

## 20. MONCKS BAY ESPLANADE RESERVE – LANDSCAPING

<b>Officer responsible</b> Parks & Waterways Manager	<b>Author</b> Warwick Scadden, Parks & Waterways Area Advocate, DDI 941 6614
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The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with background to the issue of landscaping at the Moncks Bay esplanade reserve car parking area, the preparation of a landscape plan and the conflict which has arisen through the planting of a Phoenix Palm without appropriate community consultation. (Refer also to clauses 26.2 and 26.3.)

The report also seeks the Board's approval of the attached landscape plan for consultation with the Redcliffs community.

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the latter half of 2001 a landscape plan was prepared in conjunction with the Christchurch Yacht Club for the car park on the esplanade reserve and Yacht Club facilities at Moncks Bay.

The plan was prepared to cater for the parking of cars and boat trailers with facilities for seating, fishing and washing down of boats incorporated within the layout. Proposed planting included seven Phoenix Palms, two native Matipo shrubs and associated ground cover plants.

The landscape plan was approved by the Christchurch Yacht Club committee in mid 2002. An estimate of \$70,000 was received for the development of the car park. As this funding was not available from the Parks and Waterways Capital Works budget, it was considered that public consultation should be delayed until funding became available. The alternative was to proceed with public consultation and then be unable to implement an agreed plan through lack of funding.

### PLANTING OF PHOENIX PALM

In March 2003, the Yacht Club requested that a start be made on planting the palm trees. As no funding was available, the Parks and Waterways Area Advocate advised that palms might be available from private gardens for removal, but any opportunity to procure a palm privately would need to be investigated and costs established for planting.

Within a few days, the Yacht Club had located a palm and an estimate was sought for transplanting. Before a quotation was obtained by the Council (within eight days), the Yacht Club had obtained a price and the Community Advocate was advised at 9pm on 9 April that the palm tree was to be transplanted to Moncks Bay at 9am on Thursday, 10 April. The Community Advocate was advised that the Yacht Club was arranging its own transport and landscape architect advice.

Although no community consultation had been done due to the rapid turn of events, as the Parks and Waterways Area Advocate's first priority was public safety, he sited the position for the palm and ensured that the contractor had a Health and Safety Plan. The palm was planted on the Moncks Bay esplanade reserve on Thursday, 10 April.

### COMMUNITY MEETINGS

As a result of residents' adverse reactions to the palm, a meeting was held on site at 3.30pm on 10 April 2003. At that meeting, the Parks and Waterways Area Advocate and Community Advocate met with 10 residents including Yacht Club committee members to discuss the situation. Councillor Cox attended.

The majority of residents at the meeting were angry that the palm had been planted without any consultation. An apology was given for not following the normal Council procedure and an explanation given that staff procedure had been overridden at a political level. At this meeting, it was agreed that the palm would stay in position until a meeting on 1 May could consider several options.

As agreed on 10 April, a second community meeting was held at 4pm on Thursday, 1 May 2003 at the Yacht Club. This meeting was attended by 32 people, some of whom were not local residents. Dennis Preston (Landscape Architect) presented plans and photo montages of six options for the landscape of the car park. Details of the 6 plans presented follow:

- (i) Original plan with seven palms.
- (ii) Three palms along the road frontage and native planting along the water's edge.
- (iii) Two palms along the road frontage without any tall native planting along the water's edge.
- (iv) New Zealand Cabbage Trees in groups along the road frontage and along the water's edge with ground cover plants.

- (v) A combination of Pohutukawa, Ngaio and Matipo along the road frontage and along the water's edge.
- (vi) Planting to consist of either New Zealand native or exotic material, but not to exceed 600mm high.

Comments taken from those attending the meeting about the various options are outlined in the attached Appendix I. It was agreed that a further meeting was necessary after the feedback on each of the six options was analysed with further refinements.

Councillor David Cox and Community Board member Linda Rutland attended that meeting.

As agreed on 1 May, a third community meeting was held at 4pm, on Tuesday 10 June 2003. This meeting was held at the Yacht Club and attended by approximately 30 people. Dennis Preston presented plans and photo montages of three options (resulting from feedback at the 1 May meeting). Details of the 3 plans presented follow:

- (i) Three palms along road frontage (one either side of the entrance to the car park and one adjacent to the Yacht Club).
- (ii) A combination of New Zealand Cabbage Trees along the road frontage in groups either side of the car park entrance and two Pohutukawas.
- (iii) Ground cover planting, maximum height 600mm along the entire road frontage.

All three options included ground cover planting (maximum 600mm) at road frontage and no planting on the water frontage.

Councillor David Cox attended that meeting.

Comments received at the meeting are outlined in the attached Appendix II.

#### **COMMUNITY'S VIEWS**

The feedback received, as outlined in the attached appendices, shows wide-ranging community views. For example, some of the immediate neighbours are not in favour of the palm tree or any tree plantings because of obstruction to their views and the mismatch of the palm tree species with the Estuary area; while the Yacht Club and some other neighbours are in favour of the palm tree planting to provide an upgrade to the area and a height balance to this frontage. From the discussions held to date, agreement cannot be reached on whether planting should be of New Zealand natives or exotics, the composition of the planting or the amount. The one aspect on which there is general agreement is that there not be any planting near the water's edge of the car park.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Having analysed the community feedback with Dennis Preston (Landscape Architect), the attached plan incorporating three palm trees with low ground cover planting (maximum height 600mm) is proposed for public consultation. It is suggested that the existing palm remain in its present position, a second palm be planted adjacent to the Yacht Club building and a third palm be located southeast of the car park entrance way. It is felt that this planting would give a balance to the overall frontage and would help to visually soften the building, creating a link with palms in the nearby residential properties and those along the main road from Sumner and Clifton. While the palms have a canopy, views can be maintained through to the Estuary and sea, whereas the comment regularly made about Pohutukawa in this context is that they have a dense structure and would block views. Phoenix Palms can also be maintained and trimmed to ensure minimum obstruction for immediate neighbours from their upstairs windows.

It should be noted that with any of the landscape plan options the existing very untidy shrubbery consisting of self-seeded Ngaios to heights in excess of 3 metres will be removed assisting current sight lines through to the Estuary.

This proposal should now be distributed for public submissions. It is suggested that the area from Shag Rock to Moncks Spur, incorporating the Moncks Bay and Redcliffs community be included in the consultation.

**Staff****Recommendation:**

1. That the Board approve the attached plan for community consultation, including the option of three Phoenix Palm trees with ground cover which does not exceed 600mm.
2. That community consultation include the area from Shag Rock to Moncks Spur, incorporating the Moncks Bay and Redcliffs community including the Redcliffs Residents' Association.

**Chairperson's****Recommendation:**

For discussion.