APPENDIX 3:
COUNCIL OFFICER EVIDENCE

From: mark@robertsconsulting.co.nz
To: Campbell Thomson; Robert Buxton
Cc: munrosteve61@gmail.com
Subject: Re: LUC-2020-524 - Application - 61 Wallace Street.pdf
Date: Wednesday, 18 November 2020 11:15:27 AM
Attachments: PastedGraphic-6.png
IMG_T1175.jpeg
IMG_T1176.jpeg

Hi Campbell

I visited 61 Wallace Street on November 13, I met with Mr Munro and assessed scheduled tree T1176 (the copper beech). There can be no question that the tree is in decline - I've attached a photo of it (IMG_T1176) and one of T1175 (IMG_T1175) which is growing about 100m away at number 55 Wallace Street. The photos were taken on the same day, the trees are the same species and about the same age - if anything Mr Munro's tree should be the healthier looking of the two based on growing conditions, but it is not.

Looking as 'bud-scars' it is possible to gain a simplified growth history and it was evident due to the reduced growth increments that the tree has been declining for several years.

Not that it has been suggested, but for the record; I saw no evidence that anything untoward was going on, the pattern of decline did not suggest a single or intentional cause was likely, the surrounding plants and foliage were healthy, the soil undisturbed and soil levels unchanged. There were some signs of secondary damage as a result of the removal of an adjacent beech back in 2018 but in my opinion, this damage was not substantial enough to be the underlying cause of decline.

So, in answer to your questions:
Is remedial work realistic or practical? - While it is possible, I believe that remedial work would not have a high likelihood of success and therefore I any actions or recommendations would need to be given on that understanding the tree may not recover

Is the decline of the tree beyond recovery? - While it is possible, it would seem unlikely (see above).

In regards to the removal of significant tree T1176 - copper beech (LUC-2020-524). I am comfortable that there are insufficient arboricultural grounds to decline this application and I recommend that the Council approve the application to remove.

I do not believe that removal can be granted under 'Emergency Works' as the risk posed to people and property is currently low and the likelihood of failure is not imminent. I do however recommend that the tree is removed sooner rather than later (within the next 6 to 12 months) as costs and associated risks with removing a dead tree are disproportionally high compared to removing a live tree.

I am happy to provide more detail and/or formalise this email into a report if required. Please advise how or if you would like me to proceed.

Kind regards
Mark

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ROBERTS
CONSULTING

January 26, 2021

RE: **STEM Condition Assessment for the copper beech T1176**

Luke McKinlay
Urban Designer
Dunedin City Council
PO Box 5045
Dunedin 9058

Dear Luke,

As per the request of DCC Senior Planner, Campbell Thomson, I have undertaken a Standard Tree Evaluation Method (STEM), Condition Assessment of the scheduled copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) T1176 growing at 61 Wallace Street, Dunedin.

According to STEM, the Condition evaluation is typically undertaken by an arborist, the Amenity evaluation is usually undertaken by a Landscape Architect and the Notability section, if undertaken at all, is to be undertaken by a specialist assessor or number of assessors knowledgeable in the relevant notability sub-category.

I have only undertaken the Condition Evaluation assessment for this tree.

Condition in terms of STEM is a statement on tree health. The sub-categories are broken into:

- Form — relating to the structure of the tree in comparison with good specimens of the type and local examples
- Occurrence — relating to the number of examples of the trees in the local district
- Vigour & Vitality — relating to how well the tree is growing in terms of its continued survival potential
- Function — relating to usefulness in terms of eco-system and human services
- Age (yr) — relating to the age of the tree

I have scored the tree as follows

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	9
Function	Minor	Useful	Important	Significant	Major	3
Age (yr)	10 yrs. +	20 yrs.+	40 yrs. +	80 yrs. +	100 yrs. +	27
Sub-total points						63

Table one: Condition Evaluation section of the STEM score sheet, filled in for the copper beech T1176

Reasons for scoring the STEM Condition Evaluation

Form	The tree has an asymmetrical canopy, and the distribution of foliage is uneven. The outline of the canopy (it's silhouette) is not a uniform when viewed for all angles, but the proportion of trunk to canopy (the crown to trunk ratio) is close to ideal. Based on that the tree has **Moderate** for Form: **9 points**. Looking at the 2013 aerial photograph provided by the applicant, the tree was never symmetrical due to the proximity and growth restrictions created by an adjacent and now removed beech tree. As a stand-alone tree, it is unlikely that tree ever had a 'very good' Form
Occurrence	There are some examples of the species in Dunedin and throughout the district but not enough for the species to be common. I am comfortable with the 2001 occurrence rating of **Infrequent**: **15 points**.
Vigour & Vitality	The tree is in decline and has been in decline for a number of years. There is reduced growth at the extremities and no substantial internal canopy. There was evidence that some response and wound closure growth was occurring which indicates some vigour remains, giving **Some** for Vigour & Vitality: **9 points**.
Function	61 Wallace Street is situated within 10m of the town-belt and on a no-through section of the street. The direct eco-system and human services are reduced due to the tree's proximity to the town-belt and further reduced due to the tree's relatively poor health. The Function of the tree is **Minor**: **3 points**.
Age (yr)	The house was built in 1905 and based on the hight and trunk girth of the tree, it was most likely planted at or about the time the house was built. Based on that the age of the tree could go up into the next age class, **100+yrs**: **27 points**.

Total for the Condition Evaluation section: **63 points**

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Roberts
Roberts Consulting Ltd

DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL | kaunihera a-rohe o Ōtepoti

Memorandum

TO:	Robert Buxton, Planner
FROM:	Luke McKinlay, Landscape Architect
DATE:	01-Febuary-2020
SUBJECT	Land Use Consent – Scheduled Tree LUC-2020-524 – 61 Wallace Street Landscape Architect Comments

Hi Robert,

This memorandum is in response to a request for comment on an application to remove protected tree T1176 due to its deteriorating condition.

The original STEM assessment for this tree was made in 2001, and was scored as follows:

- Copper Beech (Plan ID: T1176): **162** (condition evaluation 87, amenity evaluation 65)

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

Under the Proposed District Plan (2GP), removal and other work on a scheduled tree that will lead to the death or terminal decline is automatically assessed as a **non-complying activity** pursuant to Rule 7.3.2(3). Applications or resource consent for the following activities will be publicly notified in accordance with section 95A of the RMA:

1. Removal and any other work on a scheduled tree that will lead to the death or terminal decline of a scheduled tree, except where:
   a. the tree is dead or in terminal decline;
   b. and the application is accompanied by written documentation by a suitably qualified arborist to this effect.

Council's discretion is not restricted, and the following matters are considered relevant:

- Significant risk to personal/public safety or a risk to personal safety that is required to be managed under health and safety legislation (Assessment Matter 7.8.2(1)(c)(i))
- Moderate to significant risk to buildings (Assessment Matter 7.8.2(1)(c)(iii)
- The removal of the tree is necessary to avoid significant effects on existing infrastructure and network utilities (Assessment Matter 7.8.2(1)(c)(iv))
- The removal of the tree will result in significant positive effects in respect of the efficient use of the land (Assessment Matter 7.8.2(1)(c)(v))

Amenity Effects

These comments are restricted to considering broader amenity values associated with T1176. It is acknowledged that the planner must weigh up the amenity values of these trees 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 20 January 2020 to determine the likely effect of its removal on existing visual and landscape amenity values. Photographs taken at this time are appended to this report as Attachment 1.

Site Context

The site is located near the northern, cul-de sac end of Wallace Street. Residential development and the Pacific Park Motel occupy the western side of Wallace Street and the town belt occupies the eastern side. The surrounding area of Maori Hill to the north, south and west is largely residential. Most residential sections in this area are occupied by one or two storey stand-alone dwellings, some of which are substantial and located on generously proposed sections. Multi-unit developments are less common. A wide range of architectural styles are represented. Front boundary treatments are varied, including commonly timber or masonry fences and hedges.

There are no street trees on Wallace Street, however there are several mature trees in the front yards of properties that are visible from surrounding public locations, including a scheduled copper beech at 55 Wallace Street (T1175). The dense bush of the town belt lines the eastern side of Wallace Street, which contributes to the "green", well-vegetated character of this street.

STEM Assessment

There are two broad assessment categories to a STEM report – condition (health) and amenity (community benefit). This memo focuses on amenity related matters and involves both a re-evaluation of the amenity section of the existing STEM assessments and consideration of the amenity effects of potentially removing T1176.

The 2001 council STEM assessment of T1176, resulted in a total "score" of **162**. The amenity component of this overall score was **87**. The largest component of the amenity score was for the stature and proximity components, where the tree scored 21 as part of a 3+ group and being in the 21-26m height bracket.

Councils consultant arborist, Mark Roberts, has provided a re-evaluated STEM assessment for the condition aspect of the evaluation. He has generally marked the tree down due to its deteriorating condition, with the following explanatory comments:

Form
The tree has an asymmetrical canopy, and the distribution of foliage is uneven. The outline of the canopy (it's silhouette) is not a uniform when viewed for all angles, but the proportion of trunk to canopy (the crown to trunk ratio) is close to ideal. Based on that the tree has Moderate for Form: ***9 points.***

Looking at the 2013 aerial photograph provided by the applicant, the tree was never symmetrical due to the proximity and growth restrictions created by an adjacent and now removed beech tree. As a stand-alone tree, it is unlikely that tree ever had a 'very good' form

Occurrence
There are some examples of the species in Dunedin and throughout the district but not enough for the species to be common. I am comfortable with the 2001 occurrence rating of Infrequent: ***15 points.***

Vigour & Vitality

The tree is in decline and has been in decline for a number of years. There is reduced growth at the extremities and no substantial internal canopy. There was evidence that some response and wound closure growth was occurring which indicates some vigour remains, giving ***Some*** *for Vigour & Vitality:* ***9 points.***

Function

61 Wallace Street is situated within 10m of the town-belt and on a no-through section of the street. The direct eco-system and human services are reduced due to the tree's proximity to the town-belt and further reduced due to the tree's relatively poor health. The Function of the tree is Minor: ***3 points.***

Age (yr)

The house was built in 1905 and based on the hight and trunk girth of the tree, it was most likely planted at or about the time the house was built. Based on that the age of the tree could go up into the next age class, 100+yrs: ***27 points.***

Total for re-evaluation of condition (2021): **63 points**

Mr Roberts also provided the following initial comments on this proposal to remove the tree. His comments address whether remedial work is realistic or practical and whether the trees are beyond recovery. He reaches the following conclusions/recommendations:

- *Remedial work would not have a high likelihood of success and therefore any actions or recommendations would need to be given on that understanding the tree may not recover;*
- *While the tree could possibly recover, it is unlikely;*
- *There are insufficient arboricultural grounds to decline this application and it is recommended that the Council approve the application to remove.*
- *Removal cannot be granted under 'Emergency Works' as the risk posed to people and property is currently low and the likelihood of failure is not imminent. It is recommended that the tree is removed sooner rather than later (within the next 6 to 12 months) as costs and associated risks with removing a dead tree are disproportionally high compared to removing a live tree.*

Amenity Re-evaluation

The following provides a re-evaluation of the amenity component of the STEM evaluation.

The stature of the tree appears to have not increased significantly since the 2001 assessment, remaining in the 21-26m height range. It is also considered that the visibility and proximity ratings remains accurate.

With regards to the "role" rating, it is considered that this has lowered somewhat since the 2001 assessment. The role criteria relate to a tree's amenity value in a setting or as part of a composition. As a healthy tree, T1176 was identified as having an important role in its setting. However, taking the consultant arborists comments into account, it is considered that some of the features of this trees decline (uneven and thinning distribution of foliage, no substantial internal canopy) have reduced the amenity value of the tree. As such, it is considered that the role of the tree is now **moderate** rather than important.

The climatic influence criteria is related to a trees ability to ameliorate climate, predominantly in the form of shade, shelter and temperature control. As with the comments related to the role of this tree, it is considered that the uneven and reduced overall canopy inevitably reduces the climatic influence of this tree. It is considered that T1176 now has only a **minor** contribution to local climate.

My re-evaluation of the 2001 STEM, results in a total of **57** points for the amenity section:

- Stature: 21-26 (21 points)
- Visibility: 0.5km (3 points)
- Proximity: Group 3+ (21 points)
- Role: Moderate (9 points)
- Climate: Minor (3 points)

Potential Effects of Tree Removal on Existing Amenity Values

This tree's obvious signs of decline negatively affect its amenity value. The healthy cooper beach at 55 Wallace street (also a scheduled tree), only 100m from the subject tree, provides a good example of a healthy specimen of this species. The contrast between this healthy example and T1176, brings into focus the declining condition of T1176 and associated diminished amenity values.

If this trees canopy of leaves, which are already reduced and unevenly distributed, continue to thin, it is likely that the trees will be perceived negatively, due to its poor state of health becoming more obvious. With a further reduced canopy, the tree will not form a positive, natural counterpoint to built development in this residential suburb or provide useful climate amelioration.

The removal of this tree will not reveal an undesirable view. Whilst this tree softens views of the dwelling at 61 Wallace Street and neighbouring dwellings, it does not currently provide a visual screening function.

Whilst there are no street trees lining Wallace, there are some well-established trees and other greenery in the front yards of properties in the surrounding area, including the subject site, which contribute positively to the amenity of the neighbourhood. In addition, trees within the adjacent town belt contribute to the amenity of the surrounding area and are a natural counterpoint to nearby residential development. As such, that the removal of the subject tree will not leave this area devoid of large trees or greenery.

Conclusion

Overall, it is my opinion that the proposed removal of T1176 will have low adverse effects on the broader amenity values of the surrounding streetscape. The decline of this tree has become obvious and the consultant arborist is of the opinion that recovery is unlikely. Given this diagnosis, amenity values associated with this tree will likely continue to decline.

Based on the combined amenity and condition re-assessment scores provided by myself and the consultant arborist, this tree no longer reaches the pass score of the STEM assessment.

Regards,

Luke McKinlay
Landscape Architect

Attachment 1. Site Photographs

Figure 1. View towards T1176 from the driveway of the adjacent site

Figure 2. View of T1176 canopy

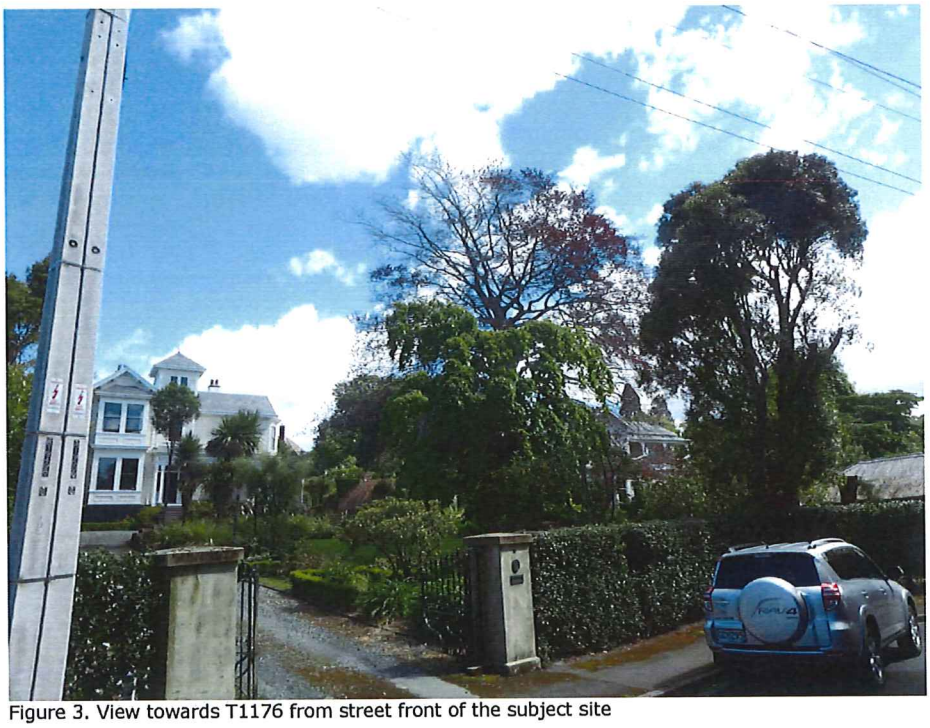

Figure 3. View towards T1176 from street front of the subject site

Figure 4: View of T1175, a healthy specimen of this species, from near the subject site