



Tree Consultants & Contractors

Tel (03) 9888 5214

8/Aug/2022

ID Ross Watt Road Pty Ltd
C/o Norton Rose Fullbright
Attn. Linda Choi

Dear Linda,

Re: 89 Ross Watt Road, Gisborne

Introduction

As requested I visited the above site and inspected all the trees as reported on previously by my colleague Knud Hansen in February of this year. My assessment was undertaken on the 3/Aug/22. The attached excel spreadsheet is the updated description of each tree as a result of my visit.

General Comments

Overall my conclusion is similar to that of the 3/Feb/22 report in that the vast majority of the large trees are in poor condition and of low worth for retention in any residential subdivision of the site. The reason for this is that the vast majority present unacceptable hazard because they are over/mature or senescing. Virtually all have prominent limb shed histories and high propensity to shed more limbs in the near future. Many have suffered fracturing and loss of major parts of their crowns during storms, with the result that the regrowth crowns consist of epicormic shoots attached to hollow decayed out trunk shells. However even for the primary original branches, on account of the advanced age, they and trunks and roots have accumulated many defects and decay due to starvation caused by loss of loss of major parts with consequent wood degradation from decay and termites, along with the fact that intact limbs are often close to the ends of their self-support limits. The length, thickness, taper loading and load distribution along many branches, combined with decay defects, are such that there is inadequate strength of the sound wood to adequately support them.

I agree with the species labelling – Swamp Gum comprise approx. 70% of the large trees with Manna Gum, Candlebark and Snow Gum making up the remaining. Of the wattles around the boundaries, particularly the north boundary, they are comprised of Late Black Wattle and Blackwood.

Hazard reduction pruning is not going to be a viable treatment for keeping these trees safe for long periods whilst maintaining their viability. Many of the trees are rangy with the foliage clumped at the branch ends. They do not lend themselves well to weight reduction pruning without resorting to lopping, which is disfiguring and causes other problems. Even in instances where branches can be shortened considerably, back to internal branches, there is a high risk of resultant die-back of the branches due to starvation, given their over mature nature.

The DELWP does not support the subdivision for a number of reasons.

One is the removal of high value native vegetation in an area already heavily cleared.

The proposal has not had regard to the removal of large trees and remnant grassland.

The proposal does not have regard to the contribution of native veg to be removed to land and water protection.

Insufficient steps have been undertaken to identify and retain areas of high value vegetation.

Habitat Hollows

Taking into account the DELWP's concerns, and what I see as the status of the trees, it would seem that their ability to provide animal habitat needs to be explored further when assigning worth for retention values in any re-development. Even if there was substantial land set aside for indigenous tree re-planting, it may take a hundred years or so for habitat hollows to develop. Thus it would seem that some of the trees shown as to be removed may have to be retained for habitat.

I understand that others will be looking for the potential of the existing trees to provide habitable hollows for native animals and birds as it is not in my expertise. However in the Feb/22 table of data, a number of trees were noted as having hollows or spouts which have potential for habitat. In my recent inspection I looked for potential habitat hollows as well.

My conclusion is that the following trees have hollows in trunks or branches which may be suitable for habitat: 17A, 17C, 21A, 21D, 23, 26, 28, 29, 38, 41, 50 and 53. Thus taking into other considerations regarding what has been said about them in the attached table of data, it would seem to me that consideration in conjunction with the flora and faunal experts needs to be given to designing around at least some of these.

Worth for Retention Ratings (WORs)

Based primarily on the potential for certain trees to provide animal dwelling habitat hollows, I have reviewed the worth for retention ratings assigned to each tree. However other factors have come into play such as the ability to undertake any semblance of effective hazard reduction, given the very poor structural status of the tree. Thus some of the WOR ratings have gone up slightly, whilst somewhat less others have gone down.

The main changes are the group of four trees 17-17C which are rated as WOR 7 as a group, tree 23 has a WOR of 7. Changes have been made to trees 10, 14, 17A, 17B, 21A, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 33C, 40, 43, 45, 46 and 54.

TPZs

I have made alterations to a few of the TPZs. In these cases much of the trunk at 1.4m above ground where the trunk diameter is measured, and hence from which the TPZ is calculated, is dead. This potentially gives the TPZ a much greater radial distance from the trunk centre than what is necessary. In response the DBHs of the stems of the live crown only were measured previously. However I have reverted to provide the true overall DBH and TPZ figures. The changes necessary were to trees 10, 30, 31, 40, 45 and 47. As a consequence they have ridiculously large TPZs but this is the way they are calculated according to the relevant Aust Std).

Minimal recommended loitering distance from the trunk centre

I have introduced the concept of ‘Minimal recommended loitering distance from the trunk centre’ as another clearance guideline for maintaining safe distances from the trunk centres. Thus in any design, building envelopes, roads, car parks, play areas, or any areas where people are likely to gather, loiter, play etc must be kept outside these recommended distances. As a rule of thumb they are approx. a metre beyond the drip lines or more if the whole tree or co-dominant stem has a prominent lean in that direction. Outside these distances, the chances of being clobbered by falling sections are fairly remote.

The TPZs will still have to be used as guidelines, however where the minimum loitering distances exceed the TPZ guidelines, then the former should be used.

In cases such as trees 10, 30, 31, 40, 45 and 47, and maybe others, there is a good argument that one can encroach into more substantially than 10% of the TPZ area, so long as the suggested minimum loitering distances are adhered to.

Comments on the DELWP hydrology concern.

The removal of the trees as currently proposed, will make a negligible impact on the hydrology of the area, given the overall low % canopy cover of these trees and the negligible impact that their transpiration would have. Depending on the extent of new planting, the transpiration from the site may easily exceed that as is currently occurring after 20 years or so.

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