

WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING

BUSINESS PAPER

TUESDAY 12 JUNE 2012

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WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING

Notice is hereby given that a Works Committee Meeting of the Council of the City of Randwick will be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 90 Avoca Street, Randwick, on Tuesday, 12 June 2012 at 6pm.

Committee Members: The Mayor (S Nash), Andrews, Belleli, Bowen, Hughes (Deputy Chairperson), Matson, Matthews (Chairperson), Notley-Smith, Procopiadis, Seng, Smith, Stevenson, Tracey, White and Woodsmith

Quorum: Eight (8) members

NOTE: At the Extraordinary Meeting held on 28 September 2004, the Council resolved that the Works Committee be constituted as a committee with full delegation to determine matters on the agenda.

Apologies/Granting of Leave of Absences

Confirmation of the Minutes

Works Committee Meeting - 8 May 2012

Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Address of Committee by Members of the Public

Urgent Business

Works Report

W13/12 Council-Owned Ficus 'Hillii' (Hill's Weeping Fig) Growing
Outside 11 Helena Street, Randwick..... 1

Notice of Rescission Motions

Nil

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Ray Brownlee
GENERAL MANAGER

Works Report No. W13/12



Subject: Council-Owned Ficus 'Hillii' (Hill's Weeping Fig) Growing Outside 11 Helena Street, Randwick

Folder No: F2004/07359

Author: Bryan Bourke, Tree Management Officer

Introduction

The owner of 9 Helena Street, Randwick, has written to Council advising of the serious pedestrian trip hazard caused by the roots of the mature *Ficus 'Hillii'* (Hill's Weeping fig) growing on the nature strip area outside 11 Helena Street, Randwick.

He has also provided a series of photographs which graphically illustrate the extent that footpath slabs have been lifted and displaced as well as the risk they pose to pedestrians and footpath users.

Issues

There are a number of mature *Ficus 'Hillii'* street trees growing along both sides of Helena Street, Randwick, and the problems and damages issues they are causing are common for this species.

The tree outside 11 Helena Street, Randwick, is approximately eighteen metres in height with a canopy spread of around sixteen metres. It is an important provider of habitat and food source and provides significant visual amenity.

The subject tree has been root pruned on a number of occasions over many years to the extent that Council's Tree Gang arborist has recommended that further root shaving or cutting is no longer a viable option because of the amount of tree root material requiring removal and its proximity to the tree.

This is of particular concern because there is a rock shelf running along the length of Helena Street which has meant that several trees of the same species have had to be removed over the past decade because major root pruning would have rendered them unstable.

Relationship to City plan

The relationship with the City Plan is as follows:

Outcome 10: A Healthy Environment.
Direction 10b: Environmental risks and impacts are strategically managed.
Key Action: Develop and implement policies, programs and strategies to manage environmental risks and impacts.

Financial Impact Statement

The cost to remove and stump grind this tree and to replace it with one super-advanced *Waterhousia floribunda* (Weeping Lilly Pilly) would be in the vicinity of \$3,000 and this would come from Council's annual tree management budget.

W13/12

Conclusion

The roots of this tree are causing ongoing and worsening damage to the adjacent footpath and this damage has increased considerably within the past few years. Large numbers of roots have intruded into three adjacent properties and are causing serious and increasing structural damage to both the properties and adjacent public infrastructure – particularly the frontage at 11 Helena Street, Randwick. If the subject tree is retained in the medium-long term it will inevitably cost Council a considerable and increasing amount of money for property damage/repairs – as well as constituting an ongoing trip/liability hazard.

The removal and replacement of this fig tree would certainly fall within the parameters originally set out in Council's resolution relating to aggressive-rooted street trees, although its removal would have a negative impact on visual amenity of the surrounding streetscape. This would be mitigated to some degree by the fact that there is an established Bull Bay Magnolia and a Weeping Lilly Pilly growing in the nature strip on either side of the fig and by replacing it with a super-advanced Weeping Lilly Pilly, which is a fast growing species once established.

Recommendation

That the Council-owned *Ficus microcarpa* var. 'Hillii' (Hill's Weeping fig) growing on the nature strip outside 11 Helena Street, Randwick, be removed and replaced with an advanced *Waterhousia floribunda* (Weeping Lilly Pilly) – as per Council's Street Tree Masterplan.

Attachment/s:

1. Series of photographs highlighting tree root damage to public infrastructure and the property at 11 Helena Street, Randwick, and the prominence of the subject tree in the streetscape.



***Ficus 'Hillii'* outside 11 Helena Street is prominent and significant in the streetscape**



Four metre tall Bull Bay Magnolia is well established outside most affected property

W13/12

W13/12



Established Weeping Lilly Pilly on nature strip outside 9 Helena Street, Randwick



Mass of large matted fig tree roots damaging footpath, stormwater pipe and brick fence



Front brick fence at 11 Helena Street has been severely damaged by fig tree roots



Large numbers of fig roots extend across the entire adjacent property frontage

W13/12

W13/12



Very large fig tree root travelling into the front yard area of 13 Helena Street