



4. RICCARTON/WIGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE REPORT OF 11 APRIL 2000

The purpose of this report is to submit the outcomes of the Environmental Committee meeting held on Tuesday 11 April 2000.

1. JAMELL PLACE SILVER BIRCH STREET TREES

Following an approach by some residents seeking the Board's reconsideration not to remove the silver birch trees in Jamell Place, the Board has decided that this issue should be revisited by this Committee.

At this meeting the Committee received a deputation from Ms D Doody, and Mr T G Scandrett, who advised that they represented a further six residents of Jamell Place.

Whilst both attendees commented on the nuisance factors, property damage, and footpath damage, a compromise solution was offered.

A proposed replacement programme would see the 14 silver birch and 7 claret ash trees being reduced, to 11 and 5 trees respectively.

On behalf of the Parks Unit, Craig Taylor noted that the silver birch trees in question were healthy and structurally sound; the Parks Unit would not, therefore, favour their removal.

The nuisance factor of the silver birch trees (and the consequential level of complaints received) was acknowledged; the suitability of this species as a street tree was seen as now being inappropriate.

Mr Taylor did caution the Committee that the compromise offered by the deputation would still see their problems existing, only a total replacement could eliminate the difficulties caused by the silver birch trees.

Most members of the Committee favoured the option of complete replacement, rather than the compromise offered.

2. SHOWGATE RESERVE TREES

The Parks Unit has recently received a petition signed by 25 residents of Murfitt Place and Showgate Avenue requesting the removal of the poplar tree adjacent to 2 Murfitt Place. The residents' main area of concern with the existing tree is the sticky yellow substance which is exuded by the buds of the tree in spring and summer.

The Parks Unit has also received a formal request for other poplar trees adjacent to neighbouring properties to be removed for the same reasons.

A landscape plan, which was circulated for public comment in August 1994, indicated that once the new plantings in the reserve became established, thinning out of the existing poplar trees (removal of 30%) would take place. With this in mind the Parks Unit considered that the removal of approximately one third of the trees could help to alleviate the problems being encountered by the residents.

A letter box drop was circulated on 24 February, 2000 asking the residents to show their preference for:

1. I support the removal of approximately one third of the poplar trees
- OR**
2. I do not support the removal of approximately one third of the poplar trees.

Comments were also sought.

A total of 84 submissions were returned. Some submissions returned included more than one person eg husband and wife, so the response per resident was:

76 residents supported the removal of one third of the poplar trees.
40 residents wanted the trees retained.

A petition has also be received from local residents who wish to express their concern and opposition to the suggested removal of existing trees in the Showgate Reserve. 50 residents have signed the petition.

These trees are a major landscape feature of the reserve and as they are in a healthy and stable condition would ordinarily be retained. However as the residents' complaints relate to an actual problem which will not diminish with time, the Parks Unit recommended that the trees which were indicated on a plan (provided to the Committee) be removed and that replacement planting be carried out. Also, that the remaining trees adjacent to property boundaries be reviewed in a further five years time once the replacement trees are established.

The tree closest to the transmission lines (which are on the north side of the reserve) is considered by Transpower's vegetation contractor to be too close to the high voltage lines, and the Council is now obligated to allow the tree to be pruned or removed, at Transpower's cost.

All those residents who had responded were invited to the meeting, to address the Committee.

The following residents addressed the meeting:

Mr I Bartram
Mr L Earl
Mrs H Fineran

Mrs S Rickerby
Mr J Terewi

As the organiser of the 50 signatory petition seeking retention of all the trees, Mr Bartram commented on the (apparent) discrepancy of the submission response numbers, the catchment drop initiated by the Parks Unit, and of the desire to retain the trees, being a feature of the streetscape.

The other speakers spoke in support of removing the trees. Issues of damage to vehicles, the interior of houses (being affected by the yellow sticky buds) and the need to tidy up the fall of buds were discussed. Members asked questions of the residents, and sought comment from Craig Taylor and Anne Cosson.

The Committee **agreed** with a suggestion (from Councillor Keast) that the Parks Unit should be involved in assessing residential subdivision schemes, when lodged with the Council, where similar situations could be identified and resolved.

Whilst the Committee were supportive of the officer's recommendations, they considered that a three year review period (rather than five years) was more appropriate.

The Committee Chairperson thanked all the residents who were present, and for the presentations made.

A submission was also received from the Riccarton Park Residents' Association seeking the retention of all the trees.

The Board **decided**:

1. To recommend to the Parks and Recreation Committee:
 - That the complete replacement of the silver birch trees in Jamell Place be undertaken and
 - In respect of the Showgate Reserve, that the trees, as indicated on the plan be removed and replaced with a more suitable species, and that the trees which remain on the property boundaries be reviewed in a further three years as to their retention.
2. That this recommendation be communicated to all residents of Jamell Place and Denley Gardens, inviting their responses.
3. That the Riccarton Park Residents' Association be thanked for their submission, and advised of the Board's recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Committee.