

11. 182 TO 202 CENTAURUS ROAD - POTENTIAL STREET TREE REMOVAL

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment, DDI 941 8608
Officer responsible:	Unit Manager Transport and Greenspace
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to obtain a decision from the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board on whether to remove or retain the seven Claret Ash street trees which are located between 182 and 202 Centaurus Road. (**Attachment 1** refers)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board has received a deputation from Evan Paterson with endorsement from Malcolm Williams and Ken Grey who have concerns with the shading effects of the street trees as they are located on the northern boundary of these properties. They have a supporting letter from Orion dated 8 April 2010. (refer **Attachment 2**)
3. Following on from a staff memorandum to the Board on the 18 June 2010, the Board decided "that staff provide a report to the incoming Board on the street tree condition at 182 to 202 Centaurus Road taking into account the Orion letter of 8 April 2010 supplied by Mr Paterson, the street amenity value (including streetscape), in consultation with the immediate neighbourhood, and giving consideration to replacing these trees including the cost of replacements and the source of funds. It was also requested that the report comment on proposed road treatments for this area."
4. The trees have been inspected using an industry recognised system of Visual Tree Assessment (VTA). The trees have been inspected from ground level. No aerial inspection was carried out or samples taken for analysis. The following observations were made.
 - (a) There are seven mature Claret Ash *Fraxinus oxycarpa* 'Rayward' between 182 and 202 Centaurus Road which are situated in large berms to the north boundaries of the properties.
 - (b) The trees are considered mature with full crowns indicative of the species, with the majority of the trees having multiple branch attachments from a single short stem base which is also indicative of the species.
 - (c) The trees have been categorized as average condition using the Christchurch City Council's condition assessment criteria.
5. Public consultation was undertaken on the proposed tree removals with 26 comment forms being returned. Of these, 12 supported the removal, and 14 did not support the removal, with most providing additional comments. Further details are provided under the "Consultation Fulfilment" section of this report.
6. For the reasons given in paragraph 5, staff recommend that the Board decline the request to remove the seven Claret Ash trees and continue to maintain them to internationally recognised and accepted arboricultural practices, standards and procedures.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. The cost to remove the seven trees and grind the stumps is estimated at \$9,418. The cost to replace the seven trees, including the cost of watering and mulching over the first three years is estimated at \$2,352.

8. The STEM evaluation for each tree outside the relevant property numbers is;

Outside 182 Centaurus Road the STEM value is \$9,800 and the STEM score is 84. With nuisance the STEM value is \$9,200 and the STEM score 78.

Outside 184a Centaurus Road the STEM value is \$9,800 and the STEM score is 84. With nuisance the STEM value is \$9,200 and the STEM score 78.

Outside 188 Centaurus Road the STEM value is \$9,800 and the STEM score is 84. With nuisance the STEM value is \$9,200 and the STEM score 78.

Outside 1 Parklands Drive the STEM value is \$9,800 and the STEM score is 84. With nuisance the STEM value is \$9,200 and the STEM score 78.

Outside 196 Centaurus Road the STEM value is \$9,800 and the STEM score is 84. With nuisance the STEM value is \$9,200 and the STEM score 78.

Outside 198 Centaurus Road the STEM value is \$9,800 and the STEM score is 84. With nuisance the STEM value is \$9,200 and the STEM score 78.

Outside 202 Centaurus Road the STEM value is \$7,200 and the STEM score is 72. With nuisance the STEM value is \$6,600 and the STEM score 66.

This is a collective valuation of \$66,000. Allowing for nuisance the valuation is \$61,800.

- (a) *STEM (A Standard Tree Evaluation Method) is the New Zealand national arboricultural industry standard for evaluating and valuing amenity trees by assessing their condition and contribution to amenity along with other distinguishable attributes such as stature, historic or scientific significance.*

Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2009-19 LTCCP budgets?

9. Yes.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

10. The Greenspace Manager has the following delegation with respect to trees:

"In consultation with any other units affected and the relevant Community Board, authorise the planting or removal of trees from any reserve or other property under the Manager's control".

11. While the Transport and Greenspace Manager has the delegation to remove the trees, current practice is that in most cases requests to remove healthy and structurally sound and healthy trees are placed before the appropriate Community Board for a decision.

12. Under the delegations to Community Boards, the Board has the authority to "plant, maintain and remove trees on reserves, parks and roads" under the control of the Council within the policy set by the Council.

13. Protected trees can only be removed by a successful application under the Resource Management Act. These trees are not listed as protected under the provision of the Christchurch City Plan.

14. The following City Plan Policies may be of some benefit when considering the options:

VOLUME 2: SECTION 4 CITY IDENTITY

4.2.1 Policy: Tree Cover

15. To promote amenity values in the urban area by maintaining and enhancing the tree cover present in the City.
 - (a) Tree cover and vegetation make an important contribution to amenity values in the City. Through the redevelopment of sites, existing vegetation is often lost and not replaced. The City Plan protects those trees identified as “heritage” or “notable” and the subdivision process protects other trees which are considered to be “significant”. The highest degree of protection applies to heritage trees.
 - (b) Because Christchurch is largely built on a flat plain, trees and shrubs play an important role in creating relief, contributing to visual amenity and attracting native birds.
 - (c) The amount of private open space available for new planting and to retain existing trees is influenced by rules concerning building density and setback from boundaries. The rules do not require new planting for residential development but landscaping is required in business zones.

4.2.2 Policy: Garden City

16. To recognise and promote the “Garden City” identity, heritage and character of Christchurch.
 - (a) A key aspect of achieving this policy will be maintaining and extending environments and vegetation types which compliment this image. A broad range of matters influence and contribute to this image, including the following:
 - (i) Tree-lined streets and avenues;
 - (ii) Parks and developed areas of open space.

14.3.2 Policy: “Garden City” image identity

17. To acknowledge and promote the “Garden City” identity of the City by protecting, maintaining and extending planting which compliments this image.

VOLUME 3: PART 8 SPECIAL PURPOSE ZONE

14.3.5 Street Trees

18. Nearly half the length of streets within the city contain street trees, but the presence of very high quality street trees which add considerable presence to streets and neighbourhoods is confined to a relatively small proportion of the road network. These streets add particular character and amenity of the city, either in the form of avenues which form points into the city, or an important part of the local character of particular streets.
19. An application to prune or remove the tree may be made to the District Court under The Property Law Amendment Act 1975.
20. The District Court can order the pruning or removal of a tree under the Property Law Amendment Act 1975.
21. The removal and replacement of the tree is to be completed by a Council approved contractor.

Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

22. Yes, as per above.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

23. Draft LTCCP 2009-19:

Streets and Transport: Page 81

- (a) Governance - By enabling the community to participate in decision making through consultation on plans and projects.
- (b) City Development - By providing a well-designed, efficient transport system and attractive street landscapes.

24. Retention of the tree is consistent with the Activity Management Plan provided the tree is structurally sound and healthy.

25. Removing and not replacing the tree is not consistent with the Activity Management Plan.

Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2009-19 LTCCP?

26. Yes, as above.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

27. Removing and replacing the tree would be consistent with the following strategies:

- (a) Christchurch City Biodiversity Strategy.
- (b) Christchurch Urban Design Vision.
- (c) Garden City Image as per the City Plan.

Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?

28. Yes, as above.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

29. A public information leaflet was distributed to approximately 140 households and absentee property owners in the vicinity of Centaurus Road, along with 14 identified key stakeholders groups and individuals. The leaflet was also available in local Council libraries and service centres, and on the Council's Have Your Say website.

30. A total of 26 comment forms were returned by residents, with many offering additional comments. There were three anonymous submissions. A total of 12 respondents supported the removal of the street trees, while 14 did not support the removal. A copy of the comments has been circulated under separate cover.

Support for removal of street trees			
	Yes	No	Total
Number of responses	12	14	26
%	46%	54%	100%

31. Nine of the 12 respondents who supported the removal of the trees provided additional comments. The most frequent reasons for supporting the removal were:

- (a) Branches break off and are a hazard to power-lines and on the footpath.
- (b) Leaves block storm-water drains and gutters.
- (c) Tree roots have damaged fences and storm-water drains.

- (d) The trees shade houses and gardens.
 - (e) More suitable replacement tree species should be planted.
32. All of the 14 respondents who did not support the removal of the trees provided additional comments. The most frequent reasons for opposing the removal were:
- (a) The trees contribution to the character of the street and wider area.
 - (b) The trees are healthy and not a hazard.
 - (c) The trees are deciduous and not likely to cause shading effects.
 - (d) Other trees in the neighbourhood are just as large.
 - (e) The property owners should have realised the trees would grow large.
 - (f) Pruning and trimming would be a better option.
 - (g) The trees should not be removed if there is no funding or timeframe for replacement plantings.
33. All respondents who provided contact details have been sent a final letter of reply thanking them for their input. The letter has also informed respondents that a report would be presented to the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board for their consideration. Details of the meetings were provided so that any interested people could request a deputation or attend.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board:

- (a) Decline the request to remove the seven Claret Ash street trees and continue to maintain them to internationally recognised and accepted arboricultural practices, standards and procedures.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

For discussion.

BACKGROUND

34. There are seven mature Claret Ash *Fraxinus oxycarpa* 'Raywood' between 182 and 202 Centaurus Road
35. The six larger trees were planted between 1967 and 1969. The smaller tree outside 202 Centaurus Road was planted in 1990.
36. The seven trees are situated in large grass berms to the north boundaries of the properties.
37. The seven trees are considered mature with full crowns and are some of the larger trees in this locality and are considered a high visual amenity asset.
38. The majority of the trees have multiple branch attachments from a single short stem base which is indicative of the species.
39. The trees have been categorized as average condition using the Christchurch City Council's condition assessment criteria.
40. In response to the Orion letter dated on the 8 April 2010, Council Arborist Martin Gohns responded in a memorandum to the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board on the 18 June 2010. He made the following comments:

"With regard to the first paragraph in the letter from Tim Pow of Orion, I would not disagree agree that there is published documentation regarding the species characteristics of claret ash and the potential for structurally weak branch unions, however there was little evidence of this and at the time of the inspection. The second paragraph relating to flowering cherries is a little misleading regarding multiple branch attachments and I am unaware of any issues around the city or published documentation regarding poor branch unions susceptible to failure".
41. Remedial works were carried out on these seven trees in October 2010. This involved pruning branches clear of power lines and reducing the end weight of lower branches extending over the properties. This remedial work was based on current Arboricultural Best Practice and in line with the current Christchurch City Council line clearing specifications.

OPTIONS

42. Decline the request to remove the seven Claret Ash street trees and continue to maintain them to internationally recognised and accepted arboricultural practices, standards and procedures.
43. Remove and replace the seven Claret Ash street trees. The costs are to be borne by the applicant(s). All work is to be carried out by an approved Council tree contractor.