

## 9. STREET TREE REMOVAL - WAKEFIELD AVENUE

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	General Manager, City Environment, DDI 941-8656
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Greenspace Manager
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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Board approval for the removal of a street tree situated on the grass berm outside 34 Wakefield Avenue, Sumner, to enable the construction of a single vehicle access to a proposed multi-unit residential development. (See attachment).

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. A request has been received from WJA Builders through their agents Middleton Williams & Co Ltd, and the Environmental Services Unit Linwood Area Development Team, for the removal of a street tree growing in the grass berm outside 34 Wakefield Avenue, Sumner.
3. The site is currently occupied by a building and car park for the Returned Servicemens' Association Sumner/Redcliffs Ltd. The applicant proposes to redevelop the site with eight new residential units, and the removal of the street tree will enable the construction of a new vehicle crossing to the site.
4. Resource consent (RMA20015053) for the construction of eight new residential units contained in one two-storied building with basement car parking was first applied for by the Returned Servicemens' Association Sumner/Redcliffs Ltd on November 2003, and granted 18 January 2005. A new resource consent application (RMA20022143), incorporating amendments to the building design, was subsequently lodged by WJA Builders on 15 February 2006, and is currently suspended.
5. The presence of this street tree was not indicated on either application and was first brought to the attention of the Greenspace Unit on 10 March 2006.
6. The applicants propose to redevelop the site with a single building containing eight two-storied residential units with basement car parking.
7. All vehicular access to the site will be via a single 4.6 metre wide entrance from Wakefield Avenue into a basement garage which is located in the south-east corner of the site. A cobblestone pathway separates the garage entrance from the boundary with the adjoining property to the south, making a total entrance width of 6.0 metres.
8. The tree is situated 4.5 metres from this boundary.
9. The proposed development will require a new vehicle crossing to be formed as the existing crossing is not in a suitable location for the design of the new complex. The position of the basement entrance to the rear south-east corner of the site enables the residential units to have outdoor living areas with access to sunlight on the northern side of the building. The positioning of the vehicle crossing to the south-east also preserves a section of stone wall that is part of the ANZAC Memorial Gates, dedicated 25 April 1947, situated across the north-east corner of the site.
10. There are also other street trees on the berm to the east of the existing crossing.
11. To alter the position of the basement entrance, and hence the new vehicle crossing, so that it is clear of this street tree would require a major alteration to the engineering design of the building.
12. Arborists from the Greenspace Unit have assessed the tree as follows:

Species: Prunus x Kanzan  
Hybrid: yedoensis x serrulata purpurascens  
Common Name: Flowering Cherry  
Height: 3.5 metres  
Crown spread: 2.3 metres

13. The tree is in excellent condition, with a good canopy structure and is showing vigorous growth. It is free from major structural defects and is of a size currently that would allow for transplantation. There is no arboricultural reason for its removal.
14. There are very few quality trees located along Wakefield Avenue at present and the loss of this tree will reduce the amenity value of the street to some degree.
15. The species, condition and size lend themselves to the prediction of a successful transplantation should that option be chosen. However, the current location of the tree under the electricity supply lines and above the water main is not ideal as these factors would add significantly to the cost element and risk to infrastructure if relocation is to be carried out. Relocation costs are estimated to be in the region of \$1,800 (GST exclusive) due to the fact that power and water services will be affected by the operation should it be undertaken.
16. If the existing tree is removed, there are several potential planting positions located around the immediate vicinity of 34 Wakefield Avenue for the planting of a replacement tree. Greenspace Unit arborists have calculated the cost of the removal of the tree in question and the provision of a replacement tree, including planting and establishment costs, to be \$1,027.86 (GST exclusive). This does not include the costs of removal of the existing accessway and reconstruction of the berm.
17. The applicant's agent has indicated that the applicant accepts that a replacement tree will need to be planted on the berm.
18. To create a potential replanting site and improve the general landscape amenity of the berm, the original vehicle crossing will need to be returned to grass berm once a new vehicle crossing is constructed. This would include the removal of the sealed surface and sub-surface of the crossing, installing kerbing, soil and grass to the Christchurch City Council standards and specifications. It is understood that this will be undertaken under the resource and building consent process.

#### **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

19. Funding for the tree removal and replacement planting, including full reinstatement of the berm, will be met by the owner of the property as part of the new vehicle crossing construction.
20. All tree work will be carried out by a Council approved contractor with the appropriate health and safety and work site management controls in place.
21. The tree is not listed as protected under the provisions of the Christchurch City Plan therefore resource consent is not required for this work.
22. Resource and building consents for the development have been applied for and are currently suspended pending further information.
23. A separate vehicle crossing permit will be required and it is understood that this is yet to be applied for.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Board approve Option C:

1. That the flowering cherry tree located outside 34 Wakefield Avenue be removed, and replacement planting with a new tree be undertaken to Christchurch City Council standards, the species and location of the new tree to be determined by a Greenspace arborist.
2. That the applicant pay the full cost of removing the existing tree, and of providing and planting the replacement tree.

#### **CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION**

That the staff recommendation be adopted.

## **OPTIONS**

24. 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 it would leave the Council exposed to a charge of being unreasonable or obstructive to access to the new development.

- (B) Decline the request to remove the tree but allow for the transplanting of the tree.

The species, condition and size of the tree lend themselves to the prediction of a successful transplantation. However the current location of the tree in relation to electricity and water services would add significantly to the cost element and risk to infrastructure if relocation is to be carried out. Taking into account the tree's age and location in relation to services, this option is not considered feasible from a financial perspective, and is therefore not recommended.

- (C) Approve the removal of the tree and the planting of a replacement tree, with the applicant meeting full costs.

This option will provide the simplest, cheapest and quickest solution. The planting of a replacement tree, in conjunction with the removal and replanting of the original vehicle crossing, will mitigate the effects of removal of the tree and improve the general landscape appearance of the streetscape. It is suggested that work on the removal of the tree does not commence until all other consents, including resource and building consents, and vehicle crossing permits, are granted, and work has begun on the development.

## **PREFERRED OPTION**

25. 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) Replacement planting with a new tree to Christchurch City Council standards. The species and location for the new tree shall be determined in liaison with a Greenspace arborist.