

1. 4. 2008

**SHIRLEY/PAPANUI COMMUNITY BOARD
GREENSPACE TRAFFIC WORKS COMMITTEE
4 MARCH 2009**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Greenspace Traffic Works Committee
held on Wednesday 4 March 2009 at 4pm
in the Boardroom, Papanui Service Centre, Corner Langdons Road and Restell Street**

PRESENT: Matt Morris (Chairperson), Ngaire Button, Pauline Cotter,
Aaron Keown, Yvonne Palmer and Norm Withers

APOLOGIES: Nil.

Aaron Keown joined the meeting at 4.05pm and was absent for
clause 5.

The Board reports that:

PART A – MATTERS REQUIRING A COUNCIL DECISION

1. EMMETT STREET - TREE PRUNING

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment, DDI 941-8608
Officer responsible:	Unit Manager Transport and Greenspace
Author:	Shane Moohan, City Arborist

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To recommend that the Board recommend to Council that the request to undertake height reduction pruning (topping) of the protected scarlet oak trees in Emmett Street be declined.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. On 17 September 2008 a petition (**attached**) was received by the Board from residents in Emmett Street and Praem Place requesting that the scarlet oak trees in Emmett Street be topped by one quarter.
3. The reason given is that the trees are too high.
4. The petition also mentions Allison Street and Praem Place, however it is unclear what the request is for these two streets.
5. Topping trees is not a recommended arboricultural management practice.
6. Council only tops trees for statutory purposes when they are under electrical conductors or the top of the tree is dead/declining and it is desirable to retain the tree rather than remove it.
7. The trees in Emmett Street are protected through the Christchurch City Plan for their landscape value under Volume 3: Part 8 Special Purpose Zone 4.5.4 Removal or major pruning of any tree in Road Zone as category B trees.
8. Reducing the height of the trees in Emmett Street would have an adverse effect on their quality as a landscape feature.
9. For these reasons it is recommended that the petition be declined and that the trees continue to be maintained to internationally recognised and accepted arboricultural standards and practices.

1. Cont'd

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10. The cost to top the trees is estimated at \$66,000 (not including cost of traffic management). Topping these trees would become an annual exercise with similar costs involved.

Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2006-16 LTCCP budgets?

11. The recommendation aligns with the current LTCCP budgets.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

12. The rules for pruning trees protected under Part 8 Special Purpose Zones are :

“In addition to any relevant rules applicable to listed protected trees in Appendix 4, part 10 of the Plan, within any of the streets listed in the SP (Road) Zone listed below:

- (a) No tree shall be removed
- (b) Pruning of any tree shall only be permitted above a height which is two-thirds of the total height of the tree measured from ground level
- (c) Below the height specified in (b), only those branches less than 50mm in diameter may be pruned

13. This rule shall not apply if removal or pruning is required for any of the following reasons:

- the tree is dead, dying or diseased;
- the tree presents an immediate hazard due to structural weakness or root instability;
- the tree is causing serious damage to essential public or private services or property”

14. This means that topping the trees by as much as one third of their height is a permitted activity therefore no Resource Consent is required to gain approval for this work.

15. The Greenspace Manager has the following delegation with respect to trees:

“In consultation with any other units affected and the relevant Community Board, authorise the planting or removal of trees from any reserve or other property under the Manager’s control.”

Therefore the delegated authority to approve or decline this request lies with the Transport and Greenspace Manager or the Community Board.

16. Although this pruning request is a permitted activity consideration of the following City Plan Policies may be of some benefit –

Volume 2 : Section 4 City Identity

4.2.1 Policy: Tree Cover

To promote amenity values in the urban area by maintaining and enhancing the tree cover present in the City.

Tree cover and vegetation make an important contribution to amenity values in the City. Through the redevelopment of sites, existing vegetation is often lost and not replaced. The City Plan protects those trees identified as “heritage” or “notable” and the subdivision process protects other trees which are considered to be “significant”. The highest degree of protection applies to heritage trees.

1. Cont'd

Because Christchurch is largely built on a flat plain, trees and shrubs play an important role in creating relief, contributing to visual amenity and attracting native birds.

The amount of private open space available for new planting and to retain existing trees is influenced by rules concerning building density and setback from boundaries. The rules do not require new planting for residential development but landscaping is required in business zones.

4.2.2 Policy: Garden City

To recognise and promote the “Garden City” identity, heritage and character of Christchurch.

A key aspect of achieving this policy will be maintaining and extending environments and vegetation types which compliment this image. A broad range of matters influence and contribute to this image, including the following:

- tree-lined streets and avenues
- parks and developed areas of open space

14.3.2 Policy: “Garden City” image identity

To acknowledge and promote the “Garden City” identity of the City by protecting, maintaining and extending planting which compliments this image

Volume 3: Part 8 Special Purpose Zone

14.3.5 Street Trees

Nearly half the length of streets within the city contains street trees, but the presence of very high quality street trees which add considerable presence to streets and neighbourhoods is confined to a relatively small proportion of the road network. These streets add particular character and amenity of the city, either in the form of avenues which form points into the city, or an important part of the local character of particular streets.

- 17 Council as landowner has the legal right to approve or decline the request to prune the trees.
18. An application to prune or remove the trees may be made to the District Court under The Property Law Amendment Act 1975.

Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

19. Council has the legal right to approve or decline the application to prune the trees.
20. The District Court can order the pruning of the trees under The Property Law Amendment Act 1975.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

21. Pruning the trees without obtaining reimbursement from the applicant is inconsistent with the current LTCCP as funding has not been allocated in the Transport & Greenspace Unit tree maintenance budget for the topping of structurally sound and healthy trees other than those requiring clearance from electrical conductors.
22. Obtaining reimbursement from the petitioners to prune the trees is consistent with the current LTCCP (however this will have to be an annual cost which will also be required to be passed on).

1. Cont'd

Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2006-16 LTCCP?

23. The recommendation aligns with the level of service for street tree maintenance and provision.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

24. Retaining the trees in their present condition and form would be consistent with the Living Streets Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy.
25. Retaining the trees in their present condition and form would be consistent with the Christchurch Urban Design Vision
26. There is currently no overarching city wide strategy for vegetation management.
27. There is currently no policy for the pruning or removing of trees in public spaces. A Draft Tree Policy is being worked on.
28. Retaining the trees in their present condition and form would be in keeping with the Garden City Image.
29. Topping the trees would not be in keeping with the Garden City image.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

30. There has been no public consultation by Council on this matter.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Greenspace Traffic Works Committee asks the Board to recommend that the Council:

- (a) declines the request to reduce the height of the trees in Emmett Street; and
- (b) that the trees in Emmett Street be maintained to internationally recognised and accepted arboricultural standards and practices.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board recommend to the Council:

- (a) that it decline the petitioner's request to reduce the height of the trees in Emmett Street; and
- (b) that the trees in Emmett Street be maintained to internationally recognised and accepted arboricultural standards and practices.
- (c) that staff be requested to arrange a meeting at a local venue with residents to provide an explanation and consultation on tree issues in Emmett Street.

1. Cont'd

BACKGROUND (THE ISSUES)

31. The scarlet oak trees in Emmett Street were planted in 1950 and 1970. There are 115 trees.
32. They are significant to Christchurch City as a landscape feature for size, form and age.
33. It is possible that they also have significance to Christchurch for commemorative purposes as it has been suggested that they were planted to commemorate soldiers in World War II. This has not been confirmed.
34. Topping the trees would have a negative effect on them as a landscape feature and would negate the reason why they were protected.
35. A conservative value of \$2.7 million (using STEM Standard Tree Evaluation Method, which is the national arboricultural industry standard for evaluating and valuing amenity trees) has recently been placed on them. Topping them would reduce the value by approximately \$900,000.
36. Approving the request may lead to residents with similar requests (e.g. Massey Crescent, Severn Street, Dudley Street etc) expecting the same result. This would have serious consequences for the Garden City image.
37. Council has declined similar requests from residents in other streets with significant trees.
38. Topping trees is not a recommended management practice because –
 - topping leads to decay within the remaining stem which can make the tree structurally unsound
 - the resultant new growth is weakly attached to the remaining stem which means it breaks off easily and is therefore hazardous
 - severe topping of trees can make them unstable as a comparable amount of roots will die to compensate for the sudden loss of photosynthetic material
 - topping trees can inhibit root growth by denying the roots access to chemicals critical to their development
 - removing the upper canopy can open up the remaining canopy to wind forces that the tree is not geared to take. This can lead to branches breaking off in winds
 - the tree will, within 1 year of pruning, put on growth up to 10 times the amount of foliage removed. This means that any “benefits” from topping are quickly reversed.
 - removal of the outer foliage can cause sun scald to the inner canopy and branches not used to exposure to the sun
 - topped trees are generally unsightly and can detract from the landscape character that the trees create or contribute to
 - maintenance costs are high as trees will require topping annually which will involve specialist equipment such as elevated platform trucks
39. A combined Community Board and staff site visit was conducted on 3 December 2008 where one of the petitioners Mr Rogers of 2 Praem Place stated that the reason he would like the trees topped is to increase their stability.
40. Residents usually request trees be topped because of shade, leaf fall, views or encroachment purposes.
41. The trees in Allison Street are Fraxinus ornus (flowering ash) and because of their small stature at maturity are highly unlikely to cause shade or encroachment problems. There may be some concerns with leaf fall in autumn.
42. There are no street trees in Praem Place.

43. There will be some encroachment pruning undertaken for Emmett Street when a general maintenance round is scheduled for May and June of this year.

THE OBJECTIVES

44. The objectives of this report are to provide the Board with sufficient information to enable Board Members to make a decision on the future maintenance of the trees in Emmett Street.

THE OPTIONS

Option 1: Maintain the status quo

45. (a) decline the request to reduce the height of the trees in Emmett Street; and
(b) that the trees in Emmett Street be maintained to internationally recognised and accepted arboricultural standards and practices.

Option 2

46. Top the trees.
(a) Do not charge the petitioners for pruning.
(b) Charge the petitioners the cost of pruning (including cost of traffic management). Cost of pruning is estimated at \$66,000 (excluding cost of traffic management). Topping these trees would become an annual exercise with similar costs involved.

THE PREFERRED OPTION

47. (a) decline the request to reduce the height of the trees in Emmett Street; and
(b) that the trees in Emmett Street be maintained to internationally recognised and accepted arboricultural standards and practices.

PART B - REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

2. DEPUTATIONS

Nil.

3. TRANSPORT AND GREENSPACE UPDATES

Mary Hay (Greenspace Consultation Leader) and Basil Pettigrew (Traffic Engineer – Community) updated the Committee on the following projects.

3.1 SPRINGFIELD/ABBERLEY CRESCENT

Traffic issues at this intersection were being assessed.

3.2 REDWOOD SHOPPING CENTRE

A report will be coming to the 1 April 2009 meeting recommending parking restrictions on the Main North Road consistent with the entrance ways being legal road.

3. Cont'd

3.3 HUSSEY ROAD

It was **agreed** that staff be requested to provide clarification on the speed limit calculation based on distance and also supply information on the process followed when deciding on speed limits.

4. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Specific mention was made of the following:

- **MORRISON AVENUE RESERVE PLAQUE**

It was **agreed** that schools in the ward be asked for any information that students may have about the memorial plaque recently stolen from the Morrison Avenue Reserve. A commitment was given by journalism students attending the meeting to provide a newspaper article publicising the theft.

- **ST ALBANS EDUCARE**

It was **agreed** that staff be requested to clarify the status of the funding of \$350,000 that was approved by the Council in 2002 for the building of a new facility for the St Albans Edu-Care.

PART C - REPORT ON DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE BOARD

5. CONFIRMATION OF MEETING MINUTES – 4 FEBRUARY 2009

The Committee **resolved** to confirm the minutes of the Greenspace Traffic Works Committee meeting of 4 February 2009.

6. PACKE STREET – PROPOSED ANGLED PARKING

The Committee considered a report seeking approval that angle parking be installed on the east side of Packe Street outside number 8 and 10 Packe Street and number 273 Bealey Avenue.

The Committee **resolved** that the parking of vehicles be restricted to 90 degree angle parking on the east side of Packe Street commencing at a point 13 metres in a northerly direction from its intersection with Bealey Avenue and extending in a northerly direction for a distance of 27 metres.

(**Note:** Aaron Keown requested that his vote against the above decision be recorded and the reason noted that in his view the entire east side of Packe Street from Bealey Avenue to Canon Street should have angle parking.)

The meeting concluded at 5.45pm.

CONSIDERED THIS 1ST DAY OF APRIL 2009

**MATT MORRIS
CHAIRPERSON**