

<b>Officer responsible</b> Parks Manager	<b>Author</b> Craig Taylor, Project Co-ordinator Arboriculture
Corporate Plan Output: Street Tree Maintenance and Felling Citywide	

The purpose of this report is to provide information and seek comment on the removal of eight Liquidambar trees on Mirfield Place and the replacement of these trees with a more suitable species.

The matter will then be referred to the City Services Committee for a decision.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Liquidambar trees were planted in 1969 on the berm and are causing significant damage to the pavements and kerb and channel. This particular species of tree has the potential to out grow the area it is planted in with mature trees having a girth in excess of 1 metre in diameter. In streets such as Mirfield Place where the distance between the property boundary and the kerb is relatively narrow, they are no longer considered to be a suitable street tree. The current practice for this species is that they are now only planted in larger grass berms, road reserves or multi-laned median divided arterial roads where there are fewer restrictions to their height and root growth

If these trees are to remain in Mirfield Place, then the “life” of any repairs will be relatively short given that the current trees are approximately a third of their potential size. To regularly revisit a site carrying out remedial work is not a cost-effective use of resources

**TREE RETENTION**

Parks Unit and City Streets staff have recently reassessed the situation to investigate any opportunities to retain the existing trees. Mirfield Place is currently 9 metres wide (kerb to kerb). The minimum width for streets as stated in the City Plan is 7.5 metres (kerb to kerb). Narrowing Mirfield Place to a 7.5 metre carriageway would provide an additional 750mm clearance on either side of the street. Although this would alleviate the problem in the short term, there would still be insufficient area for the eventual size of these trees.

Realignment of the entire kerb and channel is not a cost effective option due to the overall cost for this type of work and the fact that the problem would reoccur within a relatively short time frame. Apart from the immediate areas being affected by the trees, the remainder of the kerb and channel is in a satisfactory condition and does not warrant replacing at this stage.

Building the kerb out around each tree was also considered. However this requires the installation of a sump on either side of the “build out” to maintain the correct grade and ensure water flow along the channel. Once again this is a very expensive solution and not seen as a cost-effective option given that it would only provide a temporary respite in the long term.

**RESIDENTS VIEWS**

Following a letter of complaint, which suggested that the majority of the residents would like the trees removed, a letter was circulated to all the residents seeking their views on the possible removal of the trees.

Of the thirteen households in Mirfield Place, ten preferred the option of removing the Liquidambar and three asked for the trees to be retained.

A copy of the initial letter and subsequent reply **follows**.

#### **PROPOSED WORK**

Given the response from Mirfield Place residents the Parks Unit would propose to remove all the existing Liquidambar trees in Mirfield Place prior to replacing them with a more suitable tree species next planting season. The proposal is to remove the existing liquidambers around April 2000 with the planting of the replacement trees programmed for June 2000 when the Parks Unit commences its annual Street Tree planting programme.

#### **REPLACEMENT SPECIES**

Some residents expressed reservations about New Zealand Kowhais as the replacement species. The existing berm width and location of underground services restricts the range of suitable tree species for Mirfield Place. However in acknowledging residents feedback, the Parks Unit proposes to come back to residents with some suitable alternatives if the proposed tree replacement goes ahead.

**Recommendation:** That the Board recommend to the City Services Committee that the Liquidambar trees in Mirfield Place be removed and replaced with a suitable species.

#### **THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN COMMENTS:**

Members are encouraged to view the trees prior to the Board meeting in order to familiarise themselves with the situation.

#### **Deputy Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** For discussion

24 November, 1999

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**CHRISTCHURCH**

Dear +

**LIQUIDAMBAR STREET TREES – MIRFIELD PLACE**

In June this year the Council received a letter from Mr David Hawke of 8 Mirfield Place on behalf of a number of residents in Mirfield Place.

Mirfield Place currently has a number of liquidambar street trees, which are causing significant damage to the pavements and kerb and channel.

This particular species of tree has the potential to out grow the area it is planted in with mature trees having a girth in excess of 1 metre in diameter. In streets such as Mirfield Place where the distance between the property boundary and the kerb is relatively narrow, they are no longer considered to be a suitable street tree. The current practice for this species is that they are now only planted in larger grass berms, road reserves or multi-laned median divided arterial roads where there are fewer restrictions to their height and root growth.

If these trees are to remain in Mirfield Place, then the “life” of any repairs will be relatively short given that the current trees are approximately a third of their potential size. To regularly revisit a site carrying out remedial work is not a cost effective use of our resources.

In response to the residents request the Parks Units proposed course of action is to remove all the liquidambar in Mirfield Place. The Liquidambar would be replaced with Sophora microphylla (New Zealand Kowhai), once the remedial work to the kerb and pavements has been completed.

However there is a formal process to go through when there is a proposal to remove all the trees in a particular street before the work takes place. The Parks Unit will now prepare a report outlining the problems with the trees in Mirfield Place and the proposed course of action.

The report will go to the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board in the first instance for information and comment prior to going before the City Services Committee for recommendation and approval on the proposed course of action.

I am aware from Mr Hawke’s letter that three out of the ten residents he contacted indicated they preferred their tree to remain. However some residents may wish to reconsider their view now that they have more information on the matter.

The Parks Unit would like to confirm the view of individual residents regarding these particular trees to ensure the report accurately reflects the most up to date view of Mirfield Place residents and to assist the Council in making a decision in regard to this matter.

I would appreciate it if you could indicate your preferred option by completing the panel below and returning it by **Friday 5 November 1999** in the self addressed envelope provided.

Thank you for taking the time to assist the Council with this project.

If you would like any further information or assistance regarding this matter please do not hesitate to contact one of the Parks Unit staff listed below.

Rod Whearty 351-7109

Craig Taylor 371-1683

Yours faithfully



Rod Whearty  
**AREA PARKS OFFICER**

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**PRIVACY ACT**

*The Parks Unit of the Christchurch City Council wishes to collect the personal information requested for the purpose of communicating with you in regard to the development of Open Space. Providing this information is not compulsory. The information will be held by the Parks Unit and may be shared with other Council Units for the purpose of contacting you on related Council matters. You have the right to access and correct this information.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Contact Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**MIRFIELD PLACE - STREET TREE OPTIONS**

**Please indicate your preference with a tick (Tick one option only)**

|                                                                               |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Remove the Liquidambars in Mirfield Place and replace with a NZ Kowhai</b> |  |
| <b>Retain the Liquidambars in Mirfield Place</b>                              |  |

**Comments: (optional)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

24 November, 1999

«Name»

«Address»

**CHRISTCHURCH**

**MIRFIELD PLACE –STREET TREES**

Dear «Title»

Thank you for responding to my recent letter regarding the above matter. There was a very good response from Mirfield Place residents with all 13 residents returning the questionnaire indicating their preferred course of action.

**RESULTS**

• Preferred Option

|                                                                     |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Remove the Liquidambars and replace with New Zealand Kowhais</b> |  |
| <b>Retain the existing street trees</b>                             |  |

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Realignment of the entire kerb and channel is not a cost effective option due to the overall cost for this type of work and the fact that the problem would reoccur within a relatively short time frame. Apart from the immediate areas being affected by the trees, the remainder of the kerb and channel is in a satisfactory condition and does not warrant replacing at this stage.

Building the kerb out around each tree was also considered. However this requires the installation of a sump on either side of the "build out" to maintain the correct grade and ensure water flow along the channel. Once again this is a very expensive solution and not seen as a cost-effective option given that it would only provide a temporary respite in the long term.

## **PROPOSED WORK**

Given the response from Mirfield Place residents the Parks Unit proposes to remove all the existing Liquidamber trees in Mirfield Place prior to replacing them with a more suitable tree species next planting season. The proposal is to remove the existing liquidambers around April 2000 with the planting of the replacement trees programmed for June 2000 when the Parks Unit commences its annual Street Tree planting programme.

## **REPLACEMENT SPECIES**

Some residents expressed reservations about New Zealand Kowhais as the replacement species. The existing berm width and location of underground services restricts the range of suitable tree species for Mirfield Place. However in acknowledging residents feedback, the Parks Unit proposes to come back to residents with some suitable alternatives if the proposed tree replacement goes ahead.

## **COUNCIL APPROVAL**

Removal of these trees requires Council approval prior to any work taking place. The Parks Unit is currently preparing a report outlining the damage and the problems these trees are causing along with the proposed course of action.

The report will go before the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board on 23 November 1999 for "information and comment" prior to going before the City Services Committee on 30 November 1999 for "recommendation and approval".

As part of the decision making process, resident's supporting or opposing the proposed course of action are entitled to address either one or both committees to express their views.

If you wish to have "speaking rights" on this matter, please contact the following staff prior to the deadline for the appropriate committee.

Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board Peter Dow 351-7109 Before 16 November 1999

City Services Committee  
1999

Dennis Morgan 371-1437 Before 23 November

Thank you for taking the time to share your views with the council. If you would like any further information regarding this project please do not hesitate to contact either of the Parks Unit staff listed below.

Rod Whearty 351-7109  
Craig Taylor 371-1683

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R 6 whearty', written in a cursive style.

Rod Whearty  
**AREA PARKS OFFICER**

cc Community Secretary, Fendalton (Peter Dow)  
Committee Secretary, Civic (Dennis Morgan)  
Team Leader, Parks Unit (Walter Fielding-Cotterell)  
Projects Co-ord. Arboriculture, Parks Unit (Craig Taylor)