

**5. RICCARTON/WIGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE REPORT OF
11 APRIL 2000**

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The purpose of this report is to submit the outcomes of the Environmental Committee meeting held on Tuesday 11 April 2000.

The meeting was attended by Alison Wilkie (Chairperson), Mary Corbett, Neville Bennett, Mike Mora and David Buist. Paddy Austin, Helen Broughton, and Cr Lesley Keast were present, also.

1. JAMELL PLACE SILVER BIRCH STREET TREES

Following an approach by some residents seeking the Board's reconsideration not to remove the silver birch trees in Jamell Place, the Board has decided that this issue should be revisited by this Committee.

At this meeting the Committee received a deputation of those particular residents:

Ms D Doody, and Mr T G Scandrett.

They advised that they represented a further six residents of Jamell Place.

Whilst both attendees commented on the nuisance factors, property damage, and footpath damage, a compromise solution was offered.

A proposed replacement programme, of Jamell Place would see the 14 silver birch and seven claret ash trees being renewed, to five and 11 respectively.

On behalf of the Parks Unit, Craig Taylor noted that the silver birch trees in question were healthy and structurally sound; the Parks Unit would not, therefore, favour their removal.

The nuisance factor of the silver birch trees (and the consequential level of complaints received) was acknowledged; the suitability of this species as a street tree was seen as now being inappropriate.

Mr Taylor did caution the Committee that the compromise offered by the deputation would still see their 'problems' existing, only a total replacement could eliminate the discomforts experienced by the silver birch trees.

The majority of the Committee favoured the option of complete replacement, rather than the compromise offered.

Recommendation: That the Community Board recommend to the City Services Committee the complete replacement of the silver birch trees in Jamell Place.

(On a show of hands, this was passed, three votes in favour to one vote against.)

2. SHOWGATE RESERVE TREES

The Parks Unit has recently received a petition, 15 February 2000, signed by 25 residents of Murfitt Place and Showgate Avenue requesting the removal of the one poplar tree adjacent to 2 Murfitt Place. The residents' main area of concern with the existing tree is the sticky yellow substance which is exuded by the buds of the tree in spring and summer.

Residents have expressed concern that the substance cannot be removed from carpets and floor coverings once tracked into their homes on the soles of shoes. Also, the substance can not be removed from the paintwork of cars without leaving some marking, it creates problems of removal from pets.

The tree has been recently pruned to reduce the overhang above the property; however, this has not removed the problem as the substance is blown by high winds onto the adjacent and nearby properties.

The Parks Unit has also received a formal request for other poplar trees adjacent to neighbouring properties to be removed for the same reasons.

A landscape plan, which was circulated for public comment in August 1994, indicated that once the new plantings in the reserve became established, thinning out of the existing poplar trees (removal of 30%) would take place. With this in mind the Parks Unit considered that the removal of approximately one third of the trees could help to alleviate the problems being encountered by the residents.

A letter box drop was circulated on 24 February, 2000 asking the residents to show their preference for:

1. I support the removal of approximately one third of the poplar trees
- OR**
2. I do not support the removal of approximately one third of the poplar trees.

Comments were also sort.

A total of 84 submissions were returned. Some submissions returned included more than one-person e.g., husband and wife, so the response per resident was:

76 residents supported the removal of one third of the poplar trees.
40 residents wanted the trees retained.

A petition has also be received from local residents who wish to express their concern and opposition to the suggested removal of existing trees in the Showgate Reserve. 50 residents have signed the petition.

The poplar trees on Showgate Reserve are *Populus nigra* - Black Poplar. These trees do produce a yellow sticky substance on the buds which is blown onto adjacent properties and as the residents stated in their correspondence, stains property and fixtures as well as being difficult to remove once it has dried (on car paintwork).

These trees are a major landscape feature of the reserve and as they are in a healthy and stable condition would ordinarily be retained. However as the residents' complaints relate to an actual problem which will not diminish with time, the Parks Unit recommended that the trees which are indicated on the attached plan be removed and that replacement planting be carried out. Also, that the remaining trees adjacent to property boundaries be reviewed in a further five years time once the replacement trees are established.

The tree closest to the transmission lines, which are on the north side of the reserve, has been reported to the Parks Unit as a defect (could contact the high voltage lines) by Transpower's vegetation contractor, and the Council is now obligated to allow the tree to be pruned or removed, at Transpower's cost.

All those residents who had responded were invited to today's meeting, and address the Committee.

The following residents addressed the meeting:

Mr I Bartram
Mr L Earl
Mrs H Fineran

Mrs S Rickerby
Mr J Terewi

As the organiser of the 50 signatory petition seeking retention of all the trees, Mr Bartram commented on the (apparent) discrepancy of the submission response numbers, the catchment drop initiated by the Parks Unit, and of the desire to retain the trees, being a feature of the streetscape.

The other speakers spoke in support of removing the trees.

Issues of damage to vehicles, the interior of houses (being effected by the yellow sticky buds) and the need to tidy up the fall of buds were discussed.

Members asked questions of the residents, and sought comment from Craig Taylor and Anne Cosson.

The Committee **agreed** with a suggestion (from Cr Keast) that the Parks Unit should be involved in the assessing of residential subdivision schemes, when lodged with Council, where similar situations as that raised today, can be identified and resolved.

Whilst the Committee were supportive of the officer's recommendations, they considered that a three year review period (rather than five year) was more appropriate.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Community Board recommend to the Parks and Recreation Committee that the trees, as indicated on the attached plan, are removed and replaced with a more suitable species.
 2. That the trees, which remain on the property boundaries, are reviewed in a further three years as to their retention.

The Committee Chairperson thanked all the residents who were present, and for the presentations made.

**SUBMISSION RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS -
RICCARTON PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION LETTER - CHINESE POPLARS -
SHOWGATE RESERVE**

At its committee meeting in November 1999, the question of the above trees was raised. After discussion, the Community Board members present agreed to recommend that a tree planting programme be initiated and at a later date the problem poplars could be removed. This was also the committee's recommendation in answer to the Parks Unit questionnaire, February 2000.

The committee is concerned that the initial complaint referred to the poplar to the west of the bridge over the Paparua stream and now for some reason, includes all poplars in the reserve. If the trees are a problem, then removing a third of them will achieve nothing. It is difficult to understand that after some years, since housing was established, that the trees have now become a problem, maybe last spring was unusual, with more than usual sticky substance being exuded.

We accept that the tree by the bridge and the tree by the pylon may have to be removed. We recommend that the Community Board consider requesting the Parks Unit, as part of their planting programme of the Showgate Reserve, to plant alternative trees either between or to the stream side of the poplars, so that when they are established, the question of the poplars can again be addressed.

Stephen Shimmin
Secretary
Riccarton Park Residents Association

3 ONGOING ISSUES

Community Heritage Award Scheme
Hillary Crescent Neighbourhood Park, Plan
Picton Avenue Park Development, Plan
Reserve Contribution Policy, Discussion
Street Tree Planting Programme in Riccarton/Wigram
Halswell Domain Expansion Concept Plans

4. NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday 16 May 2000.

Chairperson's

Recommendation:

1. That the Community Board endorse the Environmental Committee's recommendation that the complete replacement of the silver birch trees in Jamell Place be undertaken.
2. That this is communicated to all residents of Jamell Place and Denley Gardens, inviting their responses (to be received at a future meeting of the Environmental Committee).
3. That the Community Board recommend, to the Parks and Recreation Committee, that the trees, as indicated on the attached plan be removed and replaced with a more suitable species.
4. That the trees which remain on the property boundaries are reviewed in a further three years as to their retention.
5. That the Riccarton Park Residents' Association be thanked for their submission, and advised of the Board's decision.