

OIR: 2324/903

8 May 2024

Tēnā koe

Request for Information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) (the LGOIMA)

Thank you for your email of **29 April 2024** requesting information regarding the removal of the historic Bluegum and Macrocarpa trees from the Tennis Court Road Reserve. You requested the following information:

1. Evidence supporting the justification for why these trees were removed

The large eucalyptus trees were overhanging the playground and were in close proximity to a neighbouring Kindergarten. These trees were becoming older and reports of them dropping branches and failing in high winds had been received. A site visit took place (initially in June 2022) and subsequent visits where the concern was echoed by Parks staff who confirmed that the trees did appear to pose a potential health and safety threat to users of the playground and Kindergarten areas alike. An independent arborist was engaged and provided a report (attached) which confirmed this risk, but also identified the need to remove the big pine trees on the hill as they will also pose a threat. This report was corroborated by the newly appointed Council arborist who was involved in the engagement of a suitable contractor able to undertake the work after consent was obtained.

2. The process adopted in order to reach a consensus regarding this decision.

These trees were listed as Notable trees in the District Plan, and as such Council was required to obtain a resource consent to be able to undertake any significant work on them (including removal). The comprehensive independent arborist report and specialist recommendations formed part of the consent application as well as a geotechnical report required by the consenting team due to the concern posed by the tree removal potentially impacting on roading infrastructure at the top of the hill. Consent RM230033 was issued.

Please note that any information provided in response to your request may be published on the Council website, with your personal details removed.

3. Who proposed or decided on this course of action.

As mentioned above, the course of action was decided on based on the specialist opinion of an independent arborist who provided a report that recommended the removal of the trees for safety reasons. This was further corroborated by the councils' internal arborist who was appointed during the time of consenting. The work was ultimately signed off by the Manager: Parks, Open Space and Environment.

4. What plans have been made in order to restore this historic reserve.

A planting plan will ensure replanting of appropriate species. These will be native and will be better suited to the prevailing conditions and habitat type.

Ngā mihi,



Sonja Williams

Acting Group Manager Customer and Community
Kaiwhakahaere Rōpū - Kiritaki me te Hapori

Tennis Court Road, Red Gums



Whittaker's Trees & Gardens

11/28/2022

Arboricultural Assessment Report
Protected Gum Trees at 38 Tennis Court Road, Raumati South.

Prepared For

Kapiti Coast District Council

November 2022

Prepared By

Stephen Whittaker

Whittaker's Trees and Gardens

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1. Introduction

Name of tree: *Eucalyptus ficifolia* commonly known as Red Gum.
Property address: 38 Tennis Court Road, Raumati South
Legal description: Lot 30 DP 9790, PT Lot 4 DP 10737, Lot 52 DP 10230, Lot 14 DP 11635.

The proposal is to remove these trees Protected Gum Trees with more appropriate endemic species.

The group of Gum trees at 38 Tennis Court Road, Raumati South are situated on KCDC reserve on the Western bank of the Tararua Ki Paraparaumu, Te Kōhanga Reo (Kindergarten) and recreation land consisting of a playground and lawn area.

The trees were protected on 17 January 2001 by unknown author, with a brief general explanation of these trees give the road its special character. The trees have no recorded link or significance to the area or any endemic value to the region.

These trees pose a significant safety risk to the public using this reserve and the occupants of the playground and Te Kōhanga Reo; due to the possibility of the trees falling over onto the of the playground and Te Kōhanga Reo or injury from the unsecure deadwood pieces from the trees dropping onto people uses the reserve.

Recommended action is to remove all the Gum trees and re-plant with more appropriate endemic species.

2. The Kapiti Coast District Council Heritage Register Protected Tree Application Form.

The unknown author's application was recorded on 17 January 2001, providing little technical evidence to justify their request for long-term protection of the trees.

The identification of the trees is the wrong species, as they're not *Eucalyptus ficifolia* commonly known as Red Gum due to the red tinge of the leaves and red flowers; *E. ficifolia* are not a large tall tree, more a medium size rounded shape. These gums more resemble *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*, (Yellow Gum, Blue Gum). With the tall upright growth form, plus the red foliage display. In regards to the trees giving special road characteristics, the red foliage is for only the short flowering period of the year, once finished the foliage blends in with the surrounding green foliage. The author's stating the trees as very good might refer to the healthy foliage from viewing from a distance but not to the condition of trees overall health and or structural integrity. The main reasons for applying for protection are the aesthetic looks and to hold onto remaining trees and vegetation remaining in the area from future sub divisions.

3. Safety issues

An assessment carried out of the trees showed the trees are a safety issue in height of being able to reach of the recreation, playground and Te Kōhanga Reo if the trees failed and fell in their direction. The average height of the gums are 31.5 metres (measuring device Forestry Pro II laser Rangefinder). The front gums that are within reach of Te Kōhanga Reo are around 33-36 metres. The distance from these trees to the Te Kōhanga Reo complex is around 25 metres, the distance between the Gums and recreation area including the playground is minimum 8 metres, centre of playground 17 metres. The Te Kōhanga Reo complex and recreational area are well within the reach of some of the Gum trees. If some of the gum trees were to fail by falling over or parts of these trees fell, there is high percentage of serious injury and damage to anyone present and the buildings.

Even when these trees were registered (17 January 2001) it is apparent from the picture that the trees were a hazard to the Te Kōhanga Reo (Kindergartens) and the new playground as being in reach if they failed. See APPENDICES 1-Application Form Page 1.

The area directly underneath the Gum trees is a safety hazard from danger of falling loose branches, hung up branches and dead wood. This hazard zone is open to public access and is frequently used by the public with walk ways, a track linking Tennis Court Road to The Crescent Road above, entertainment area for BBQs gatherings and relaxing in the shade.

The residential house on The Crescent Road above the Tennis Court Road Reserve is clear of the trees, as the lean of the gum trees is towards the playground/ Te Kōhanga Reo away from The Crescent Road houses. Likewise, the Gum trees won't reach over the recreation playground area to reach the Tennis Court Road residential houses.

See APPENDICES 1-Application Form Page 1 and APPENDICES 3 Gum Tree Overhanging Playground.

4. Tararua Ki Paraparaumu,

Te Kōhanga Reo (Kindergartens) is operated Monday to Friday between 8.30 am -3.30pm. the complex contains a building and to the rear a play area. all within reach of the tall gum trees. To the north of the Te Kōhanga Reo is an open recreational lawn area combined with a playground for public use, with a regular patronage during all hours of the day.

5. Tree Evaluation

An assessment of the trees was carried out using Notable tree evaluation System STEM (*The Standard Tree Evaluation Method*), to provide a system of evaluating trees in a range of categories. The threshold score for Kapiti is 140 points, taking into account the quality and notable attributes of tree stock in the region. The gum scored 80 points, well below the threshold.

Standard Tree Evaluation Methodology (STEM)

The Standard Tree Evaluation Method is used for the evaluation of individual tree specimens.

Factors:

The method employs a multi-criteria approach to the evaluation of trees. The following factors are assessed using the Standard Tree Evaluation Method:

The gum trees were assessed as a group instead of individually due to the close growing formation.

Condition Section (Health)

Form (botanical assessment)

The individual gum trees canopies are not symmetry due to not having enough space to develop outwards only upwards, and having to grow in an easterly direction for light making them lop sided. As a group they form a continuous rounded shape. The tree's internal branch structure displays a multi-leader framework due to minimal tree work over the tree's life span to only repair damage to the trees. The overall form for the trees is moderate to moderate.

Occurrence of the species

This has been evaluated considering the local tree numbers in the Kapiti area, gum trees are scattered throughout the district, the ratio of gum trees to the overall figures present to be in the range of a common tree species.

Vigour and Vitality (assessment of the health of the tree)

The health of the trees even though poorly maintained do display good canopy growth and coverage, with healthy new re-growth present to replace normal canopy thinning and storm damage.

Note: At time of inspection, there was no flowering present to assess the quantity or quality of reproduction.

As mentioned above the maintenance programme of the trees has only been minimum, with only storm damage repair tree work done. There has been history of at least two of the trees being cut down and then allowed to regrow, now multi trunked from the ground (Trees #2 &6).

The lack of maintenance has created a weaker framework structure of multi-trunks of instead a central trunk with minor branching causing weak structural integrity resulting in constant breakages. The tree's general health is good to continue re-grow lost branches and replace lost canopy cover. As these trees continue to age and reach senescence (the condition or process of deterioration with age) the ability for the trees to replace lost branches and canopy will diminish, resulting is an increase of ongoing maintenance.

The tree's general Vigour and Vitality is good.

Function (usefulness, e.g., bears fruit, wind / noise break etc.)

The main function is providing shade over the recreation area and ground stability in holding the ground from slipping down towards the recreation area.

Age

The age of the trees is not recorded; a general observation puts them in the range of approx 30-50 years old.

Amenity (Community Benefit)

Stature (height or width) the average height of the trees are 34 metres.

Visibility of the tree (the furthest distance from which a tree can be seen)
Due to the trees being in a gully and against a bank the visibility is limited to maximum of 100 metres.

Role in setting (How would a scene look without the tree?)

If the trees were removed, there would be still be a back drop of foliage from the remaining understory growth and the established trees further up the bank above The Crescent Road. The habitat environment would be slightly altered but there remains enough vegetation to sustain the present animal life.

Notability (Distinction)

Note: Only trees with particular values are awarded points under the notability evaluation criteria.

No written research evidence was provided to be able to score in this category.

Historic

No written research evidence was provided to be able to score in this category.

Scientific

No written research evidence was provided to be able to score in this category.

6. Tree Evaluation Score Sheet:						
Points scored under each of the factors are recorded on the form in the right hand column and totalled at the bottom. Only the point option scores set out may be used. For example, the condition evaluation is shown below:						
Condition Evaluation						
Points	3	9	15	21	27	Score
Occurrence	Predominant	Common	Infrequent	Rare	Very Rare Specimen	9
Form	Poor	Moderate	Good	Very Good	Very rare	9
Vigour & Vitality	Poor	Some	Good	Very Good	Excellent	15
Function	Minor	Useful	Important	Significant	Major	9
Age	10 Yrs+	20Yrs+	40Yrs+	80Yrs+	100Yrs+	15
					Subtotal:	57
Amenity Evaluation Points						
Points	3	9	15	21	27	Score
Score Stature (m)	3 to 8	9 to 14	15 to 20	21 to 26	27+	
Visibility (km)	0.5	1	2	4	8	8

Proximity	Forest	Parkland	Group 10+	Group3+	Solitary	9
Role	Minor	Moderate	Important	Significant	Major	3
Climate	Minor	Moderate	Important	Significant	Major	3
					Subtotal:	23
Notability Evaluation						
Points	3	9	15	21	27	Score
Feature	Local	District	Regional	National	International	0
Form	Local	District	Regional	National	International	0
Age 100+	Local	District	Regional	National	International	0
Association	Local	District	Regional	National	International	0
Commemoration	Local	District	Regional	National	International	0
Remnant	Local	District	Regional	National	International	0
Relict	Local	District	Regional	National	International	0
Source	Local	District	Regional	National	International	0
Rarity	Local	District	Regional	National	International	0
Endangered	Local	District	Regional	National	International	0
					Subtotal:	0
					Total Points:	80

7. Recommendation:

The recommendation is removing all the gum trees, due to the main reason being unsafe from the possibility of falling onto the Te Kōhanga Reo or Playground plus danger from falling loose pieces in the canopy. The limited maintenance history leading to the poor-quality trees will result in continued ongoing pruning costs which will increase from future storm damage and the increasing age of the trees. Re-plant programme of appropriate endemic species to replace the trees and maintain soil stability of the bank. See APPENDICES 6 List of Replacement Trees.

8. Secondary group of gum trees:

Positioned on the top of the bank of the Tennis Court Road recreational area running along the side of The Crescent Road. Group 2 consists of 11 medium size gums. The size of the trees is in the range of 6-8 metres high; displaying healthy full canopies with a crown spread of around 3 Metres. Little history of maintenance appears on these trees, apart from some road clearance.

These trees are not high priority to be removed, as present no danger or inconvenience to the public.

9. Pine and Poplar Trees:

In association with the gum trees there are three pine trees and one large Poplar tree as shown on the tree planting plan. These are full size mature trees. Again, no regular pruning maintenance has been carried out, only remedial storm damage. These trees also pose a safety threat to the public who use the area underneath the trees.

It is highly recommended removal of these at the same time as removal of the gum trees.

10. Conclusion:

The application to register these Gum tree by the unknown author holds no important reasons apart from giving the road its special character. The trees have no recorded link or significance to the area or any endemic value to the region. In regards to the aesthetics, if the trees were removed a new planting display would bring a new visual effect to the back drop.

The argument of retaining the gum trees to hold current vegetation of the area against ongoing redevelopment is important but has to be balanced with safety concerns and ongoing high costs of remedial action from future storm damage.

Safety is a big concern with these trees with the size and height that are in reach the Te Kōhanga Reo has a high attendance rate and is occupied a high percentage of time in the week and recreation area and the playground is used on a frequent basis every day of the week. The area underneath the trees is a danger zone if the deadwood, loose branches and die-back in the canopy were to fall, leading to a possibility of serious injury to people uses the reserve. As the trees age this issue will increase.

Trees evaluation was carried out using the STEM system to give a value of the trees over a range of categories. The total points showed a low score of 80, with the threshold being 140 making them below the value to register them as worth a protection grade.

Recommendation is to have the trees removed and a replanting of more appropriate endemic species. See appendices 5 List of Replacement trees.

The tree inspection was a ground only inspection, with no climbing carried out. If any further inspections or more detailed information is required, a climbing inspection, along with more invasive instruments is required.

This report is true and correct at time of writing

28 November 2022

Prepared by:

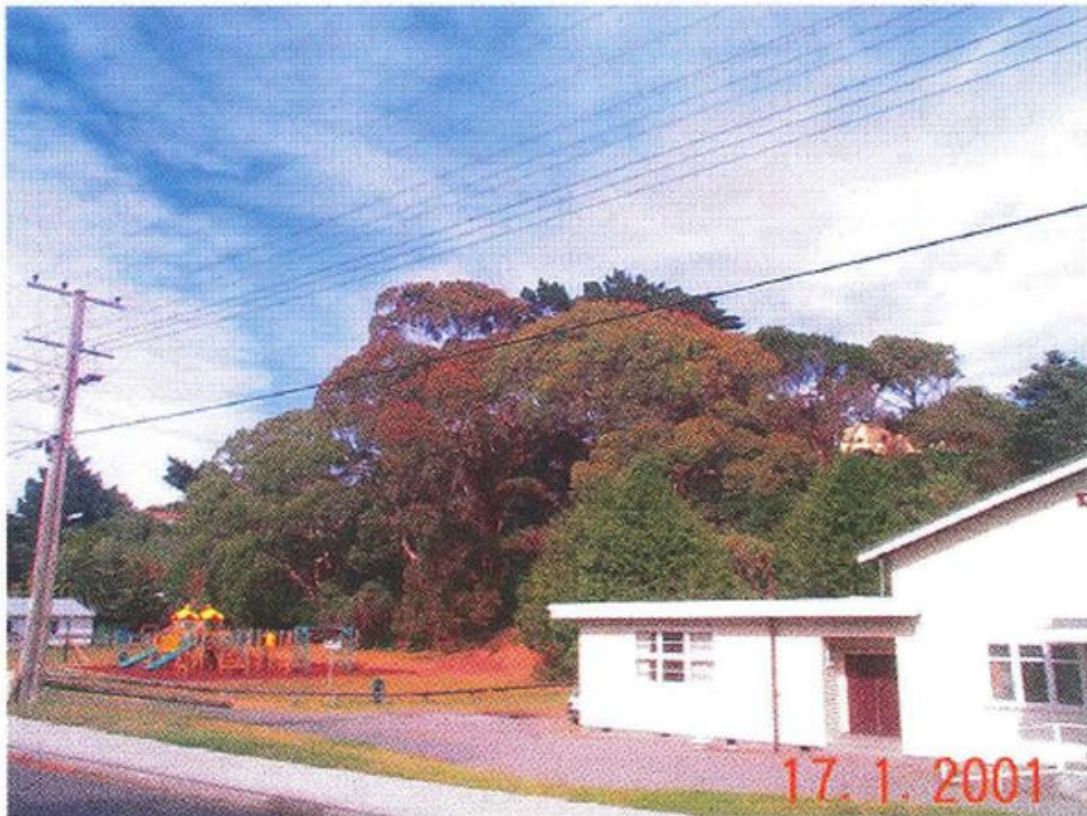


Stephen Whittaker
Arborist
Whittaker's Trees and Gardens

Kapiti Coast District Council Heritage Register PROTECTED TREE



District Plan Code:	T52
Common name:	9 Red Gum
Botanical name:	<i>Eucalyptus ficifolia</i>
Location:	Tennis Court Road Reserve, Raumati South
Owner:	KCDC



APPENDICES 2- Application Form Page 2



HERITAGE REGISTER FORM

KAPITI COAST DISTRICT COUNCIL

T52

Council wishes to obtain information from members of the public on those heritage features such as significant trees, historic buildings or sites which people feel are worthy of identification and inclusion in the District Plan Heritage Register. If you can help us with specific suggestions we would appreciate your completing this form.

Inclusion in the Heritage Register will ensure protection under the Resource Management Act 1991.

1. Name/Type of Feature (eg Tree, Historic Building)
Gum Trees
2. Location (Street and number or description)
Tenners Court Rd. back of Park & Hall & Play ground
3. Owner/Occupier K.C.D.C.
4. Present Use (eg grazed, unused, domestic house)
Reserves
5. Age (approx) Really old.
6. Current condition Very Good.
7. Reason why feature is significant (eg associated with a particular event, person, time period, visually significant).
Helps give this road its special character with backdrop of trees.
8. If feature is to be preserved/restored what should be involved (eg fencing, painting, rebuilding, signposting, landscaping).
Just retaining & maintaining.
9. Is feature of District/Regional/National Significance? Why?
Yes - with all the sub-division going on we can do with all the old trees & greenery being left.
10. Attach a photograph of the feature if possible.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Please forward to: Waikanae Service Centre
Kapiti Coast District Council
Apata Place
WAIKANAЕ Attn: Andrew Guerin

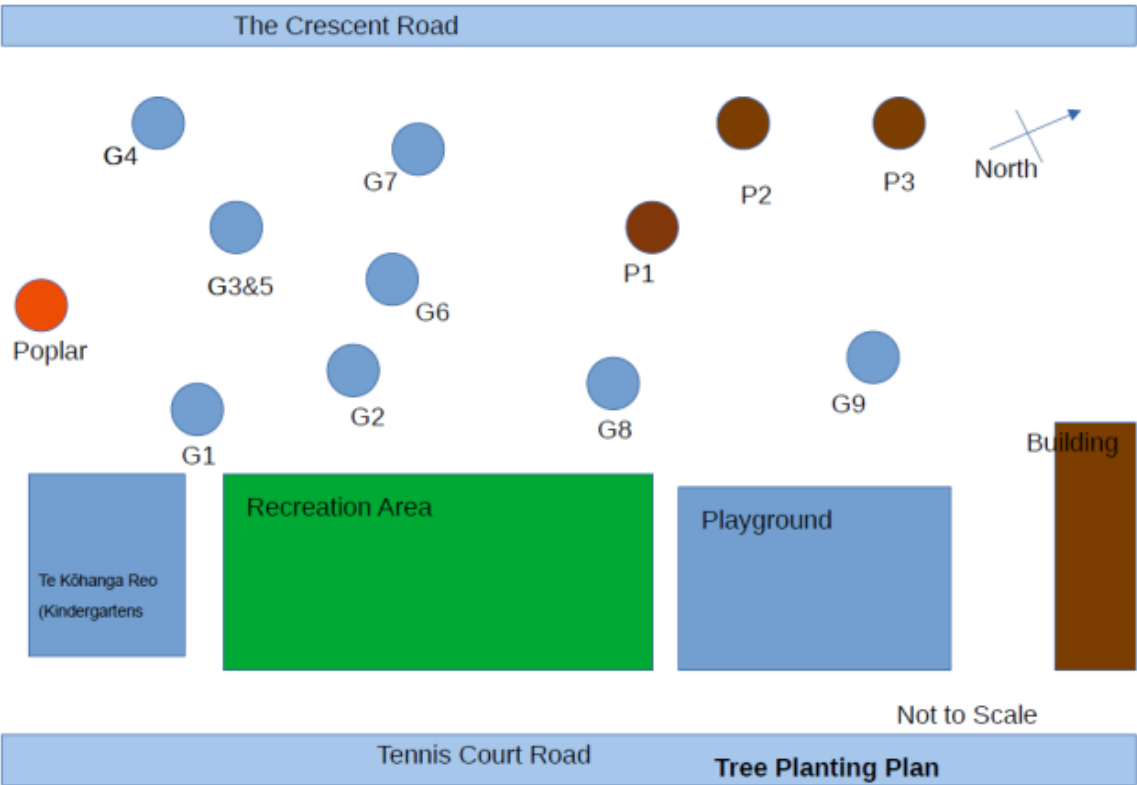
APPENDICE 3 Gum tree over hanging Playground



APPENDICE 4 KCDC District Plan Section Layout



APPENDICE 5 TREE PLANTING PLAN



A

PPENDICES 6 List of Replacement Trees

List of Replacement trees

Akeake	<i>Dodonaea Viscosa</i>
Kohuhu	<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium.</i>
Lemonwood	<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i>
Mirror bush	<i>Coprosma repens</i>
Five finger	<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>
Kowhai	<i>Sophora tetraptera</i>
Kaka beck	<i>Clianthus Puniceus</i>
Lacebark	<i>Hoheria populnea,</i>
Ribbon woods	<i>Plagianthus regius</i>
Manuka	<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>
Kanuka	<i>Kunzea ericoides</i>
Cabbage trees	<i>Cordyline australis</i>