

10. HORSESHOE LAKE POPLAR TREES

Officer responsible Parks and Waterways Manager	Author Chris Fourie - Parks and Waterways Area Advocate, DDI 941-5314 Tim Rillstone - Parks and Waterways Arborist, DDI 941-8030
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The purpose of this report is to seek a decision regarding six Lombardy poplar trees in Horseshoe Lake Reserve at the rear of Kingsford Street, Burwood.

CONTEXT OF REPORT

Over the past five to six years, a number of complaints have been received regarding the shadow cast onto nearby properties by the large poplars on the south side of Horseshoe Lake, at the rear of properties on Kingsford Street. The residents at 159 Kingsford Street have made numerous approaches to staff, both by phone and letter and have also appealed to Community Board members for help with their issues. Some of the original plantings of poplars along Horseshoe Lake have been removed in past years for reasons similar to those being raised. Assessment of the trees cannot justify their removal on health and safety grounds and therefore a decision is being sought through the Board.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Removal of all of the mature poplars along the southern edge of Kingsford Street is proposed in response to ongoing complaints of shading of nearby properties. Replanting is to be done with a mix of native species consistent with the Horseshoe Lake Management Plan.

RELEVANT CURRENT POLICY

Trees - Powers delegated to the Community Board are as follows:

- The planting and removal of trees on parks.
- To adjudicate on the removal or retention of significant healthy trees in consultation with any Units affected, and contentious matters relating to the planting of trees on any reserve or land administered by the Parks and Waterways Unit except the following:
 - Any trees protected by the City Plan (resource consent procedure required).
 - Trees immediately dangerous to persons or property, subject to the Chairperson of the relevant Community Board being advised of any removals.
 - Trees currently causing or likely to cause immediate significant damage to buildings, services or property whether public or privately owned.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

Tree Removal, Retention, Replacement Planting and Landscape Development

All of the large poplars along the southern side of Horseshoe Lake are proposed for removal. The stumps are to remain in the ground. However, the stumps are to be repeatedly poisoned to prevent resprouting and left to succumb to the processes of decay accelerated by the poisoning.

The area will be replanted with a mix of native species consistent with the Horseshoe Lake Management Plan. Funds are available and the replanting is to be done next planting season.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The poplar trees, a quick growing species with an optimum life span of around 60 years in this type of location, were planted 35 to 40 years ago and are currently approx 20m in height. The poplar trees, which are growing in a close group, have put on extensive growth since being 'topped' some 15 years ago. There is no history of the poplar trees falling over in this location, however there will be a continuing quantity of debris falling from the trees as they age and deteriorate. At present this is of little concern, due to the low volume of public access in this area. However, one of the poplars is hard up against the Lawrences' fence and this tree and the next closest to a children's play hut, pose some risks to the residents with falling debris. An offer to remove these two trees and to prune the remaining poplars was rejected by the residents at 159 Kingsford Street, who again on 14 July 2002, have requested the removal of all of the six trees.

The trees are on a 'no maintenance cycle', but as there has been a history of complaints over a long period of time, they would be inspected, thinned and have the deadwood removed, only on request. This is due mainly to the fact that if the trees are 'over thinned' or 'reduced', they will be placed under stress, and will put on extensive reactive growth, which defeats the purpose of the pruning to start with.

Considering the relatively short life that these poplars will have, and that the overall management plan for the area advocates replacing the exotic trees in this part of Horseshoe Lake Reserve with native species, it is opportune to remove the poplar trees. This will satisfy the requests of adjacent residents and enable the successful establishment of replacement native species.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

The seven residents immediately adjacent to the group of poplars on the southern edge of the reserve (as indicated on the attached aerial photograph), were contacted by phone during the last two weeks of August. They were informed of the issues raised by the residents at 159 Kingsford Street, and that an option being considered as a recommendation to the Community Board is removal of the poplars.

Although most of the neighbours admitted being affected to a lesser extent than the Lawrences, they complained of leaves, debris and shading. All residents except for one, the resident at 33 Tasman Street, supported the removal of all of the poplars. That resident stated his indifference to the idea of removal, although he admitted that he would be "sad to see them go". He admitted to being instrumental in getting trees closer to his place removed some years ago because of shading problems.

The Horseshoe Lake Residents' Association was also approached on 27 August 2002 for their view on the possible removal of the trees. The Association replied on 29 August 2002 that the Association "agrees that the trees should be removed for safety reasons".

CONCLUSIONS

As a rule trees causing shading are not recommended for removal. However, in this case, consideration of the location, and close proximity to private property, the likely reduced lifespan of this species, local resident support for removal, and the fact that the goal is to replant the site with indigenous species, removal of all the large poplars should be undertaken as soon as possible. This will satisfy those residents who consistently complain about shading, and enable replacement planting of native species as advocated in the Horseshoe Lake Management Plan.

- Recommendations:**
1. That the information be received.
 2. That the Board approve the removal of all of the six poplars on the southern edge of Horseshoe Lake opposite 159 Kingsford Street.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the abovementioned recommendations be adopted.