

## 12. JAMES CONDON PARK

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Corporate Plan Output: Local Park Tree Maintenance and Felling	

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board as to the claim for the Council to repair damage allegedly caused to the property at 34B Prestons Road by two oak trees in James Condon Reserve.

The damage is stated as follows:

- Blocked spouting and downpipes replaced at a cost of \$500.
- Gum on roofs of house and garage causing discolouration and fading.

In addition it is claimed that the Hinckley's have to endure the general nuisance effects of litter falling from the trees on the property as a whole and the detrimental effects the shade from the oaks has on the growth of garden plants.

### BACKGROUND

In May 1998, following a series of similar complaints from Mr and Mrs Hinckley, the owners of the above property, the Council agreed to alleviate the problems by removing two of the oak trees in a poor condition of the group of four affecting their property. Further pruning of the remaining two trees was also carried out to reduce the length of branches extending across the park boundary. The roofs of the Hinckley's house and garage were also water-blasted at the Council's cost to remove the sticky substance falling from the trees. This substance is known as honey-dew, it is secreted by aphids feeding on the leaves.

Following this latest letter of complaint to the Board dated 22 April 2001, the two oaks received further pruning attention. This time all the overhanging branches were cut back to the park side of the boundary and the overall size of the tree's crowns reduced considerably.

### DISCUSSION

The Parks and Waterways Unit receives a great many complaints of this nature and requests for trees on parks and streets to be removed for the sorts of reasons stated by the Hinckleys.

As with the case in question, it has always been the policy of the Council to take all reasonable steps to alleviate problems caused to residents by trees on Council land. However, it is imperative that the Council also take into account the landscape and general amenity values provided by large trees in reserves and other public places, and the Council's policies of maintaining the Garden City character of Christchurch. This is particularly so in view of the amount of large trees disappearing from the landscape due to the intensification of development throughout the City.

For those who have chosen to purchase properties next to reserves or in streets containing large trees the sort of problems stated in this complaint are a fact of nature and common to many thousands of properties all over the city. For the Council to attempt to resolve all these problems in the manner requested by the Hinckleys would either burden the ratepayer with enormous costs or result in the destruction of most of Christchurch's large trees. Neither of these options is considered to be acceptable, either locally, or citywide.

**Recommendation:** That the Council decline to take any further action with regard to the two oak trees in James Condon Park.

### For discussion