

ITEM NO: 12

DECISION-MAKER:	PLANNING AND RIGHTS OF WAY PANEL			
SUBJECT:	WEST QUAY ROAD SITE - REQUEST TO REMOVE TREES			
DATE OF DECISION:	19 JANUARY 2010			
REPORT OF:	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS – NICK MURPHY			
AUTHOR:	Name:	Mike Harris, Senior Tree Officer	Tel:	023 8083 3422
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None.

SUMMARY

- Richmond Hyundai lease a site from Southampton City Council (SCC) along West Quay Road, adjacent to the Holiday Inn, to use as a car retail centre.
- On the 27th October 2009 the Panel refused Richmond Hyundai's request to fell three Silver birch and three Italian Alders on this site due to problems with honeydew and various debris dropping onto the cars parked below. The Panel concurred with the recommendations of the Senior Tree Officer for permission to remove one Silver birch in poor health and to prune the remaining trees.
- On the 16th November 2009 the dominant Italian Alder along the eastern boundary had to be removed following storm damage and this, together with the reduced canopies of the remaining two Birches, has resulted in a significant decrease in the screening value of the two remaining Silver Birches and their removal would provide an opportunity to replant with more suitable species.
- The Tree Team officers are only delegated to authorise the removal of trees that are dead, dying or dangerous or for reasons of good arboricultural practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. (i) To allow the removal of two Silver Birch trees on the Richmond Hyundai site.
(ii) To condition the planting of up to 8 replacement fastigate crowned trees and to delegate the choice of species, size and spacing of trees to the Senior Tree Officer, in consultation with the leaseholder.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The loss of the dominant Italian Alder has significantly reduced the screening along the central portion of the eastern boundary. The two remaining Birch trees that are in this central section have, following recent pruning, minimal screening value and it is considered that their loss would not be significantly detrimental to the amenity of the area.
3. There is now an opportunity to improve the future amenity of the area and to re-establish a suitable screen along the edge of the site by the planting of fastigate (narrow-crowned) species which would minimise encroachment onto the area where the cars are parked. Where possible two for one replacement are planted, however, this may be determined by the size of replacement trees and spacing of planting.

CONSULTATION

4. Property Services has provided the following comment.
“Under the terms of the lease to Renault UK Ltd dated 24th July 1980 which was assigned to Richmond Cars (Bognor Regis) Ltd on 13th March 2009, the tenant is entitled to use the premises as a warehouse store workshop and motor vehicle showrooms.”
The tenant cannot lop top or otherwise damage or remove any trees on the property without the consent of the Council. In situations such as these Property Services would usually rely on the specialised advice of Planning and the Trees Officers in particular.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. Do nothing.
To retain the two Birch trees and plant up to 4 replacement trees, for the loss of the Italian Alder and birch felled with consent.
This has been rejected as it would result in a less effective boundary screen as the retention of the Birches would require the replacement trees to be planted at variable spacings to reduce the effect of the retained trees on the growth rates of the new trees, thereby compromising the screen and overall aesthetics of the planting. Also, the pruning to the Birches has left them with what is now considered to be low amenity value.
6. To fell the two Birches and the remaining two Italian Alders and plant up to 12 no. replacement trees.
Whilst this would clear the eastern boundary and provide a clear area for new planting, it is considered that the removal of two healthy Italian Alders, positioned in the southern corner and having minimal effect to the site, would have a detrimental effect on the amenity of the area. As long as the trees were reasonably safe, any issue with insect –produced “honeydew”, which is not usually associated with Alders, could be resolved by annual application of an approved chemical (imidacloprid).

DETAIL

7. Richmond Hyundai, a car sales franchise, has leased the West Quay Road site from the City Council until the 31st December 2071 –see appendix A for location map. The terms of the lease require the leaseholder to seek the permission of the Council to prune or remove any trees on site.
8. An earlier request by Richmond Hyundai to fell three Silver Birch and three Italian Alder trees on this site, due to the nuisance they caused to the business, i.e. the cars requiring daily cleaning due to various debris and honeydew from the trees, was taken to the Planning and Rights of Way Panel on the 27th October 2009. The Panel concurred with the Senior Tree Officer’s recommendations that the permission be granted for the removal of one of the Birch trees (in poor health) and to refuse permission for the removal of the remaining trees. The Panel proposed that alternative measures to control, the aphids causing the honeydew problem should be trialled together with permitted pruning to reduce the size of the tree canopies.
9. Soon after the Panel’s decision some of the permitted pruning works were carried out with the removal of the lower branches. On the 16th November 2009 storm force winds caused the failure of a weak union on the dominant Italian Alder, central along the eastern boundary, resulting in the failure of a large stem, causing significant damage to two cars parked beneath the tree. The Senior Tree Officer visited the site the same day and agreed for the rest of the tree to be removed in the interest of health and safety.
10. The loss of the dominant Italian Alder and the reduced canopies of the two Birch trees has effectively removed their screening value and diminished their amenity value. As a result, it is now considered that the removal of the two Birch trees would have no significant impact on the amenity of the area,
11. The removal of the two Silver Birches would provide an opportunity to replant this boundary with appropriate species to provide future amenity. By using fastigate, or narrow-crowned trees, such as *Quercus robur* “Fastigiata” or *Carpinus betulus fastigiata* “Frans Fontaine”, or other species to be agreed by the Senior Tree Officer, it would also minimise future inconvenience to the leaseholder.
12. The remaining two Italian Alders in the south-east corner of the site are to remain.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

13. None.

Revenue

14. None.

Property

15. None.

Other

16. None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

17. In accordance with the Constitution any decision relating to council trees, unless delegated, will be determined by the Planning Panel.

Other Legal Implications:

18. None.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

19. None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

A.	Location map
B.	Photograph of eastern boundary of site.

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None.
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Background Documents

None.

1.	None.	Not applicable
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Background documents available for inspection at: N/A

FORWARD PLAN No: None **KEY DECISION?** No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	Bargate
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