*

- i) The existing driveway is not under the dripline of the tree (images two and four), therefore the area currently occupied by the existing driveway could be used for a new driveway.
- ii) If the dead branches and cones were removed from the tree the danger associated with them falling would also be removed.

3.3 The impact of the proposed work upon the amenities of the locality, and the values of the tree. 15.6.3 Amenity Values

3.3.1 *Araucaria araucana* are not native to the area and for the tree to be the size that it is would suggest that it is one of the original introduced plantings. It is possible there is an historic importance or community connection with this tree. The removal of the tree could result in a loss of a connection with the local community and/or history associated with the area.

- 3.3.2 The tree exhibits typical form for its age and is a near specimen example of the species.

I did not conduct an amenity evaluation of the tree using the Standard Tree Evaluation Method (STEM) which the Dunedin City Council use. I am confident that the tree would score very highly under the Condition and Amenity Evaluation sections and if an historic connection could be established then the tree would gain Notable Evaluation points as well.

4 Conclusion and summary

- 4.1 I saw nothing to suggest that the tree's age or exposure was detrimentally affecting the health, structural integrity or stability of the tree
- 4.2 The health and safety concerns raised by the applicant can be addressed by pruning and relocation of the proposed dwelling before construction begins.
- 4.3 In my opinion the six reasons for removing the tree given by the applicant are not sufficient to have the tree felled and removed from the Dunedin City District Plan
- 4.4 In my opinion the Assessment of Environmental Effects, presented as Assessment of Effects on Environmental by the applicant do not adequately address the effect that removal of the tree will have on; land, water, flora and fauna, people, infrastructure, traffic and parking.
- 4.5 In my opinion there is insufficient mitigation or potential remedy options given by the applicant to enable consideration for removing this tree.
- 4.6 In my opinion I do not believe that the Dunedin City Council should grant Philip and Heather Wilson [the applicant] consent to remove significant tree T854

As per your request, I have provided a relatively concise report. If you require an explanation of any of the recommendations provided, or documentary evidence to support any of the content in this report please do not hesitate to ask.

Comments in relation to the condition of this tree only considered known targets and visible or detectable tree conditions at the time of the inspection.

Yours sincerely



Mark Roberts
Roberts Consulting Ltd

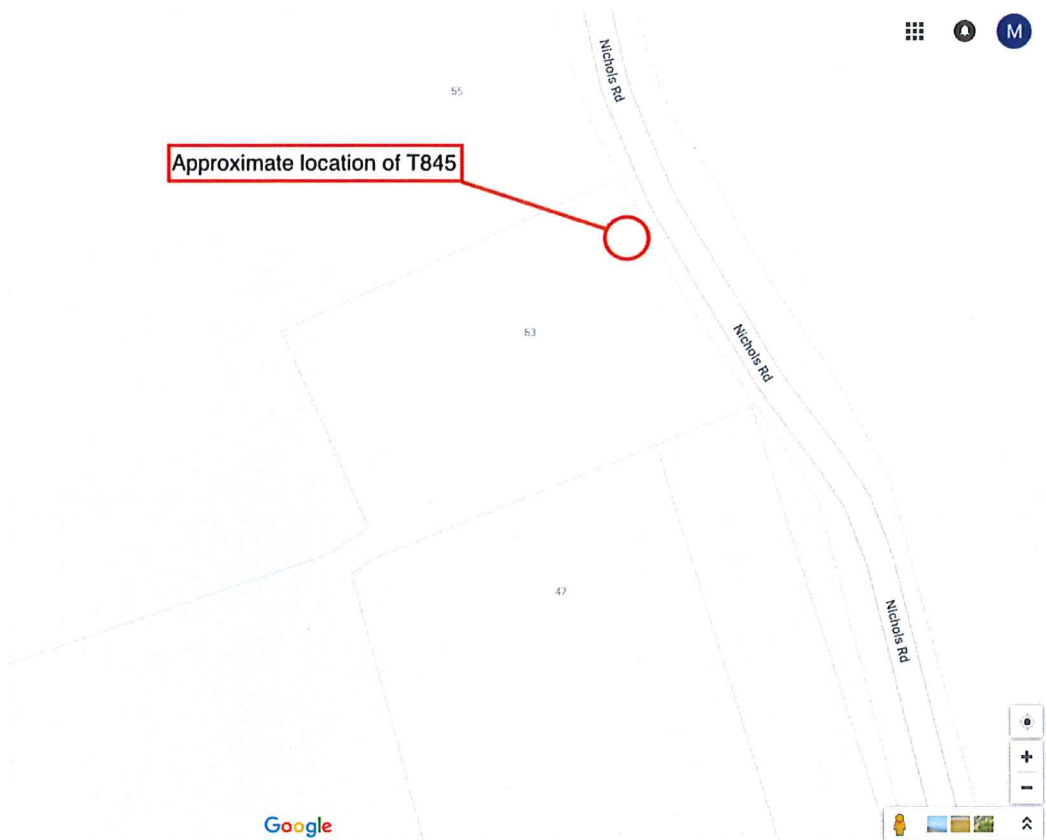


Image one: Google Maps image showing the approximate location of T845



Image two: Google Earth image showing the approximate location of T845 and the houses, driveway, structures and vegetation on number 53 Nichols Road before the May 11, 2018 site visit



Image three: Image of T854 showing the form of the tree, the 'clear' trunk and the fencing under the drip line



Image four: Image of T854 showing the form of the tree and location of the existing driveway

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