7 2021 Follow up assessment(Arbor Guy)

ARBOR GUY
CERTIFIED TREE SPECIALIST

4th March 2021

St Mary's Church Busselton – Follow-up Tree Assessment

Prepared for: The City of Busselton

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Quantified Tree Risk Assessment –
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of Works

At the request Iain Ferry, Parks Technical Officer with the City of Busselton, a tree inspection was undertaken at St Mary's Church Queen Street Busselton. The purpose of this inspection was to record the current health and structural condition of all the trees and make recommendations for the management of these trees.

This is a follow-up inspection to a previous inspection carried out in September 2019.

In response to this request I inspected the subject trees on Thursday 4th March 2021 in order to:

1. Undertake a visual tree assessment (VTA) to ascertain the health, vigour and structural condition.

1.2 Methodology

An inspection of the trees was undertaken on Thursday 4th March 2021 comprising a visual inspection from ground level using the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) method. This assessment did not involve any excavation for belowground inspection nor did it involve a climbing aerial inspection.

2.0 Tree Risk Assessment

2.1 Visual Tree Assessment

The assessing arborist uses his skill, experience and knowledge to locate any visual abnormalities upon or surrounding the subject trees. VTA interprets the body language of trees, linking internal defects to the tree's own repair-structures, confirming and measuring these defects, and finally assessing them with failure criteria, and from this, deducing measures for the 'therapy' of the tree. Accordingly trees that are only apparently dangerous should be distinguished from those that are really dangerous, thus avoiding unnecessary fellings and accidents caused by tree failure.

VTA comprises the assessment of predictable symptoms associated with tree failures and / or tree disorders that culminate to form visual tree condition. This process is accepted by professional arborists as being a first measure in the assessment and management of urban trees.

The assessment is conducted visually from ground level or under binocular view. In order to achieve clear viewing the assessor may initiate clearance of vines or plant clutter from around tree base, upon tree main stems, within main branch unions or other key locations prior to conducting the assessment itself. Hand tools and data recording equipment are commonly employed during VTA.

In the event the VTA process is deemed by as being insufficient in determination of a trees condition then further measures of an exploratory or investigative nature may be recommended. Employment of specialist tools, sophisticated measuring instruments and laboratory-based analysis are a few of the investigative activities that may be adopted by the assessor as additional diagnostic tools in support of VTA.

3.0 Findings

3.1 The Site

There are 11 *Agonis flexuosa* (WA Peppermint Tree) located along the corner boundary of St Mary's Church along Queen and Albert Streets.

Most of these trees are mature or over. From examining online aerial photography it is evident the trees were well established in 1950 and are likely over 100 years old. They are growing between the footpath and the paved carpark.

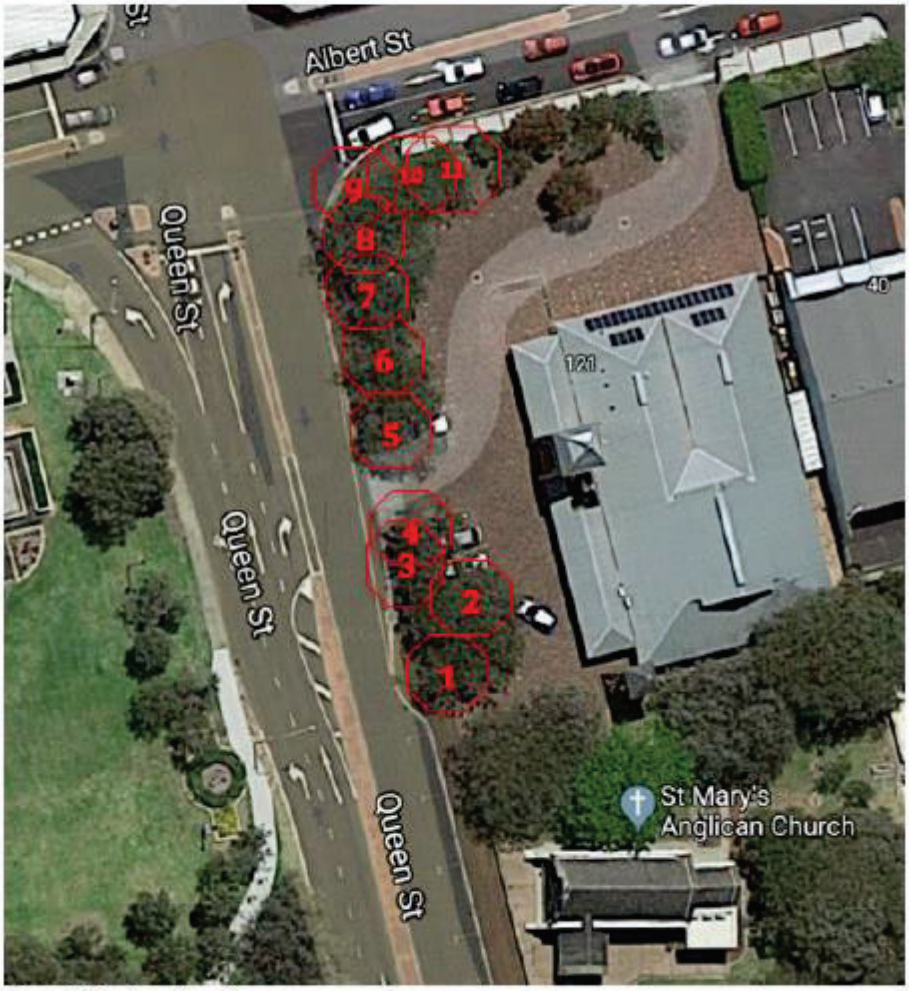


Figure 1: Tree Location Map

3.2 The Trees

Since the previous inspection in 2019 the trees were all pruned to remove dead and dying branches, to reduce weight on defective tree parts, to remove broken limbs and to reduce canopy size where required. This work was carried out to a high standard and considering the poor structural condition of many of the trees there have been no major failures following the completion of these works.

It is apparent that since the previous inspection a number of trees have rapidly declined in health. Trees 1, 2, 8, 9, 10 & 11 are all in Poor health condition with little live foliage.

Those trees in poor health condition are exhibiting symptoms of stunted leaf growth with small undersized leaves where leaves exist at all. These symptoms are common when trees have been poisoned with herbicides and also when trees are being over-grazed by possum browsing.

Figure 2: Sparse and stunted foliage

I examined the trunk and buttresses of the trees to inspect for evidence the trees had been poisoned with herbicide and did not find any evidence of drill holes or cuts. I do not believe the trees have been vandalised by poisoning. I observed a large amount of possum scat beneath the trees and I believe the observed poor health condition is largely caused by over-grazing by possums combined with the age of the trees. This is likely exacerbated by the unusually high number of winter storms that occurred in 2020 where many trees in the region were heavily wind and salt scalded.

The following table of Individual Tree Data is an update to the data collected in 2019 and includes recommendations for each tree. There are 5 trees that have been recommended for immediate removal based on their as-found health and structural condition. Following the removal of these trees I recommend replacement planting be undertaken and this planting should include succession planting for those trees to be retained with the expectancy that these trees will likely require removal within 10 years as their structural condition deteriorates.

I have recommended the installation of possum bands to prevent possum's having access to the trees to be retained in order to give the stressed trees a chance to rec over from over-grazing. This is meant as a temporary measure and should be re-evaluated in 12 month's time to determine whether tree health has improved sufficiently to allow the removal of these bands.

3.3 Individual Tree data*

Tree No.	Tree Species	Age Class	DBH m	Height m	Vitality	Structure	Recommendations
1	*Agonis flexuosa*	Post-Mature	1	10	Fair/poor	Poor	Remove tree
2	*Agonis flexuosa*	Post-Mature	1.25	12	Fair/poor	Poor	Install through-bolt in lower fork – install possum band
3	*Agonis flexuosa*	Mature	0.7	10	Fair	Fair	Install possum band
4	*Agonis flexuosa*	Post-Mature	1.25	10	Fair	Poor	Install possum band
5	*Agonis flexuosa*	Semi-Mature	0.75	7.5	Good	Fair	Install possum band
6	*Agonis flexuosa*	Semi-Mature	0.85	7.5	Fair/poor	Fair	Install possum band
7	*Agonis flexuosa*	Young	0.15	4	Good	Good	Install possum band
8	*Agonis flexuosa*	Post-Mature	2	10	Poor	Poor	Remove tree
9	*Agonis flexuosa*	Post-Mature	1.2	10	Poor	Poor	Remove tree
10	*Agonis flexuosa*	Post-Mature	1.35	10	Poor	Poor	Remove tree
11	*Agonis flexuosa*	Mature	0.7	7.5	Poor	Fair	Remove tree

**Highlighted cells indicate change from previous inspection*

3.4 Images

Tree 1

Tree 2

Tree 3

Tree 4

Tree 5

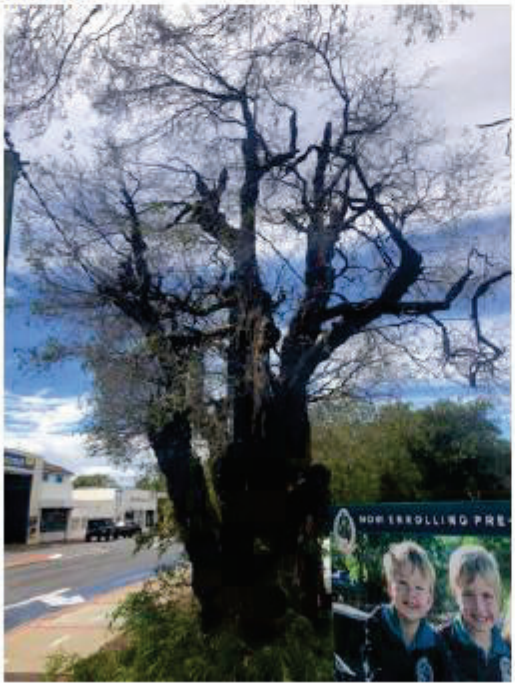
Tree 6

Tree 7

Tree 8

Tree 9

Tree 10



Tree 11

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