ATTACHMENT 14 - APPLICANT ARBORICULTURAL REPORT

Arboricultural Report
Briggs St and Raleigh St, Carlisle
9th June 2025

TREESWEST AUSTRALIA

Arboricultural assessment of: *Ficus microcarpa* (Hill's Weeping Fig)

Site Address: Corner of Raleigh St and Briggs St, Carlisle
(adj. Briggs St truck access to Holcim Concrete P/L)

Client: Holcim Concrete P/L

Date assessed: 6.06.2025

Report prepared by:

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1. ABSTRACT

This report is based on the client brief to assess the health and structural status of a *Ficus microcarpa* (Hill's Weeping Fig) located within the Briggs St, Carlisle verge.

The report gives a general overview of the mature tree, detailing the species, height, and location with comments made on the condition and integrity of the canopy.

The assessment raised concerns that the tree may have been deliberately poisoned, however, no clear evidence of an attempt to poison the tree was found.

Recent drought conditions, leakage from the high-pressure gas line and earthworks within the verge may have all contributed to the apparent rapid decline of a mature tree of a generally resilient species.

This tree was found to be no longer in a viable condition and removal has been recommended.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Treeswest Australia were engaged by Holcim Concrete P/L to assess the current health and condition of the *Ficus microcarpa* (Hill's Weeping Fig) located in proximity to the Briggs St entry to the above property due to the severe visible decline of the tree.

2.2 Scope of works

The request was to assess the tree from ground level, report back on the findings and offer advice regarding tree removal or retention and what remedial works would be required if the tree was considered suitable for retention.

3. METHODS

3.1 Equipment The tree was able to be viewed without impediment.
Photographs were taken from ground level with a Nikon 'Coolpix' Digital camera. Other data was recorded manually.
Other Equipment used: 'Haglof' clinometer, 5m retractable tape, long handled screwdriver and a nylon tapping hammer. A shovel was used to expose the root crown area.

3.2 Weather The tree was inspected on the 6th of June 2025 13:00 – 14:00 hrs, the weather at the time was sunny and approx. 22 degrees Celsius with a light westerly wind.

3.3 Visual Tree Assessment

The tree was assessed using the Visual Tree Assessment methodology recommended by the International Society of Arboriculture.

The VTA (Visual Tree Assessment) method is an internationally recognised and acknowledged method of tree inspection. Hazardous symptoms are interpreted, defects are confirmed and measured, and criteria of failure are assessed.

VTA helps to distinguish between apparent hazardous trees from those that are hazardous. This method reduces the risk of removing a viable tree.

VTA gives information about body language and the mechanics of trees.

The basis behind VTA is the identification of symptoms, which the tree produces in reaction to a weak spot, or area of mechanical stress.

4. TREE LOCATION

4.1 The tree is the northernmost of several dead or severely declined trees of the same species situated within this section of the Briggs St verge.

4.2 The base of the tree is 2.4m from the boundary fence of the adjacent property, 3.3m from the Briggs St roadway and approx. 8.0m from the truck entry point to the Holcim Concrete facility.

4.3 Signage indicating the presence of a high-pressure gas supply line within the verge and running parallel to the roadway was evident.

4.4 An area between the base of the tree and boundary fence of the adjacent property was bare of grass cover and may have been recently disturbed.

5. TREE OBSERVATIONS

5.1

- Species–*Ficus microcarpa* (Hill's Weeping Fig)
- Height – 15.2m
- Diameter Breast Height – 0.61 m taken at 1.0 m
- Age – Mature
- Health – The tree is dead
- Structure – Fair
- Live Canopy Ratio (LCR) – Not applicable
- Canopy spread – north/south 16m, east/west 14m.

5.2

1. Inspection at ground level found evidence of the demise of cambial and vascular tissue around the base and of buttressing roots and associated cracking, lifting and separation of bark and the exposure of underlying wood was evident.
2. There was no evidence of fungal decay or cavities within the base or lower trunk.
3. Manual excavation of sections of the root crown by this consultant found no evidence of drill holes to indicate the tree has been poisoned.
4. The soil profile west of the tree was found to be previously disturbed with imported sand fill present.
5. Major branches were found to remain soundly attached and there was no evidence of significant bark inclusion or recent significant branch failure.
6. The tree displays a modified, natural form and has developed an asymmetric crown, with growth extending in a northerly and easterly direction away from the mature tree within the adjacent property.
7. There was no live foliage remaining within the crown and there was no evidence of emerging epicormic re-growth.
8. A few desiccated leaves remain in the crown and areas of desiccated and lifted bark on second, third and fourth order branches were visible from ground level.
9. There was no evidence of disease or insect infestation within the remaining branch structure.
10. A review or Google Streetview images suggest this tree was in good condition in November 2023, declining by June 2024 and defoliated by February 2025.

6. DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS

6.1

1. The apparent decline and death of this mature *Ficus microcarpa* over less than 18 months is considered inconsistent with the resilient characteristics of the species. Deliberate poisoning of the tree cannot be ruled out.
2. Given the time that has elapsed since the decline of the tree became evident, the presence of glyphosate or other toxin within the tree tissue is unlikely, therefore tissue analysis in not recommended.
3. Leakage from the gas supply line within the verge was also considered a possible cause of tree decline, however the continued health of two mature *Eucalyptus* spp. nearby suggests this was not the case.
4. A disturbed soil profile west of the tree suggests some works in proximity of the tree has occurred, however those works did not appear significant and there was no evidence of those works on Streetview.
5. Drought conditions over approximately the last 8 months may have also been a factor contributing to the rapid decline of the tree.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1

1. Removal of the tree and grinding of the stump is recommended.
2. Replacement planting as soon as is practicable to do so is also recommended.

Any queries or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me,

Kind regards,

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NB. This report is based on the condition of the tree at the time of the assessment.

8. Tree Photos

(all photos provided were taken by this consultant at the time of assessment)

Figure 1 Displaying the *Ficus microcarpa* within the Briggs St verge with high pressure gas service warning and the adjacent mature *Eucalyptus* sp. within the property evident.

Figures 2 & 3 Displaying the base and trunk of the tree and indicating areas of dead tissue removed and splitting as the tree's vascular tissue and bark has died and become separated from the underlying wood.

Figures 4 & 5 Displaying the base of the tree with the root crown exposed by this consultant.

Figures 6 & 7 Displaying sections of the defoliated crown and indicating sections of dead and lifted bark visible from ground level.