

Treeskills Tree Report

prepared for Far North District Council

Long Beach Morton Bay Fig



Site Visit to 65 Long Beach Road, Russell

Conducted 07.10.2022

Overview

A visual inspection of this tree was carried out by Roger Gale and Fyn Minogue, Treeskills Ltd, at the request of Graham Norton.

The primary focus was to confirm the condition of the tree and report on any remedial work required to remove H&S risks and to promote tree health through an on ground and climbing based assessment. Identify any particular issues and concerns and report back on findings, including photographs and a cost estimate associated with the remedial work.

The inspection was done from ground level and in the crown. Photographs are attached to illustrate points of note.

Any questions or queries please contact the author directly at roger@treeskills.co.nz

Inspection Details

Date/time of Inspection: 07 October 2022, 1415hrs.

Address: 65 Long Beach Road, Oneroa Bay beach, Russell.

Tree Species: *Ficus macrophylla*

Weather conditions: Overcast/ calm.

General Health

This mature tree is situated on an exposed beach site where wind can get to it from numerous angles.

The tree is situated in a gentle rise with adequate drainage however a significant proportion of its root zone is impermeable due to a road running through its dripline. There is a clear lean towards the sea.

The tree has a girth of 4.82 meters, an average crown width of 28 meters and a height of 10 meters.

The foliage density, size and colour are good. The road intrudes into the drip line and growth is suppressed to some degree on this side.

The significant issues will be addressed one by one.



Figure 1: Showing two suppressed branches on the south side.

The near branch has died back to the vertical diversion which has remained alive due to the sunshine available to it in the crown. The rear branch is still alive however will soon die as there are not enough leaves left to keep it alive.



Figure 2: Showing The same two branches from the other side.

The dot on the stem is indicating a significant crotch which is addressed later in the report (figure 9).

It is evident that the rope swings on this tree are frequently used. The two stems on the left side and stretching towards the camera are the ones of most concern as they are poorly attached and could fail.



Figure 3: Showing some stubs and crown deadwood.

It is clear this tree has been shedding significant amounts of dead wood. The reason is unclear but could be related to the excessive development of crotch cavities at most unions of stems and branches.



Figure 4: Showing two dead limbs in the upper crown.

The load bearing side of the scaffolding is in excellent health and means the upper structure of the tree is sound.



Figure 5: Showing a 10cm dead limb above the road.

This limb was a clear and present hazard, so I removed it while in the tree.



Figure 6: Showing a cavity associated with the crotch formed where a large limb grew.

I assume the water sitting in a cavity behind the limb caught humus which hosted pathogens that killed the limb and caused it to be removed. One or even three defective crotches forming cavities on a tree are manageable as the limbs associated can be reduced or removed. Unfortunately, this tree has a defective crotch on almost every union. This will lead to numerous pockets of decay and resultant interruptions to xylem and phloem which in turn would lead to patches of the crown dying. The problem this tree has is the abundant cavities associated with almost every crotch. I have researched this crotch formation problem without finding anything pertinent. This looks to be an anomalous tree, perhaps a mutant.



Figure 7: Showing Y crotches at every union.



Figure 8: Showing humus build- up.



Figure 9: Showing a very large crotch with a large stem hanging on to this point.

This limb and the one below it (figure 10) should be removed as they are not securely attached. This is because the load bearing timber is not only exposed to decay, but also poorly shaped as shown in **figure 11** below.



Figure 10: Showing crotch with a decay pocket and very poor attachment.

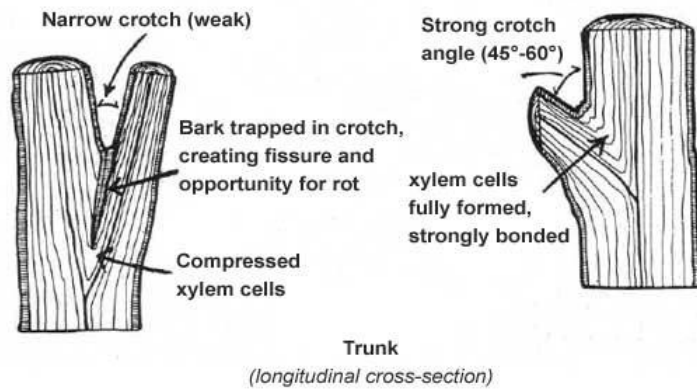


Figure 11: Showing how to identify a weak crotch with very poor attachment.



Figure 12: Showing how much needs to be removed due to decaying crotches with very poor attachment.

This essential work would remove the end of the swing limbs, some of the shade for beach goers. The systemic fault that has caused pockets of decay will continue and require ongoing monitoring and maintenance.

Summary

I am conscious that the tree is popular. While in the tree a young boy told me his parents were married under the tree. I appreciate that FNDC stands to take some flack if the tree is removed. This tree has a systemic fault that places a cavity of nutrient rich water above every union. At the very best these wet pockets break down the vascular system causing die back in patches in the crown. At the worst it weakens the support structures between the stem and a limb leading to catastrophic failure of the limb. At present it is probably why there are so many smaller dead patches falling out of the crown. This situation will worsen with time and eventually lead to removal.

I recommend that all the recommendations in this report (above) be actioned, but especially the any hazard ratings above 3:

I see two options:

1/ Remove a hazardous tree.

This tree will always have ongoing internal decay that is very difficult and expensive to accurately monitor.

Summary of Work Recommended (Hazard rating: 1 = minor, 5 = extreme).

- ✚ Monitoring could fail to identify decay spreading to the extent that a large part of the tree fails and falls on someone. **I recommend that the tree be removed.**

Hazard rating: 5

2/ Remedial works to mitigate immediate hazards.

This option would be more popular and cheaper but depends on accurate annual monitoring.

Summary of Work Recommended (Hazard rating: 1 = minor, 5 = extreme).

- ✚ Figures 1 and 2: These two limbs will die and fall. Remove.

Hazard rating: 3

- ✚ Figure 3, 4 and 5: This deadwood can fall so remove it. (I removed figure 5 by hand)

Hazard rating: 1

- ✚ Figure 9 and 10: These two stems could fail, especially in a storm. Perform a heavy crown reduction on these two stems to reduce the loading on these two union points

Hazard rating: 5

Reducing these two stems would make this tree moderately safe in the interim, however, we can expect to have ongoing deadwood to remove and would need to continue monitoring this tree annually.

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Disclaimer: The tree referred to in this report is a living entity and is therefore subject to natural processes, and changes to its environment caused by human's activities and by exceptional weather conditions. The inspection undertaken relies on the visual attributes of tree health and structure which can be ascertained from a visual inspection. Hidden defects which are not readily visible may not be detected. The condition and safety of the tree inspected cannot be guaranteed beyond what can be reasonably assessed from the procedures used. It is recommended that all significant trees are regularly inspected. Treeskills can advise on the suitable frequency of these inspections.