
TO:	Caleb Park, Planner
FROM:	Luke McKinlay, Landscape Architect
DATE:	07-December-2021
SUBJECT	Land Use Consent – Removal of Scheduled Tree T499 LUC-2021-665 - 110 Gladstone Road Nth Mosgiel. LA Comment

Hi Caleb,

The following is in response to your request for comment on the above application for the removal of the Schedule Tree T499 (*Sequoiadendron giganteum* – Wellingtonia) at 110 Gladstone Road North. As you note, the applicant's request to remove the tree does not appear to relate to the health of the tree but is due to their wish to place a garage/hobby room in its location, public and personal safety concerns, shading issues, and potential adverse effects of the growth of the tree on infrastructure.

Planning Matters

Under the Proposed 2GP – the proposal is assessed a **non-complying activity**.

Given that the provisions for the removal of scheduled trees under the Proposed 2GP are under appeal, the proposal will also be a **discretionary activity** under Rule 15.5.1 of the Operative District Plan.

The subject *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (Wellingtonia) is listed as Tree No 1483 in the Operative District Plan (ODP) and T499 in Appendix A1.3 of the Proposed District Plan (2GP).

The original STEM assessment, which was made in 2001, resulted in an overall score of 174, which is well above the required 147 "pass" total for inclusion on the schedule. The amenity evaluation section and the condition evaluation section received the same subtotal of 87 points. The highest score was attributed to its height in the 'stature' category (>27m - 27 points)

Under the Operative District Plan (ODP), the proposal is a restricted discretionary activity pursuant to Rule 15.5.1(i). As such, council are to have regard to the health and quality of the tree, the reason for the proposed work, any alternatives to its removal and the impact of the removal upon the amenity of the locality and values of the trees.

Under the Proposed District Plan (2GP), the proposal is a non-complying activity pursuant of Rule 7.3.2(3), which seeks to avoid the removal of scheduled trees unless:

- I. There is a significant risk to personal/public safety or a risk to personal safety that is required to be managed under health and safety legislation
- II. The tree poses a substantial risk to a scheduled heritage building or structure
- III. There is moderate to significant risk to buildings
- IV. The removal of the tree is necessary to avoid significant adverse effects on existing infrastructure and network utilities, or
- V. The removal of the tree will result in significant positive effects in respect of the efficient use of land (Policy 7.2.1.2)

Background

I am aware of the history of the tree/site, including the consent recently granted to undertake works within the root protection zone (LUC 2021-231).

Council Arborist Report

Council's consultant arborist, Mark Roberts, has reviewed the proposal, in the context of the provisions of both the Operative District plan and the 2GP. He reaches the following conclusions regarding the proposed tree removal:

- i. is not required as emergency work to safeguard life or property (15.5.1 of the Operative District Plan),*
- ii. is not required because the tree is dead or in terminal decline (proposed District Plan - Policy 7.2.1.1)*
- iii. is not required because the tree poses significant risk to personal/public safety or property (proposed District Plan - Policy 7.2.1.2)*

In conclusion, he is *"unable to recommend support of application LUC-2021-665 on arboricultural grounds or based on health and safety concerns"*.

Comments

These comments are restricted to considering broader amenity values associated with T499. It is acknowledged that the planner must weigh the amenity values of this tree and any potential adverse effects of tree removal alongside issues of health and safety and effects on property.

I undertook a site visit to the area surrounding the subject tree on 6 December 2021 to determine the likely effect of the proposed removal of this Wellingtonia on existing visual and landscape amenity values and reassess the STEM score. Photographs of the tree are appended to this report as Attachment 1.

Gladstone Road North is in south-eastern Mosgiel. It connects Quarry Road to Puddle Alley, Wingatui. The subject site and neighbouring dwellings on the southern side of Gladstone Road North are zoned Low Density Residential. The land directly opposite the site is zoned rural and is currently in pasture. Residential development occupies the land between Hagart-Alexander Drive and Gladstone Road North, to the west of the site. The Main South Railway Line runs parallel to Gladstone Road North on its northern side.

The tree is approximately 41m high and has a spread of approximately 10m. It is located in the front yard of 110 Gladstone Road North, to the northwest of the applicant's dwelling. Due to its stature and close proximity to the street, T499 is a focal feature of the streetscape from both the western and eastern approaches to the site on Gladstone Road North.

Three neighbouring Wellingtonia are located immediately to the east of the site, which are also on the DCC tree schedule (T493, T500 and T501). Together, these four large, columnar trees form a prominent natural edge to this residential area at the foot of the Chain Hills.

It is noted that several trees that were located near T499 on the applicant's property have been removed since the initial STEM evaluation. Shading caused by these trees has affected the development of foliage on the northern side of T499. Following the removal of these neighbouring trees it is noticeable that parts of the lower canopy are now somewhat asymmetrical. The very tip of

the tree also has some reduced foliage. Whilst these areas of reduced foliage reduce the overall form/symmetry of the tree to a degree, it is considered that, on balance, T499 continues to have a positive influence on the amenity of the surrounding area. Due to the height and age of T499, it is likely that it has become a well-known and highly prominent natural landmark within this neighbourhood. It continues to form a strong natural counterpoint to nearby residential development.

STEM Assessment

There are two broad assessment categories to a STEM report – condition (health) and amenity (community benefit). My role in the assessment of applications to remove a scheduled tree, is to consider the amenity section of the STEM assessment.

The 2001 council STEM assessment of T499, resulted in a total amenity ‘score’ of 87.

It is considered that this assessment is still valid. Re-evaluation of the 2001 STEM, results in the same total of 87 points for the amenity section:

- Stature: 27+ (27 points)
- Visibility: 1km (9 points)
- Proximity: Group 3+ (21 points)
- Role: Important (15 points)
- Climate: Important (15 points)

Proposed Mitigation

It is considered that the proposed replacement planting of smaller native tree and shrubs would be insufficient to maintain amenity values provided by T499. It is acknowledged that it is very difficult to mitigate for the loss of such a large, prominent tree, however, its replacement with a selection of shrubs/small trees appears of insufficient scale to compensate for the loss of T499.

Concluding Comments

It is considered that T499 retains the amenity values as evaluated within the STEM assessment system, which resulted in its inclusion on the scheduled tree register and it should have on-going protection.

Regards,

Luke McKinlay
Landscape Architect

CITY PLANNING

Appendix 1: Site Photographs

Figure 1: View of T499 from opposite side of Gladstone Road North



Figure 2: View towards T499 from west of the site.



Figure 3: Neighbouring Wellingtonia trees



Figure 4: View towards T499 from eastern edge of site.