

15. STREET TREE - 63 KINGSFORD STREET

RR 10332

Officer responsible Parks Manager	Author Gary Harrow, Area Parks Officer
Corporate Plan Output: Consultation and Advice p.9.4 text 6, text 46 Street Landscapes p.9.4.12	

The purpose of this report is to present a request from two residents of Kingsford Street to remove a street tree from outside their property. This report has been referred to the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board.

A request has been received from Mr and Mrs Rothwell to have the crab apple tree removed from the berm outside their ownership flat.

The reasons for the request are the mess that the tree creates, the long period of leaf drop and the invasion of roots into the adjacent garden. The residents request that it be replaced with a more suitable medium sized deciduous tree.

Further discussions with Mrs Rothwell identify that her husband is not well and neither of them are able to deal effectively with the amount of leaves that fall into their garden. There are other tall trees such as an elm and a conifer nearby, but the street tree drops its leaves over a much wider range of the months, ie November to April, instead of the normal autumn months of March to May. The leaves are leathery, do not compost down easily and create an incessant noise as they are blown around in their patio, even at nights, when they are kept awake.

Mrs Rothwell has always been proud of her summer garden but cannot get to it now as there are too many leaves. She states that even if a lot of the leaves are from other trees, the street tree leaves are still a nuisance.

In other parts of the city, the Parks Unit have removed crab apple trees because of the mess created by their fruit, the tendency for premature leaf fall and susceptibility to silver-leaf disease. The trees in Kingsford Street however are a different variety and have small or minute fruits (there are two varieties).

Because of this the Parks Unit sent out a questionnaire to the residents, of Kingsford Street, north of New Brighton Road, asking for their views on whether or not all the trees could be removed. Out of approximately 110 households, 40 replied, 26 wanted them removed and 14 did not. There was some very vocal opposition received to the removal of the trees, with one strong letter in opposition.

As an alternative, it was noticed that some of the trees lost their leaves earlier than others and it was thought that these could be removed, but still a considerable number of residents objected.

Another alternative would be to thin the crown of the tree. As the crown is very congested it is suggested that major thinning would result in some relief for Mr and Mrs Rothwell. Mrs Rothwell accepts this as an alternative, but wishes the Board and the Committee to consider removal, not the alternative.

Although a neighbour has offered to gather the leaves regularly, this is not a long-term solution and cannot be regulated by Council.

The tree itself is a fine specimen, not one of the type that loses its leaves before the others. Photographs of the tree are available to view at the meeting. Photocopies are attached.

The Parks Unit's view of the situation is that apart from the reasons put forward by the resident, there is no reason to remove the tree. It is requested that the Board consider that the pruning of the tree as outlined in the report would be sufficient to alleviate a lot of the nuisance caused by the tree.

The Parks Unit can also bring forward the replacement of the trees in this street and because of the opposition to 'clear felling', offer that new trees be planted where possible (and where requested) without all trees being felled immediately. The trees can then be removed gradually over the years.

The Burwood/Pegasus Community Board recommends:

1. That the tree not be removed.
2. That the tree be pruned as outlined in the report.
3. That the Parks Unit be requested to make a priority the replacement of trees in this street in consultation with the residents.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the Board's recommendation be adopted.