

20. CROFTON ROAD - SILVER BIRCH TREES

At its meeting on 30 May 2000 the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board considered the report set out below on the removal of trees in Crofton Road. The recommendation of the Board is set out below:

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| <i>Officer responsible</i> Parks Manager | <i>Author</i> Rod Whearty |
| <i>Corporate Plan Output: Street Trees : Maintenance and Felling City Wide</i> | |

The purpose of this report is to provide information and seek comment on the request for removal of Silver Birch trees in Crofton Road. The matter will then be referred to the City Services Committee for a decision.

BACKGROUND

The Council received a petition in February signed by seven residents of Crofton Road requesting the removal of the Silver Birch trees over a period of years and replacement with another smaller growing species. The concerns of the residents were:

- *That the trees are nearly thirty years old and up to fifteen metres high.*
- *That some residents are suffering from allergy problems.*
- *The long duration and large amount of seed which these trees produce.*
- *Stormwater drains and house gutterings are frequently blocked.*

RESIDENTS' VIEWS

The Parks Unit wrote to all Crofton Road residents after receiving the petition to determine individual resident's views on the matter.

At the conclusion of the consultation process the Parks Unit had received a response from 75 properties in Crofton Road indicating their preferred option, with the following results.

- 47 *Favoured removing the existing Silver birch trees and replacing them with an alternative species*
- 27 *Favoured retaining the existing trees.*
- 1 *Did not have a preference either way*

TREE CONDITION

Crofton Road has a mixture of predominantly Silver Birch and Kowhai trees growing in the grass berms, which were originally planted in 1975. There are a total of 55 Silver Birch, twenty Kowhai and three Eucalyptus, the majority of which are in good health and sound structural condition and would not ordinarily be considered for removal. The exception being three Silver Birch and one Eucalyptus which will require replacement in the near future due to poor structural condition.

Crofton Road has the look of a well established streetscape with a four metre wide berm for the majority of the streets length. The existing trees help to provide this look and are considered to be of high amenity landscape value.

RESIDENTS' CONCERNS

The concerns of the residents relate primarily to the maintenance problems, which these trees create on the adjoining properties. Whilst the Parks Unit recognises that the Silver Birch trees do drop a large number of seeds over a lengthy period, approximately three months, Silver Birches as with all trees will drop leaves, seed and other debris at differing times of the year. Crofton Road is certainly not the only street in the city with such problems and on this basis the Parks Unit would not recommend the removal of the trees.

The issue of some residents suffering allergies caused by the trees is one which has been brought to our attention before. The information we have to date suggests that while Silver Birch can cause an allergic reaction this usually is the case with people who have a history of asthma/hayfever type problems and are allergic to a number of other tree species such as Privet, Alder, Beech as well as many grasses. Therefore again the Parks Unit would not recommend the removal of the trees on this basis

CONCLUSION

Whilst the Parks Unit appreciates the problems the Silver Birch trees may cause to some of the residents in Crofton Road we are committed to retaining all healthy and sound trees wherever possible as the benefits the trees give the street and city as a whole outweigh the maintenance issues they present.

As indicated earlier, virtually all the existing trees are in a sound and healthy condition, growing in 4 metre wide berms causing no other problems to services, kerbs or pavements. Therefore the Parks Unit will be recommending that all the healthy existing street trees be retained.

- Recommendation:**
- 1. That the Board recommend to the City Services Committee that the residents request to replace the Silver Birch trees in Crofton Road be declined.*
 - 2. That the existing trees be retained with the exception of the three Silver Birch and one Eucalyptus which should be removed in the near future.*

Chairman's

Recommendation: That a subcommittee consisting of the Chairman, Councillors Evans and Wright, together with the Chairman of the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board, meet on site to consider this matter.