

13. GUILDFORD STREET TREES

Officer responsible Parks and Waterways Manager	Author Gary Harrow, Parks and Waterways Area Advocate Fendalton, DDI 372-2708
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The purpose of this report is to address the concerns of some of the residents in Guildford Street with regards to the effects of their street trees.

BACKGROUND

The following letter has been received from Mrs Jennifer Griffiths, Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator of the street.

"Further to our conversation with you last week, when we talked about the problems occurring from the street trees in Guildford Street, including Wadhurst Place, for the reasons stated above, which was referred to me by the Neighbourhood Support, Community Constable Dave Wilkinson.

The street trees are too dense, large, and produce deciduous leaves which accumulate in force during the autumn season, block up the channels, also the footpaths have large cracking, as roots are protruding, making walking quite hazardous.

The lighting too is inhibited, which in thinking is another reason for these huge street trees to be culled.

I have circulated my opinions, with a leaflet drop to each individual dwelling in the street. I have a few signatures below, as well as correspondence from ratepayers concerned with this matter.

Please forward our comments onto the Council, and that a representative will make an on site visit, to review the problem first hand."

On inspecting the street, six sites were noted to need the footpath repaired because of damage by tree roots, there were five areas where the seal had broken away and needed repair, one recent unsealed service trench and seven private properties had vegetation overhanging the footpath. One resident requested that the Council remove the tree branches that are overhanging their property. The Council can repair the footpaths and prune the tree in question. There is a lot of general cracking and undulating seal which will be addressed when a footpath overlay is done. The City Streets Unit will advise when this is to be undertaken.

The Council can also prune low branches overhanging the footpath and street and prune side branches to allow more light spill into these areas. All the lights otherwise are clear of vegetation. There are also a number of branches overhanging the road which could be removed.

A number of trees have been removed in the past because of disease but the remainder seem sound and healthy but can be checked when pruning is undertaken. Leaves are a problem throughout the city in autumn and winter especially leathery leaves such as oaks which do not decompose rapidly. Extra leaf collections have been made in the past and this process can continue.

THE TREES

As mentioned above, the trees are healthy. They are scarlet and pin oaks, planted in 1959. Based on their present health they would quite easily last another 20 years or so. They have almost reached maturity so have a very slow growth rate generally.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The two photographs (attached) in this report show views taken towards the northwest (towards Grahams Road) in mid-July. One is taken from Ilam Road looking at the east end of the street between Ilam Road and Wayside Avenue, and the other is taken from just past Wadhurst Place. Tabled photographs show the street in summer with the trees in full leaf.

DISCUSSION

The Parks and Waterways and the City Streets Units receive many complaints of a similar nature when leaves and/or litter fall from trees onto the street, footpath or private properties. It has always been policy to alleviate these problems as far as practicable within the bounds of maintaining healthy and aesthetically pleasing trees. One of the Parks and Waterways Unit's goals is to "actively preserve and develop the Christchurch urban tree resource in a manner that reflects the essential landscape and botanical characters of the Garden City and its environs". Where these amenity values are likely to be

seriously diminished in order to provide a debris-free solution, the Units believe there is an obligation to the wider community to decline to carry out further work.

THE GARDEN CITY A SAFE CITY

Members will be aware of the 1994 document by this title which has been used as a benchmark by the Council on such matters as urban design, neighbourhoods, central city, roads and reserves. One of the major ways to increase local safety is the formation of local neighbourhood support groups (NSG), increasing the pedestrian usage and increasing the surveillance of the road from private properties. Linked to this is lighting at night. Street trees enhance the character of a street is also a key finding in the document. Mrs Griffiths and Mrs McNaughton have recently resurrected the support group and publish fliers to outline news and items of relevance. One of these was distributed to the 59 properties in Guildford Street and Wadhurst Place concerning the removal of the trees. As a result of this written comments were received from another two residents and 12 residents co-signed Mrs Griffith's letter. The Council has not canvassed the residents. Mrs Griffiths confirms that by "culled" she means remove all the trees.

This street must be commended for their NSG and the time spent by Mrs Griffiths and her neighbours. The Parks and Waterways Unit has viewed the street with Mrs Griffiths and has outlined how the Council can assist with leaf collection from the gutters and ensuring the footpaths are safe. Tree trimming can be undertaken to allow more light spill onto the footpath and street.

Unfortunately there is no current co-ordinator at the Christchurch Safer Community Council, so their input apart from the 'safer cities' booklet is not available. The local Constable has advised that he would strongly support judicious pruning of the trees in the street.

COMMUNITY BOARD COMMENTS

This matter was discussed at the 31 July 2001 meeting of the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board. The Board recommended to the City Services Committee that the trees be retained in Guildford Street and that judicious pruning and footpath repairs as outlined in the report be undertaken as soon as possible.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the trees be retained in Guildford Street.
 2. That judicious pruning and footpath repair as outlined in the report be undertaken as soon as possible.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the matter be referred to a subcommittee consisting of the Chairman of the City Services Committee, Councillors Evans and Wright and the Chairman of the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board.