

ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

relating to a new garage and timber decking at

**129 RIVERVIEW ROAD
AVALON NSW 2107**

Prepared for Catherine and Peter Hrones

19 February 2021
Revision A

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report was commissioned by Catherine and Peter Hrones, the owners of 129 Riverview Road, Avalon to provide an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) report relating to the construction of a new garage and the existing trees located within close vicinity to the works. It is understood the garage structure burnt down last year and the existing concrete slab and studio beneath remains intact. The owner is seeking permission from Council to construct a new garage on the existing slab, plus new timber decking extending out at both garage and studio levels.
- 1.2 A total of two (2) trees are included in this assessment which are positioned within five metres of the timber decking works. Generally, a tree is protected in accordance with the Northern Beaches Council Local Environment Plan if it is a height greater than five (5) metres. In some instances a tree may meet the prescribed size, however may not be protected for other reasons such as it being a noxious weed species or a species listed by Council as exempt.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to undertake a visual assessment of the trees, determine the sustainability of the trees in the landscape, determine the impact of the proposed works on the trees and provide recommendations for tree protection measures to be implemented for those trees being retained.
- 1.4 This report shall reflect the expert opinion of the Arborist. The Arborist is acting independently of and not as the advocate for the owner. The Arborist shall not receive any commission to prune or remove the tree/s which is the subject of this report.
- 1.5 This report has been prepared in accordance the Australian Standard "*Protection of Trees on Development Sites*" (AS 4970:2009).
- 1.6 Details shown on the following plans were reviewed in this assessment:

Title	Author	Dwg. No.	Date
Architectural drawings (00-4)	Peter Downes Designs	2101	8/2/21

- 1.7 Key Definitions and Abbreviations used in this report.
- **TPZ = Tree Protection Zone.** This is the area as defined by AS 4970 – "*Protection of trees on development sites*" and means the typical minimum area above and below ground at a given distance from the trunk to provide for protection of the tree. Most importantly it represents the root zone required to be kept uninjured to maintain a healthy and viable tree. Note, roots will usually extend well beyond this zone, so this represents the minimum remaining root zone required, assuming all others are lost or damaged due to construction. It is typically calculated as a circle centred on the trunk unless existing site conditions can be assessed and indicate otherwise. According to the Australian Standard, a minor encroachment of 10% of the TPZ is allowable, provided the 10% is compensated for elsewhere and contiguous to the TPZ.
 - **SRZ = Structural Root Zone.** This is the area as defined by AS 4970 – "*Protection of trees on development sites*" and means the area immediately around the base of the tree at a given distance from the trunk. The woody roots and soil cohesion in this area are considered vital to the structural stability of the tree. Damage or removal of soil and roots from this area will typically render the tree unstable and require its removal. It is typically calculated as a circle, centred on the trunk, unless existing site conditions can be assessed and indicate otherwise.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Health and Condition Assessment

A site inspection was undertaken on 10 February 2021 to visually assess the trees in view from ground level. This report is limited to the methods of assessment listed below (and outlined in **Appendix 1**), and does not include any internal probing, compaction testing, drilling, root mapping, aerial inspection or diagnostic testing.

- Tree Species (botanical and common name).
- Tree height was estimated.
- Canopy spread was estimated.
- Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) and Diameter at Ground Level (DGL) was measured.
- Health and vigour assessed, including indicators such as foliage size, colour, extension growth, presence of disease or pest infestation, canopy density, presence of deadwood, dieback, epicormic growth.
- Condition assessed, including visible evidence of structural defects, instability, evidence of previous pruning and physical damage as indicators.
- Life expectancy of the tree was estimated, suitability of the tree to the site and its existing location.
- The photographs included in this report were taken at the time of inspection.
- Assessment was carried out visually from ground level within the property.
- The comments and recommendations in this report are based on findings from the site inspection.

2.2 Landscape Significance

The significance of a tree in the landscape is a combination of its environmental, heritage and amenity values. A criteria for the assessment of landscape significance as devised by Andrew Morton (2003) and shown in **Appendix 2** have been applied. Whilst it may be somewhat subjective to assess these values consistently, it is appropriate to assign some measure to assist in determining the overall retention value of a tree.

The rating system which has been applied to the tree and to assist in determining a priority for retention, includes the following categories:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Significant | 5. Low |
| 2. Very High | 6. Very Low |
| 3. High | 7. Insignificant |
| 4. Moderate | |

2.3 Tree Retention Value

The retention value shown in the Tree Assessment Schedule in **Figure 2** has been determined on the basis of the estimated longevity of the tree and its landscape significance rating, in accordance with Table 1 below. These retention values can help to determine the most appropriate position of any future building footprints and/or structures within the site, to minimise the impact on trees considered worthy of preservation. When a tree is located on a neighbouring property or public land, typically a higher retention value has been allocated given that the tree is not owned by the client and the client is therefore obligated to ensure the neighbouring or Council owned trees are not negatively impacted upon by proposed works.

	Landscape Significance Rating								
Estimated Life Expectancy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Long (>40 yrs)	High Retention Value			Moderate Retention Value		Low Retention Value			
Medium (15-40 yrs)	High Retention Value		Low Retention Value						
Short (5-15 yrs)	Moderate Retention Value		Very Low Retention Value						
Transient (<5 yrs)	Low Retention Value		Very Low Retention Value						
Dead or poses an unacceptable risk to life	Very Low Retention Value		Very Low Retention Value						

Table 1: Tree Retention Values - assessment methodology (Ref:- Morton, Andrew 2006 modified from Couston, Mark & Howden, Melanie (2001) Footprint Green Pty Ltd, Sydney, Australia)

3. OBSERVATIONS

3.1 The Site

The property is legally identified as Lot 100 in Deposited Plan 1196629 and is located on the western side of Riverview Road (refer to **Figure 1**). Currently on the property is a multiple storey dwelling positioned relatively central to the length of the site. The concrete slab where the garage structure was positioned is located forward of the dwelling. Residential properties adjoin the north and southern side boundaries, whilst the western boundary adjoins Pittwater foreshore.

The property slopes steeply from Riverview Road down to the rear foreshore boundary. A concrete driveway provides a connection from Riverview Road down to the existing concrete slab of the garage. A studio is located beneath the garage concrete slab with a small decrepit timber deck extending out to the west from the studio.

According to the Pittwater Local Environmental Plan 2014, the site is zoned as E4 Environmental Living, being land identified as holding biodiversity and ecological significance. The trees found growing on the site and within close proximity to the garage are locally occurring species that are associated with the Pittwater Spotted Gum Forest Endangered Ecological Community (ie. *Corymbia maculata*). As such these trees have a high landscape significance rating (in accordance with **Appendix 2**) and many of these trees are considered to hold a high retention value.



Figure 1: An aerial image of the site with boundary lines highlighted in red (accessed from <http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/> on 19/2/21).



3.2 The Trees

The information and characteristics of the trees are set out in the Tree Assessment Schedule in **Figure 2**. Each tree has been provided with an identification number for reference purposes which is noted on the Site Plan (in **Figure 6**) using the site plan prepared by Peter Downes Designs as a base layer and correlates with the Tree Assessment Schedule. Site photos can be found in **Figure 3-5**.

Tree No.	Plant Name (Species/Common Name)	Age	Tree Height (m)	Average Canopy spread (m)	DBH (m)	DGL (m)	Crown Class	Vigour	Condition	Useful Life Expectancy	Landscape Significance	Tree Retention Value	Observations/ comments	Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) radius in metres	Structural Root Zone (SRZ) radius in metres	Plan status - remove or retain?	Impact / Incursion
1	<i>Corymbia maculata</i> (Spotted Gum)	mature	20.0	10.0	0.68	0.57	co-dominant	low	fair	long (40yrs+)	high	high	Locally indigenous species representative of original vegetation of the area. Recent damage to sections of trunk and reduced crown volume due to fire damage.	8.2	2.6	retain	Timber deck construction located in SRZ of tree.
2	<i>Corymbia maculata</i> (Spotted Gum)	mature	10.0	4.0	0.21	0.27	supressed	low	fair	medium (15-40yrs)	high	moderate	Locally indigenous species representative of original vegetation of the area. Suppressed canopy and inferior specimen. Recent damage to sections of trunk and reduced crown volume due to fire damage.	2.5	1.9	retain	Timber deck construction located outside TPZ of tree.

Figure 2: Tree Assessment Schedule



Figure 3: Photograph viewing east at the studio with the garage concrete slab above. The trunk of Tree No. 1 (Spotted Gum) is visible to the right hand side. (Photo: J Willis)



Figure 4: Photograph viewing west at the existing garage concrete slab. The trunk of Tree No. 1 (Spotted Gum) is visible to the left hand side - see red arrow. (Photo: J Willis)

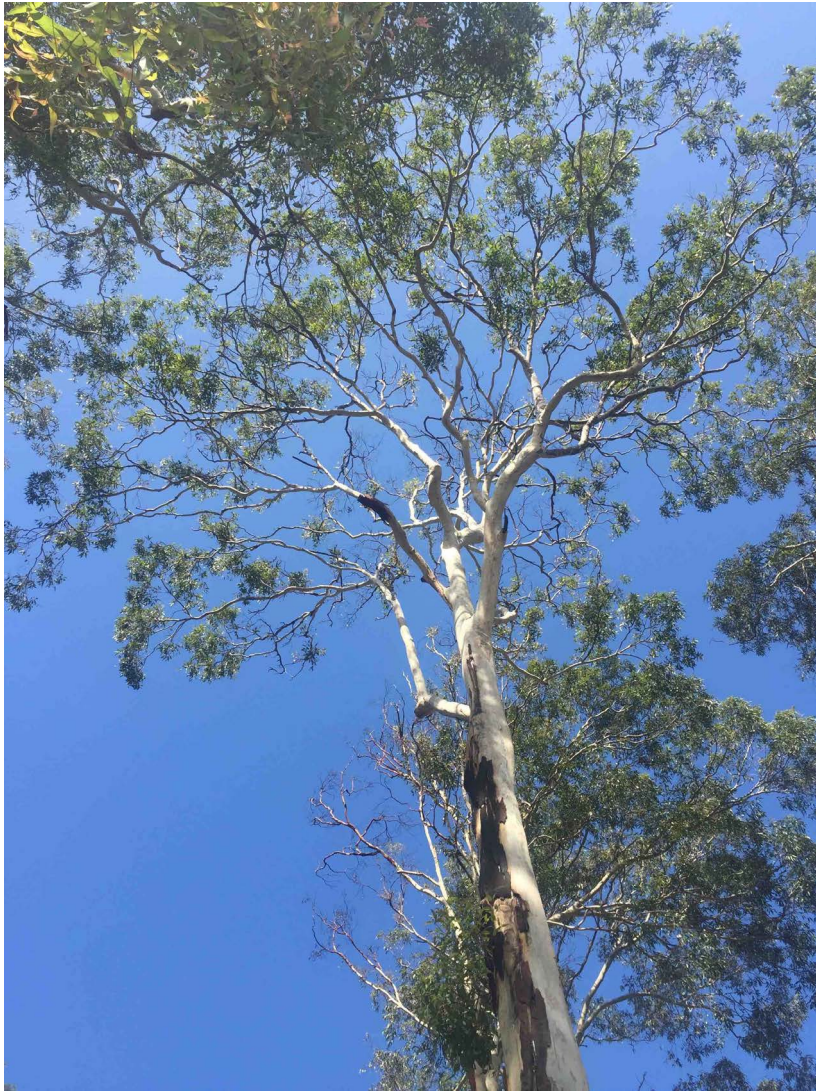


Figure 5: Photograph viewing the upper canopy of Tree No. 1 (Spotted Gum) and evident fire damage to the tree (Photo: J Willis)

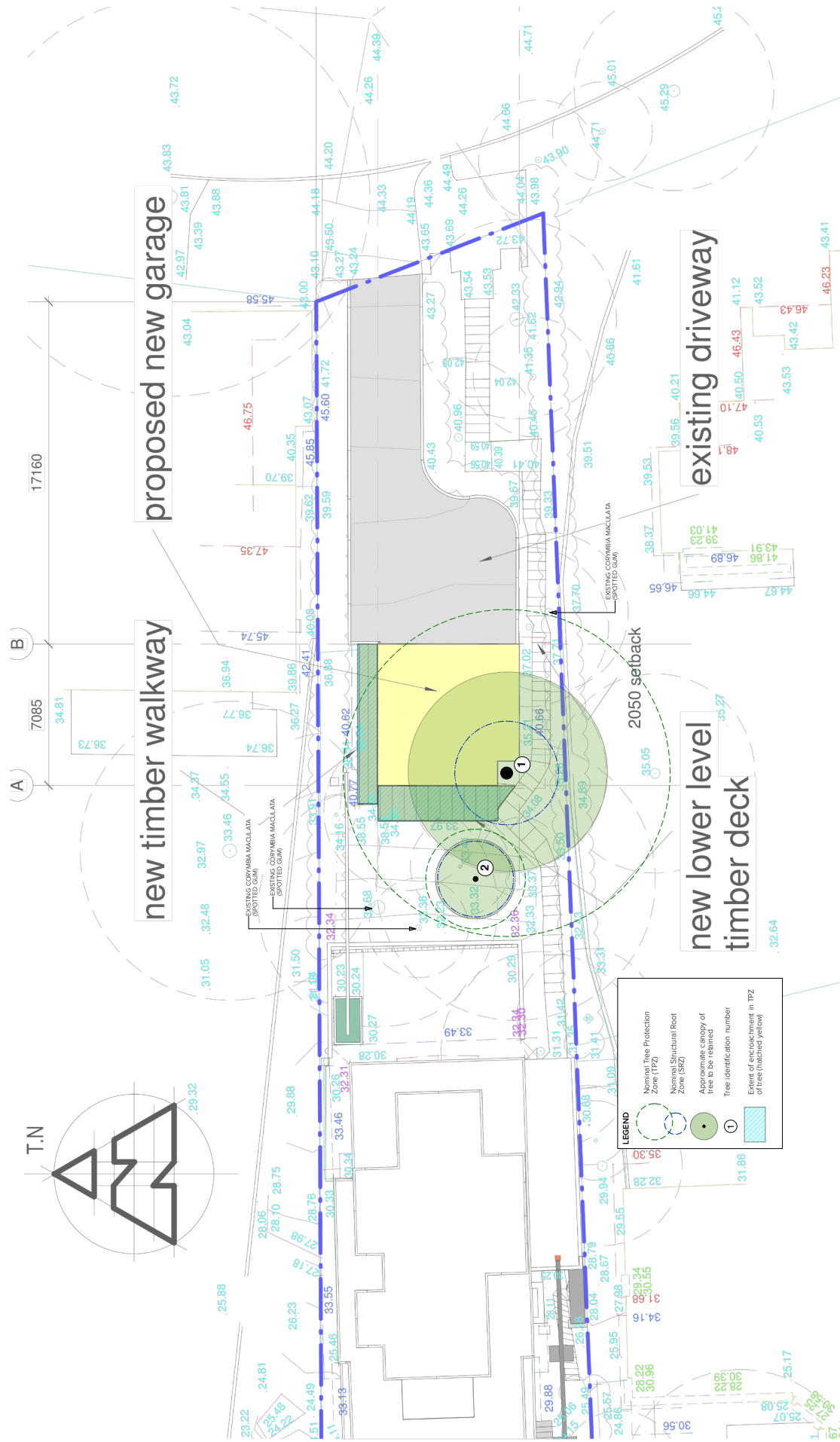


Figure 6: Proposed Site Plan indicating the timber decking works in relation to the existing trees located immediately adjacent to the works. The indicative Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) and Structural Root Zone (SRZ) are also indicated

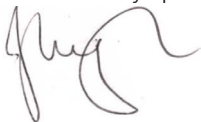
4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The intention of this assessment is to determine the incursion to the root zones and canopies of the trees resulting by the proposed works and evaluate the likely impact of the works on the existing trees located on the site or on an adjoining site and within close proximity to the proposed works. The Site Plan shown in **Figure 6** indicates the tree locations and the encroachment of the proposed works in relation to the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) and Structural Root Zone (SRZ) for those trees proposed for retention. The following criteria have been examined as part of this assessment:-
- Existing Relative Levels (RL)
 - Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)
 - Structural Root Zone (SRZ)
 - Footprint of the proposed development and any temporary structures (such as scaffolding)
 - Incursions to the TPZ & SRZ, including excavation, filling, and potential above ground impacts to tree canopy;
 - Existing structures located in the TPZ of the retained trees; and
 - Assessment of the likely impact of the works on the existing trees.
- 4.2 **Rebuilding of garage structure**
The construction of the new garage is located within the TPZ and SRZ of Tree No. 1 (Spotted Gum). However, given the garage will be constructed within the line of the existing concrete slab the works should not result in any impact upon the tree. Additionally, the new roof will not necessitate any canopy pruning to the tree.
- 4.3 **New timber decking**
It is proposed to replace the existing decrepit timber deck which extends out from the garage level and studio level. The line of the new deck at studio level will extend out 1.8 metres to the west. The deck is located in the SRZ of Tree No. 1 (Spotted Gum) and immediately adjacent to the trunk of the tree. It is imperative any excavation for post footings is undertaken by hand digging, and no woody roots greater than 40mm diameter are severed to ensure the stability of the tree is not compromised in any way. Existing ground levels should be retained within the TPZ of the tree. Providing the appropriate tree protection measures are undertaken, it is the author's opinion the works should not result in any adverse impact upon the tree.
- 4.4 Tree No. 2 (Spotted Gum) is positioned approximately 2.8 metres away from the edge of the new timber deck. Based on the calculated TPZ for the tree, the works are located just outside the tree's TPZ and as such there should be no adverse impact upon the tree. Tree protection measures should be implemented to ensure the tree is not inadvertently damaged during the course of the works.

5. CONCLUSION | RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The owners of 129 Riverview Road are seeking permission to build a new garage on the existing garage slab including new timber decking extending out from the garage slab and studio beneath. The site contains numerous mature Spotted Gums which are locally occurring species that are associated with the Pittwater Spotted Gum Forest Endangered Ecological Community. As such, the trees hold a high ecological significance.
- 5.2 Tree No. 1 is identified as a large Spotted Gum positioned to the immediate southwest of the garage and studio structure. The construction of the new garage should not result in any adverse impact upon the above or below ground components of the tree. It is assumed new post footings will be required to support the new timber deck extension. The proposed works are considered acceptable providing the following measures are undertaken as part of the works:
- (i) Existing post footings are utilised as part of the building of the new deck.
 - (ii) All excavation for new footings must be hand dug carefully, ensuring no damage or severance to woody roots. The final positioning of footings must ensure there is no cutting of any woody roots greater than 40mm diameter. Where woody roots greater than 40mm diameter are encountered and the footing cannot be relocated, further advice must be sought from a qualified Arborist prior to root severance. Any roots less than 40mm in diameter shall be cut cleanly with sharp pruning implement.
 - (iii) It is recommended trunk protection is installed around all trees located within five metres of the proposed works and positioned within the site boundaries (some of which are not included in this assessment). As a minimum, the trunk protection shall consist of 1.8 metre lengths of pine board timbers (90 x 45mm) spaced at 100-150mm centres secured together with perforated metal straps. These shall be strapped around the trunk (not fixed in any way) to avoid mechanical injury or damage. Trunk protection should be installed prior to any site works and maintained in good condition for the duration of the construction period. Trunk protection will help to protect the trees from any inadvertent damage that may result from the building works. Note: The trunk of Tree No. 1 should be protected at studio level and also at the garage slab level.
 - (iv) It is assumed there will be no heavy machinery accessing the lawn area between the studio and the existing retaining wall located adjacent to the dwelling. The following activities be avoided within the TPZ of the surrounding trees and in particular the lower lawn area:
 - Excavations and trenching;
 - Ripping or cultivation of soil;
 - Modification of existing soil levels;
 - Mechanical removal of vegetation;
 - Soil disturbance or movement of natural rock;
 - Temporary or permanent location of services, or the works required for their installation;
 - Movement and storage of plant & equipment;
 - Affixing of signage or hoardings to trees;
 - Storage of building materials, waste and waste receptacles;
 - Disposal of waste materials and chemicals including paint, solvents, cement slurry, fuel, oil and other toxic liquids;
 - Other physical damage to the trunk or root system; and
 - Any other activity likely to cause damage to the tree.

If you have any questions regarding this report please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.



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Assumptions

Care has been taken to obtain all information from reliable sources. All data has been verified as far as possible. However Joanne Leigh – Consulting Arborist can neither guarantee nor be responsible for the accuracy of information provided by others.

Unless stated otherwise:

- Information contained in this report covers only the tree that was examined and reflects the condition of the tree at the time of inspection: and
- The inspection was limited to visual examination of the subject tree without dissection, excavation, probing or coring. There is no warranty or guarantee, expressed or implied, that problems or deficiencies of the subject tree may not arise in the future.

6. REFERENCES

- Draper, Danny B. and Richards, Peter A (2009) "Dictionary for Managing Trees in Urban Environments". CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, VIC Australia
- Harris, R.W; Clark, J.R; & Matheny, N.P (2004) Arboriculture; Integrated Management of Landscape Trees, Shrubs & Vines 4th Edition, Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
- Mattheck, Claus (2007) "Updated Field Guide for Visual Tree Assessment". Karlsruhe Research Centre, Germany.
- Standards Australia (2009) AS2970-2009 "Protection of Trees on Development Sites", Sydney.
- Council's relevant tree planning documents.

APPENDIX 1: TREE INSPECTION INVENTORY NOTES

The values for terminology provided below are sourced from SRIV© Sustainable Retention Index Value © From Draper BD and Richards PA 2009, Dictionary for Managing Trees in Urban Environments, Institute of Australian Consulting Arboriculturists (IACA), CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Victoria, Australia.

Age: Most trees have a stable biomass for the major proportion of their life. The estimation of the age of a tree is based on the knowledge of the expected lifespan of the taxa in situ divided into three distinct stages of measurable biomass, when the exact age of the tree from its date of cultivation or planting is unknown and can be categorized as Young, Mature and Over-mature.

Young - Tree aged less 20% of life expectancy, in situ.

Mature - Tree aged 20-80% of life expectancy, in situ.

Over-mature - Tree aged greater than >80% of life expectancy, in situ, or senescent with or without reduced vigour, and declining gradually or rapidly but irreversibly to death.

Height: In metres (estimated)

Spread: Average diameter of canopy in metres (estimated)

Crown class:

(D) Dominant (crown extends above general canopy; not restricted by other trees)

(C) Co-dominant (crown forms the bulk of the general canopy but crowded by other trees)

(I) Intermediate (crown extends into dominant/codominant canopy but quite crowded on all sides)

(S) Suppressed (crown development restricted from overgrowing trees)

Vigour: Ability of a tree to sustain its life processes. This is independent of the condition of a tree but may impact upon it. Vigour can appear to alter rapidly with change of seasons (seasonality) e.g. dormant, deciduous or semi-deciduous trees. Vigour can be categorized as:

Normal Vigour Ability of a tree to maintain and sustain its life processes. This may be evident by the typical growth of leaves, crown cover and crown density, branches, roots and trunk and resistance to predation. This is independent of the condition of a tree but may impact upon it, and especially the ability of a tree to sustain itself against predation.

High Vigour Accelerated growth of a tree due to incidental or deliberate artificial changes to its growing environment that are seemingly beneficial, but may result in premature aging or failure if the favourable conditions cease, or promote prolonged senescence if the favourable conditions remain, e.g. water from a leaking pipe; water and nutrients from a leaking or disrupted sewer pipe; nutrients from animal waste, a tree growing next to a chicken coop, or a stock feed lot, or a regularly used stockyard; a tree subject to a stringent watering and fertilising program; or some trees may achieve an extended lifespan from continuous pollarding practices over the life of the tree.

Low Vigour Reduced ability of a tree to sustain its life processes. This may be evident by the atypical growth of leaves, reduced crown cover and reduced crown density, branches, roots and trunk, and a deterioration of their functions with reduced resistance to predation. This is independent of the condition of a tree but may impact upon it, and especially the ability of a tree to sustain itself against predation.

Dormant Tree Vigour Determined by existing turgidity in lowest order branches in the outer extremity of the crown, with good bud set and formation, and where the last extension growth is distinct from those most recently preceding it, evident by bud scale scars. Normal vigour during dormancy is achieved when such growth is evident on a majority of branches throughout the crown.

Useful Life Expectancy: The life span of a tree in the urban environment may often be reduced by the influences of encroachment and the dynamics of the environment and can be categorized as Immediate, Short Term, Medium Term and Long Term.

Short Term - Period of time less than 15 years.

Medium Term - Period of time 15 - 40 years.

Long Term - Period of time greater than >40 years.

Condition: A tree's crown form and growth habit, as modified by its environment (aspect, suppression by other trees, soils), the stability and viability of the root plate, trunk and structural branches (first (1st) and possibly second (2nd) order branches), including structural defects such as wounds, cavities or hollows, crooked trunk or weak trunk/branch junctions and the effects of predation by pests and diseases. These may not be directly connected with vigour and it is possible for a tree to be of normal vigour but in poor condition. Condition can be categorized as:

Good Condition - Tree is of good habit, with crown form not severely restricted for space and light, physically free from the adverse effects of predation by pests and diseases, obvious instability or structural weaknesses, fungal, bacterial or insect infestation and is expected to continue to live in much the same condition as at the time of inspection provided conditions around it for its basic survival do not alter greatly. This may be independent from, or contributed to by vigour.

Fair Condition - Tree is of good habit or misshapen, a form not severely restricted for space and light, has some physical indication of decline due to the early effects of predation by pests and diseases, fungal, bacterial, or insect infestation, or has suffered physical injury to itself that may be contributing to instability or structural weaknesses, or is faltering due to the modification of the environment essential for its basic survival. Such a tree may recover with remedial works where appropriate, or without intervention may stabilise or improve over time, or in response to the implementation of beneficial changes to its local environment. This may be independent from, or contributed to by vigour.

Poor Condition - Tree is of good habit or misshapen, a form that may be severely restricted for space and light, exhibits symptoms of advanced and irreversible decline such as fungal, or bacterial infestation, major die-back in the branch and foliage crown, structural deterioration from insect damage e.g. termite infestation, or storm damage or lightning strike, ring barking from borer activity in the trunk, root damage or instability of the tree, or damage from physical wounding impacts or abrasion, or from altered local environmental conditions and has been unable to adapt to such changes and may decline further to death regardless of remedial works or other modifications to the local environment that would normally be sufficient to provide for its basic survival if in good to fair condition. Deterioration physically, often characterised by a gradual and continuous reduction in vigour but may be independent of a change in vigour, but characterised by a proportionate increase in susceptibility to, and predation by pests and diseases against which the tree cannot be sustained. Such conditions may also be evident in trees of advanced senescence due to normal phenological processes, without modifications to the growing environment or physical damage having been inflicted upon the tree. This may be independent from, or contributed to by vigour.

APPENDIX 2: CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

The level of landscape significance has been determined using the following key criteria as a guide:

1. SIGNIFICANT

- The subject tree is listed as a Heritage Item under the Local Environment Plan (LEP) with a local, state or national level of significance; or
- The subject tree forms part of the curtilage of a Heritage Item (building /structure /artifact as defined under the LEP) and has a known or documented association with that item; or
- The subject tree is a Commemorative Planting having been planted by an important historical person (s) or to commemorate an important historical event;
- The subject tree is scheduled as a Threatened Species or is a key indicator species of an Endangered Ecological Community as defined under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (NSW) or the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999; or
- The tree is a locally indigenous species, representative of the original vegetation of the area and is known as an important food, shelter or nesting tree for endangered or threatened fauna species; or
- The subject tree is a Remnant Tree, being a tree in existence prior to development of the area; or
- The subject tree has a very large live crown size exceeding 300m² with normal to dense foliage cover, is located in a visually prominent in the landscape, exhibits very good form and habit typical of the species and makes a significant contribution to the amenity and visual character of the area by creating a sense of place or creating a sense of identity; or
- The tree is visually prominent in view from surrounding areas, being a landmark or visible from a considerable distance.

2. VERY HIGH

- The tree has a strong historical association with a heritage item (building/structure/artifact/garden etc) within or adjacent the property and/or exemplifies a particular era or style of landscape design associated with the original development of the site; or
- The subject tree is listed on Council's Significant Tree Register; or
- The tree is a locally-indigenous species and representative of the original vegetation of the area and the tree is located within a defined Vegetation Link / Wildlife Corridor or has known wildlife habitat value;
- The subject tree has a very large live crown size exceeding 200m²; a crown density exceeding 70% Crown Cover (normal-dense), is a very good representative of the species in terms of its form and branching habit or is aesthetically distinctive and makes a positive contribution to the visual character and the amenity of the area.

3. HIGH

- The tree has a suspected historical association with a heritage item or landscape supported by anecdotal or visual evidence; or
- The tree is a locally-indigenous species and representative of the original vegetation of the area; or
- The subject tree has a large live crown size exceeding 100m²; and
- The tree is a good representative of the species in terms of its form and branching habit with minor deviations from normal (eg crown distortion/suppression) with a crown density of at least 70% Crown Cover (normal); and
- The subject tree is visible from the street and surrounding properties and makes a positive contribution to the visual character and the amenity of the area.

4. MODERATE

- The subject tree has a medium live crown size exceeding 40m²; and
- The tree is a fair representative of the species, exhibiting moderate deviations from typical form (distortion/suppression etc) with a crown density of more than 50% Crown Cover (thinning to normal); and
- The tree makes a fair contribution to the visual character and amenity of the area; and
- The tree is visible from surrounding properties, but is not visually prominent – view may be partially obscured by other vegetation or built forms.
- The tree has no known or suspected historical association

5. LOW

- The subject tree has a small live crown size of less than 40m² and can be replaced within the short term with new tree planting; or
- The tree is a poor representative of the species, showing significant deviations from the typical form and branching habit with a crown density of less than 50% Crown Cover (sparse); and
- The subject tree is not visible from surrounding properties (visibility obscured) and makes a negligible contribution or has a negative impact on the amenity and visual character of the area.

6. VERY LOW

- The subject tree is listed as an Environment Weed Species in the relevant Local Government Area, being invasive, or a nuisance species.
- The subject tree is scheduled as exempt (not protected) under the provisions of the local Council's Tree Preservation Order due to its species, nuisance or position relative to buildings or other structures.

7. INSIGNIFICANT

- The tree is a declared Noxious Weed under the Noxious Weeds Act (NSW) 1993

Ref:- Morton, Andrew (2003) *Criteria for Assessment of Landscape Significance Earthscape Horticultural Services. Sydney, Australia*