



Tree Consultants & Contractors
Tel (03) 9888 5214

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[REDACTED]
The 3068 Group Inc.
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

re: Elms near Tennis Courts at the Edinburgh Gardens

Introduction

I am informed that more tennis courts are proposed to be constructed adjacent to the existing courts at the Edinburgh Gardens. This will necessitate the removal of several old Elm trees. Galbraith and Associates has been requested by the 3068 Group to inspect and report on the condition of five of these trees, specifically trees 1-5 as numbered in the Urban Forestry Vic P/L report dated the 15/12/21. I inspected the elms on the 5/Sep/25. I also walked through the rest of the gardens observing the extensive elm plantings.

The Trees – General

The trees are large with a dominant height of 27m. It is likely they are of the order of 140 years in age. Two have been lopped (Trees 2 and 5), probably by the removal of dead tops after the trees had died back during a past drought. As a result they are less likely to shed branches like trees 1, 3 and 4 over the tennis courts or the popular pedestrian asphalt path, but they have lost substantial aesthetic appeal. Lopping is a management tool that should be avoided if possible due to the promulgation of decay in the trees, the formation of weak sprout attachments and the premature damage to beauty provided. My brief look through the park suggests that most of the elms have been lopped and probably for the same reason, i.e. due to the removal of the dead tops as a result of die-back during drought.

Major limbs are in need of weight reduction pruning to lessen the risk of further major limb shed. I would suggest past drought periods have exacerbated the incidence of limb shed. Foliar cover in the upper crowns thins out during drought, causing the upper sides of branches to be scorched by the sun, leading to death of the bark and sapwood. This results in decay and weakening of the wood, leading to shedding. Branch shedding is also a direct response by the tree to water stress.

Well established hollows are present in a couple of the trees. Some of the hollows are old and appear to have been kept clean and open by animals using them as homes.

Elms may live to approx. 250 years in England however they have largely disintegrated by then. Arthurs Elms in the Royal Vic Bot Gardens were planted by Baron Von Mueller in 1846. These elms in Edinburgh Gardens I think could be maintained responsibly for at least another 30 years, but not if allowed to have development near them whereby the risk of people or infrastructure being damaged from falling branches is heightened.

The Trees

Tree 1 is quite spectacular in that it is a huge tree with a height of some 27m and trunk diameter at breast height of approx. 150cm. It has a prominent branch shed history as is evident from the many tear out wounds and stubs in the lower 85% of the tree. From my cursory look throughout the Edinburgh Gardens it would appear this is the largest tree in the park. It has well established hollows in the trunk which look to be active. Based on its size, old age and the assumption it was subjected to hazard reduction pruning, and irrigation during extended dry periods, and works were kept well clear, say approx. 15m, off the trunk (depending on how much in various directions) it could be kept successfully.

Tree 2 has been lopped at approx. 70% of its height, very likely within the last ten years. I would suggest this is likely due to the tree having died back during a past drought, and the dead tops were taken back to healthy growth. The tree thus does not have the aesthetic appeal of Tree 1, although it is safe.

Tree 3 has not been lopped although it is not as large as Tree 1. Despite this it is unusual in the park because it has not suffered from lopping. It has a branch shed history. There are some high branches over the tennis court which need substantial weight reduction pruning, as well as those over the asphalt path. There is also a co-dominant stem which has a split prone pressure fork in it at approx. 12m height which would need attending to prevent splitting. It too has considerable worth for retention based on its unusually large size. It could be relatively safely maintained assuming it gets irrigated during extended dry periods. It like Tree 1 has hollows in the trunk which look to be used by tree dwelling creatures.

Tree 4 Similar to above.

Tree 5 is similar to Tree 2 in that it has been lopped to a similar degree, likely due to the removal of the dead tops after a drought event.

Ongoing Management

Although the trees have limb shed histories and have suffered from drought, they can be actively managed to lessen their limb shed tendency. This occurs in the Fitzroy Gardens for example where the elms are at least 20 years older. All that is required is a combination of irrigation during extended periods of drought and periodic selective weight reduction pruning of the long heavy branches. Mulching would not go astray either. One would assume that, appropriate to their environmental and heritage value, this would be an appropriate maintenance response, in which case another 30 years or so of safe useful life could be achieved.

GALBRAITH & ASSOCIATES

Rob Galbraith
B.For.Sci.(Melb.)
N.C.H.(Arb.)(U.K.)