

Hearing 14: Historic Heritage and Notable Trees

1. Introduction

Mr. Chair, Commissioners and submitters.

My full name is Grant Leonard Sirl and my colleague at my side is Kevin Robert Gordon.

Kevin and I are employees of Waikato District Council and in the capacity of being a former and existing district arborist have assisted with the District Plan review of Notable Trees within the bounds of the Waikato District Council.

The purpose of the notable tree review was to re-evaluate trees listed in the Operative Waikato District Plan (Waikato – Section F Notable Trees and Franklin Appendix 2 Inventory of Historic Buildings, Structures, Trees and Areas Group C: Trees) and to evaluate additional trees nominated for inclusion as a notable tree.

2. Qualifications and Experience

Kevin Gordon - Diploma in Arboriculture from Waikato Wintec 2017
- National Certificate in Countryside Management from Merrist Wood College, United Kingdom 2000
- 21 years in the industry as a practicing arborist

Experience - Practicing arborist working for local authority (UK) and private companies (NZ) managing contracts for local Councils as well as local Utility Network providers. Part time tutoring for Wintec.

Grant Sirl - Certificate of Arboriculture, Waikato Polytechnic 1990.
- 30 years associated with the arboriculture industry

Specialisations - Arboricultural Assessments and Advice

Provided arboricultural Consultancy services to various departments of Auckland Council, Auckland Transport, Hamilton City Council and other Environmental and Planning organizations for the purpose of assessing resource consent applications or providing detailed arboricultural reports for specific projects.

3. Assessment Criteria

For the purpose of this summary and to avoid repetition as alluded to in the Section 42A Report by Alice Morris the method adopted to evaluate all trees is the Standard Tree Evaluation Method (STEM).

The STEM evaluation method is a widely used and is an accepted tree evaluation method that provides consistency with objective criteria and assessment definitions.

Tree assessment is a subjective topic but the STEM assessment method is transparent, specific and with little scope for creative interpretation.

The main sections of STEM are subdivided into the following categories

- Condition
- Amenity
- Notability

The categories are then broken down into further criteria that can be separately valued to a maximum perfect score of 30 points. Please refer to the attached copy of an evaluation score sheet.

The threshold for determining a tree for inclusion in the notable tree list is set at 160 points.

4. Tree Assessments

Trees listed in the respective Waikato District Operative District Plan and Franklin Section Notable tree registers were re-evaluated. Note that several trees listed in the Operative Plan could not be located and in one a case a notable tree had been felled. Approximately twenty (20) new trees were nominated for assessment.

5. Schedule 30.2: Notable Trees

Schedule 30.2 – Notable trees details those individual trees and groups of trees that meet the threshold to be recommended as a Notable Tree.

I must acknowledge some anomalies in the schedule.

Specifically to a property address where since the original evaluation of a specific tree or group of trees was undertaken the site has been the subject of a subdivision.

The subsequent creation of additional Lots on a parcel of land has resulted in a tree potentially now being listed on an incorrect property number.

To avoid the need of a variation it is requested time be permitted to undertake an additional technical review of the accuracies of the schedule.

6. Definitions – Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)

The definition of a dripline for a tree is determined by the extremities of the branch tip ends (canopy spread). For a tree species with a conical (fastigate) upright habit e.g. Lombardy poplar the canopy spread is very compact (branches nearly erect).

To minimize potential adverse effects on a notable tree as a consequence of any type of earthworks or activities the calculation of a 'Tree Protection Zone' (TPZ) is recommended.

For a broad spreading tree species the canopy 'dripline' is used as a point of measurement to define the TPZ.

For an upright fastigate tree species the method to calculate the TPZ is measuring the stem (trunk) diameter (DBH) at 1.4m above ground level and multiply by twelve (12).

(TPZ = tree diameter at breast height (DBH) x 12).

In addition to the diagram on page 27 Section 42A Hearing report an additional diagram for clarity purposes showing a fastigate tree species should be included.

Applying the tree protection zone will provide greater clarity and ensure improved plan administration. Therefore, it is recommended the definition for the dripline be modified as proposed.