

11. 18 AKAROA STREET - STREET TREE REMOVALS

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment
Officer responsible:	Transport and Greenspace Unit Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval for the removal of two street trees situated on the grass berm on Dawe Street, adjacent to 18 Akaroa Street, to enable the construction of two vehicle accesses to a proposed elderly persons' development.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. In June 2006 Mr Steve Dench approached the Council with a request to remove one midget crab apple (*Malus micromalus*) street tree, on the berm of Dawe Street to allow a new vehicle crossing to be constructed. The address for the property is 18 Akaroa Street, Shirley, which is a corner section. However, once the site is developed the entrances to this property will be onto Dawe Street.
3. Building consent for the construction of four elderly persons' homes was applied for by Mr Dench on 3 February 2006 and granted by Council on 21 March 2006. The trees on the berm were not identified by the applicant on the design plans submitted.
4. Following a site inspection it was discovered that the proposed new vehicle crossings would, in fact, affect two trees on the berm. The trees which the applicant would like removed are mature midget crab apples. The midget crab apples have good vigour and vitality, are of reasonable size (approximately 5.4m in height with a canopy spread of 3.6m) and moderate form. The trees are situated mid-way across the grass berm in front of the property on the Dawe Street boundary, and contribute to the amenity of the street landscape (see attached). They are two of a group of ten midget crab apple trees. These trees create an avenue affect for Dawe Street.
5. Both midget crab apples require removal to accommodate the approved plans. Construction of the new units is nearly complete and it is understood that it would be very difficult to redesign the entrances to ensure the street trees remain. This is due to the proximity of the new dwellings to each other and subsequent limited space available to relocate each vehicle crossing.
6. Both trees are currently encroaching within the growth limit zones of the overhead services (see attached photographs). Pruning to achieve legally required clearance from the services would compromise the form and amenity value of the trees.
7. Should the Community Board approve the removal of these trees, it is proposed to replace the lost amenity value by planting Japanese maple trees close to the location of the existing trees. There are no other suitable planting locations currently vacant in Dawe Street.
8. This case does highlight a problem in the building/resource consent process in that the position of street trees are not always considered in relation to the building layout on the site and, in particular, the alignment of the garage and driveway crossing that is likely to affect them. Consent for buildings and driveway crossings may therefore be granted without having regard to the tree. The ability of community boards to make decisions under their delegated authority on the removal/retention of street trees is therefore pre-empted and/or compromised by these initial consents.
9. The whole process is, however, currently being investigated by the Units concerned with a view to establishing a procedure that ensures that the preservation of existing street trees is considered from an early planning stage. It is proposed that the accurate position of street trees will be shown by any applicant developer on all consent applications and plans. At this early stage, every reasonable effort will be made by the Council, in consultation with the developer, to position a driveway sufficiently clear of an affected tree and to construct it in a manner that ensures the tree's preservation in a safe and healthy condition. If this is not possible for some reason, any proposal to remove a street tree will still be subject to Council approval along with any conditions under the appropriate delegation.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

10. Any healthy street tree can only be removed with approval from the appropriate Community Board and any protected street tree can only be removed by a successful application under the Resource Management Act. These trees are not listed as protected under the provisions of the Christchurch City Plan.
11. The actual cost to remove the trees and replace them with trees of approximately two metres height that have been grown in a 95 litre container with a stem girth at root collar of 60-80mm, dependent on tree species, (hereinafter referred to as pb95) is \$630.
12. The valuation of each tree using STEM is \$ 6,500 per tree.
13. STEM is the national arboricultural industry standard for evaluating and valuing amenity trees. STEM is used as a valuation tool by other Councils such as Auckland, Tauranga, Lower Hutt and Wellington.
14. STEM valuations on the trees concerned are detailed on the attached valuation sheets.
15. Removing and replacing the trees without obtaining reimbursement from the applicant is inconsistent with the current LTCCP as funding has not been allocated in the Transport and Greenspace Unit operational budget for the removal of healthy trees to allow for vehicle crossings.
16. Obtaining reimbursement from the applicant to remove and replace the trees is consistent with the current LTCCP.
17. All tree work will be carried out by Council's Street Tree Maintenance Contractor.

Option (A)

18. Remove both of the crab apple trees and replace them with Japanese maples.
19. Actual cost of \$630 to remove and replace the trees is borne by the applicant.

Option (B)

20. Remove both of the crab apple trees and replace them with Japanese maples.
21. Actual cost to remove and replace the trees of \$630 is shared evenly between Council and the applicant.

Option (C)

22. Remove both of the crab apple trees and replace them with Japanese maples.
23. All costs to be borne by the applicant including the cost of removing and replacing the trees, and the value of the trees using the STEM valuation method. Use the funds obtained from the value of the trees to remove the rest of the trees in the street and replace them with pb95 grade Japanese maples.
24. Total Cost \$13,630.

Option (D)

25. Status quo. Do not remove either of the two crab apple trees. Trees are to be maintained to accepted international arboricultural standards. Vehicle crossings are to be redesigned so that they do not interfere with either the roots or the canopy of either of the two trees.
26. Do nothing/maintain the status quo and decline the request to remove the tree.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board resolve to adopt Option (A) and approve:

- (a) That the two midget crab apple trees located on the Dawe Street berm outside 18 Akaroa Street (Tree ID 42510 and Tree ID 42511) be removed to allow for vehicle crossings to be constructed.
- (b) That the two midget crab apples are replaced with two pb95 grade Japanese maples.
- (c) That the actual costs of \$630 for removing the trees and replacing them with pb95 grade Japanese maples is borne by the applicant.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATIONS

That the staff recommendations be adopted.

Chairperson's Comment:

As outlined in paragraph 8 of the report, a serious problem exists within the organisation in terms of building and resource consents being granted without the impact on local existing trees being taken into consideration. It is hoped that this issue can be remedied in such a way that, in future, healthy trees will not be compromised because of approvals being given for building works to proceed.