

8. MACROCARPA TREE REMOVAL – 81A TAYLORS MISTAKE ROAD

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment, DDI 941-8656
Officer responsible:	Greenspace Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the removal of a single macrocarpa tree (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) located outside 81A Taylor's Mistake Road. The tree is now perceived to be a nuisance by residents as it is causing structural damage to the boundary wall, and root lifting of the lawn, of the property at 81A Taylor's Mistake Road.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. In March 2006 Harcourt's Real Estate Agents, acting as representatives of the property owners, approached the Council with a request to remove the macrocarpa tree which lies directly on the property boundary of 81A Taylor's Mistake Road and the Council road reserve. The tree is perceived to be a nuisance causing both structural damage to a boundary wall and raising the lawns of the adjacent property.
3. The tree that the applicant would like removed is a macrocarpa (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) which appears to be healthy, and is of reasonable size, approximately 7 metres in height with a canopy spread of 12 metres. The tree is situated mid way across the property boundary on the corner intersection between Smugglers Cove and Taylor's Mistake Road. It is located directly behind the large stone feature placed as an entranceway to Smuggler's Cove. It currently contributes significantly to the amenity of the street landscape being the largest tree of any notable size on this section of Taylor's Mistake Road. Photographs of the tree showing its form, position in the street, and predicted growth rates, **are attached**.
4. Due to the growth characteristics of macrocarpa trees, it will not be long before this particular specimen outgrows its current position. The tree canopy structure and growth rates predicted will lead to, within the next 3 – 5 years, the outer lateral limbs growing directly over the roof of the adjacent property and a height increase that will create view restrictions for neighbouring properties located to the west of the tree. The attached photographs of the tree show the predicted extent to which the canopy shall spread over the next 5, 10, and 20 years. The tree is already causing some structural damage to the adjoining property as the attached photographs indicate. Within the immediate area of the macrocarpa tree there has been significant landscape planting which will over time be shaded out by the tree as it matures. If these plantings are to be retained and enhanced, the tree must be either pruned severely or removed.
5. It is possible to carry out remedial maintenance operations on the tree to reduce its size and also to reduce its shading effect on the local area. With correct arboricultural treatments we can sustain the tree in its present condition, or carry out reduction pruning to provide a smaller tree. These operations, however, are not inexpensive, as each pruning operation would cost around \$500 - \$750, and in order to retain the tree at a set size, they would have to be repeated as a regular three-yearly maintenance programme. Although these operations would reduce the canopy growth, the main stem and roots would continue to expand, compounding the damage to the boundary wall and adjacent lawns.
6. To remove the tree in its entirety and replant with a more appropriate species, for example, pohutukawa, would be a fiscally more prudent option. It would also provide the potential to enhance the landscape planting that has already been completed in the immediate area. The estimated cost would be approximately \$1500 (excluding GST) for removal with a further \$300 - \$500 (excluding GST) to cover replanting and associated maintenance operations. Those neighbours adjacent and opposite would be notified prior to any work taking place.
7. Should the removal of the existing tree be approved by the Board, replacement planting of another tree must be considered. However, the exact species to be planted will need further investigation in conjunction with consultation with the surrounding neighbours. At this point, officers recommend planting two pohutukawa trees at either side of the rock feature.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8. Funding is available in the Greenspace Unit operational budget under street tree maintenance.
9. The tree is not listed as protected under the Christchurch City Plan therefore resource consent is not required for this work.
10. All work will be carried out by a Council approved contractor with the appropriate health and safety and work site management controls in place.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board approves:

1. That the macrocarpa tree (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) located outside 81A Taylors Mistake Road be removed with all operations facilitated by the Christchurch City Council.
2. That replacement planting with a new tree or trees be undertaken to Christchurch City Council standards. The species and location of the replacement tree plantings shall be determined by a Greenspace arborist in consultation with the surrounding neighbours.
3. That the applicant shall pay 50% of the detailed costs of:
 - (a) The felling and removal costs to remove the macrocarpa tree (*Cupressus macrocarpa*).
 - (b) The purchase and planting of two replacement trees plus associated maintenance costs to establish the new trees over the next three years.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the staff recommendations be adopted.

OPTIONS

11. There are three options:

- (a) Do nothing/maintain the status quo and decline the request to remove the tree.

This is not considered a viable option as the tree is already causing structural damage to the adjoining property. The predicted growth pattern and rate indicates that there will be further adverse effects on the neighbouring properties and the streetscape plantings.

- (b) Decline the request to remove the tree but undertake remedial maintenance operations.

It would be possible to undertake remedial maintenance operations to either maintain the tree in its current state or reduce its size. Although this would reduce the canopy size of the tree, the main stem and roots would continue to grow and cause further damage to the adjoining property. Significant costs would be incurred on an ongoing basis as the work would need to be repeated as a regular three-yearly programme. This option is not considered feasible from a financial perspective, nor will it prevent further damage to the adjoining property, and is therefore not recommended.

- (c) Approve the removal of the tree, and the planting of a replacement tree (or trees) following consultation with the surrounding neighbours, with the applicant meeting 50% of the costs.

This option will provide the simplest, cheapest and quickest option. The removal of the tree will prevent further damage to the adjoining property due to the trees predicted growth rate and pattern. The planting of a replacement tree (or trees) of a more suitable species for the location and conditions will mitigate the effects of the removal of the tree and improve the general landscape appearance of the streetscape.

PREFERRED OPTION

12. The preferred option is option (c).

Under this option, the proposed course of action would be as follows:

- (a) Removal of the street tree (including stump/roots).
- (b) Planting of a new tree or trees to Christchurch City Council standards. The species and location of the new trees shall be determined by a Greenspace arborist after consultation with the surrounding neighbours.

ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

The Preferred Option

Approve the removal of the tree and the planting of a replacement tree with the applicant meeting 50% of costs.

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	Nil	Nil
Cultural	Nil	Nil
Environmental	Nil	Nil
Economic	Economic benefit to applicant as no further damage to property or repairs required; May facilitate the sale of their property; Less financial cost than ongoing remedial work on the existing tree	Partial costs of removal and replacement met by applicant
Extent to which community outcomes are achieved: Primary alignment with community outcome: A city with a sustainable and natural environment.		
Impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities: None identified.		
Effects on Maori: None identified.		
Consistency with existing Council policies: Yes; Consistent with Tree Planting in Streets Policy.		
Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest: No persons other than applicant were considered to be directly affected. Applicant seeks removal of the tree. It is proposed to notify neighbouring residents of intention to remove the tree and consult over replacement species.		
Other relevant matters: None identified.		

Maintain The Status Quo (If Not Preferred Option)

Do nothing/maintain the status quo and decline the request to remove the tree.

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	Nil	Nil
Cultural	Nil	Nil
Environmental	Nil	Nil
Economic	No costs for removal incurred at present but may be negated at future date.	Economic cost to applicant in terms of ongoing damage and repairs to property; May affect future sale of property; May incur greater costs if removal is required at a future date.

Extent to which community outcomes are achieved:

Primary alignment with community outcome: A city with a sustainable and natural environment.

Impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities:

None identified.

Effects on Maori:

None identified

Consistency with existing Council policies:

Yes.

Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest:

No persons other than applicant were considered to be directly affected. Applicant seeks removal of tree due to damage to property and to facilitate sale of property.

Other relevant matters:

None identified.

Option 3

Decline the request to remove the tree but undertake remedial operations to either maintain current size, or reduce size, of the tree.

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	Nil	Nil
Cultural	Nil	Nil
Environmental	Nil	Nil
Economic	Nil	Significant ongoing financial cost to Council due to requirement for ongoing maintenance programme; Financial costs to property owner and/or Council due to continuing damage to property caused by roots and trunk.

Extent to which community outcomes are achieved:
Primary alignment with community outcome: A city with a sustainable and natural environment.

Impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities:
None identified.

Effects on Maori:
None identified.

Consistency with existing Council policies:
Yes.

Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest: No persons other than applicant were considered to be directly affected. Applicant seeks removal of tree due to damage to property and to facilitate sale of the property.

Other relevant matters:
None identified.