



City of Palo Alto City Council Staff Report

(ID # 8541)

Report Type: Consent Calendar

Meeting Date: 11/27/2017

Summary Title: Heritage Tree Application

Title: Adoption of a Resolution to Designate an Aleppo Pine at 1231 Parkinson Avenue as Heritage Tree Number 8

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Public Works

Recommended Motion

Staff recommends that Council adopt a resolution (Attachment B) designating an Aleppo Pine located at 1231 Parkinson Avenue as a “heritage tree” at the request of the owner of the property (Attachment A).

Background

In 1996, Council enacted the Tree Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 8.10 of Palo Alto Municipal Code, to preserve and maintain specified native oaks, redwoods, and heritage trees on private property, and to protect them from disfigurement or removal, except in certain circumstances.

Section 8.10.090 of the ordinance allows persons to nominate a tree on their property for heritage tree status. After Council approval of such designation, the tree is added to the heritage tree listing, which includes specific location, overall size, and canopy spread. The list is maintained by the Department of Public Works and available to the public on the City’s Urban Forestry website. Once designated, a heritage tree is protected by the provisions of the Tree Preservation and Management Regulations, unless removed from the heritage tree list by subsequent Council action at the request of the property owner.

The property owner at 1231 Parkinson Avenue has applied to designate an Aleppo Pine as a heritage tree.

Discussion

Staff has reviewed the application and fully discussed the benefits, restrictions and obligations for a tree on private property being designated as a heritage tree by Council. The owners, Mr. Cummins and Ms. Clark, are committed to: maintain the tree according to the standards of practice, care, and stewardship outlined in the Palo Alto Tree Technical Manual; disclose this obligation to future owners of the property; and allow the address and tree location to appear on City inventory lists, maps, web site and information.

Staff has evaluated the tree and supports the heritage tree designation. The tree is of sound health and structure, is a significant contributor to the landscape scheme of the property, and provides superior curb appeal to the neighborhood and, with reasonable care, will live for many years to come. To be designated as a heritage tree, the tree must meet one or more of the PAMC Section 8.10.090 criteria listed below:

1. It is an outstanding specimen of a desirable species.
2. It is one of the largest and oldest in Palo Alto.
3. It possesses distinctive form, size, age and location.

The Aleppo Pine meets the standard for heritage tree designation and satisfies all criteria as set forth above. Written request, consent and photographs from the owners have been received, along with a written analysis of the tree's specific location, size, dimensions, quality and economic value included in the arborist report prepared by consulting arborist, Katherine Naegele of Anderson's Tree Care, (Attachment A). The tree is a desirable species, healthy and sizable, and is perhaps the best example of an Aleppo Pine in all of Palo Alto. Roughly 100 years old, the tree has been well maintained and has a favorable prognosis for the future and contributes approximately \$30,000 to the property value.

Resource Impact and Policy Implications

There is no staff or funding resources required for this action, nor any policy changes required.

Environmental Review

Adoption of this resolution does not require environmental review.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: 1231 Parkinson_HeritageTreeApp

- Attachment B: Resolution Designating a Heritage Tree

1231 Parkinson Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Palo Alto City Council
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

August 18, 2017

Dear Council Members,

We hereby request that subject tree be considered as a candidate for Heritage Tree status as outlined in CPA Municipal Code 8.10.090.

The reason we feel it qualifies for such is the fact that only two other such Aleppo Pine of its size exists in Palo Alto today and one is designated as a Heritage Tree. The location of the other tree is at 2291 Ramona Street, and was designated as such in 2004 as Heritage Tree No. 7.

In comparison, our Aleppo Pine is of larger size in all dimensions.

As an aside, we mention that our tree is on a Canopy Community Center tree walk and as such we hear much appreciation for its magnificence. The occasional people walking by that we notice will stop and seem to be amazed at the grandeur of it.

At Christmas, we place a large red bow around the trunk and place a spotlight on it.

This tree, because of its size, shades our house in the summer and keep us at least 10 degrees cooler than the outside temperature.

Our tree is also mentioned in the Encyclopedia of Stanford Trees, Shrubs & Vines - <https://trees.stanford.edu/ENCYC/PINhalepen.htm>

Property Owners' Assurance

To the City of Palo Alto of our indefinite commitment to maintain the Heritage Tree specimen according to the standard practice of care and stewardship. We hereby agree to disclose the same to any future owners of the property.

We hereby grant consent to: include the address and tree location on any inventory list and map that may be utilized by persons interested in viewing the tree.

We also wish to add the following:

1. I, Urban Cummings, have lived in this home for 45 years and have maintained subject tree by the standards of the best arborists (including McClenahan) in the area. I believe this beautiful tree adds status to our neighborhood.
2. I have unfailingly maintained this tree by having it pruned by the best arborists in the area. I have also added cabling per the arborists recommendations.
3. We are attempting to preserve its ground water supply by applying for the removal of a nearby oak tree which the arborist states is competing with the Pine for water.

Yours Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Urban K. Cummings and Christine E. Clark. The signature of Urban K. Cummings is on the left, and the signature of Christine E. Clark is on the right, written in a cursive script.

Urban K. Cummings & Christine E. Clark
1231 Parkinson Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301
650-388-6504



8/16/2017

Urban Cummings
1231 Parkinson Avenue
Palo Alto, 94301
(650) 388-6584
furryfeet@mindspring.com

Re: Heritage Tree Designation for Aleppo Pine at 1231 Parkinson Avenue

Dear Urban,

At your request, I have visited the property referenced above to evaluate the Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*) for designation as a City of Palo Alto Heritage Tree. This report details its condition as related to suitability for Heritage status.

Location

This tree is located in the front yard at 1231 Parkinson Avenue, overhanging the yard, house, neighboring properties to the east and west, and adjacent portion of the street (**Image 1**).

Species, Habitat, Size, and Age

A suggested by its name, Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*) is native to the Mediterranean region. Like most Mediterranean plants, it thrives in the California Bay Area with little care, but is not classified as invasive (California Invasive Plant Council, 2017).

The DBH (diameter at breast height) of the subject tree is 47.7 inches. Its height is approximately 100 feet, and its crown spread is approximately 90 feet (estimated visually). This is unusually large for an Aleppo pine, as the species generally reaches only about 60 feet in height and 40 feet in spread (SelecTree, 2017).

Given this tree's size, it may predate the existing house by several decades. I estimate very roughly that this tree may be 100 years old. No increment core was taken to determine age. Aleppo pine can be quite a long-lived species, reaching over 150 years old in favorable growing conditions (SelecTree, 2017). I expect the subject tree to continue thriving for at least several more decades in the absence of major site disturbance.

Health and Structure

This tree is in good health, evidenced by bright green foliage in all parts of the canopy. A small amount of deadwood is present, mainly on branches which receive little to no sunlight. This is normal for all tree species, and usually does not indicate a problem.

One small black bleeding canker is present on the trunk, under the lowest limb (**Image 2**). This may indicate infection by a phytophthora pathogen (*Phytophthora* sp.), which may or may not prove problematic over time. The bark in this area was sound and undamaged at the time of my inspection. No other signs of decay were observed in the trunk.

This tree has three codominant leaders and one large low branch, all of which were cabled together in the past (**Image 3**). The cables are installed improperly, with multiple cables attached to the same point on the most central leader. The cables likely have little impact on tree stability. I observed no decay or previous limb failures in the canopy.

While there is a small amount of included bark in the codominant unions, no bulging, bleeding, or other signs of weakness are apparent (**Image 4**). The diameter of the low limb is over half the diameter of the trunk at the attachment point; however, the branch collar appears well-formed and structurally sound (**Image 5**).

Based on its current condition, I do not expect this tree to die or undergo a substantial failure (breakage of a limb or leader) in the near future. Its condition may change over time, and this portion of my evaluation is valid for only three years.

Growing Conditions

The landscaping around this tree's trunk comprises one coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), several Italian cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens*), low shrubs, and bark chips (**Images 6, 7**). Optimal growing conditions for coast live oaks and Italian cypresses are similar to those for Aleppo pine. I could not identify all shrubs present, but none appeared to be high-water use species, suggesting compatibility with Aleppo pine.

Much of this tree's root zone is paved, including the walkway at this address; the neighboring driveway to the east; the public sidewalk and planter strip; and the public street. I did not observe root conflicts with any of these paved areas. The house at this address also occupies part of the tree's root zone, as do the neighboring house to the east, and both neighboring front yards.

Existing Heritage Aleppo Pine

A different Aleppo pine at 2291 Ramona Street was designated as Heritage Tree #7 in 2004. The arborist report submitted with the application, prepared by McClenahan Consulting on 2/5/2004, lists the tree as having a DBH (DSH) of 34.8 inches; a height of 55 feet; and a canopy spread of 60 feet. The subject tree at 1231 Parkinson is far larger in all dimensions.

Maintenance, Past and Future

This tree appears to have been maintained appropriately up to this point. Like most trees, this one would have benefited from more aggressive structural pruning in its very early years to establish ideal branching architecture; however, it has been pruned well in its maturity, with no signs of topping, heading cuts, lion's tailing (removal of interior branches), or removal of excessively large branches.

Appraisal

This Aleppo pine has a value of \$29,700 according to the appraisal I conducted using the methodology detailed in the Guide for Plant Appraisal (Gooding et al., 2000). This appraisal method takes into account tree size, species, location, health, structure, and other factors. Details of my appraisal can be provided upon request.

Bibliography

SelecTree. "*Pinus halepensis* Tree Record." <http://selecttree.calpoly.edu/tree-detail/pinus-halepensis> Accessed Aug 14, 2017.

California Invasive Plant Council. "California Invasive Plant Inventory Database." <http://cal-ipc.org/paf/> Accessed Aug 15, 2017.

Council of Tree & Landscape Appraisers. *Guide for Plant Appraisal*. 9th ed. Champagne, IL: International Society of Arboriculture; 2000.

The Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture. *Species Classification and Group Assignment*: "A Regional Supplement to the CTLA *Guide for Plant Appraisal*, 9th Edition." International Society of Arboriculture; 2004.

Image 1: Aleppo pine at 1231 Parkinson Avenue (obstructed, best angle possible)



Image 2: black bleeding canker on trunk, under lowest limb

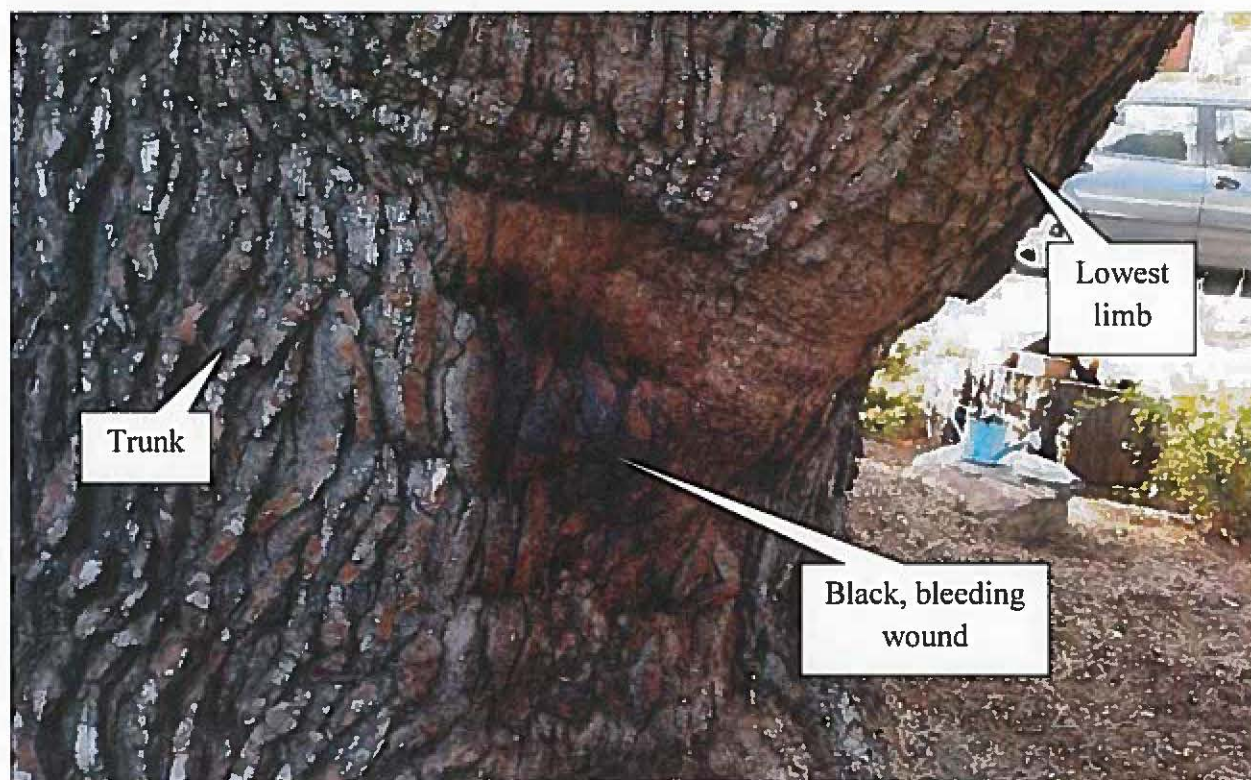


Image 3: cables in canopy



Image 4: codominant unions

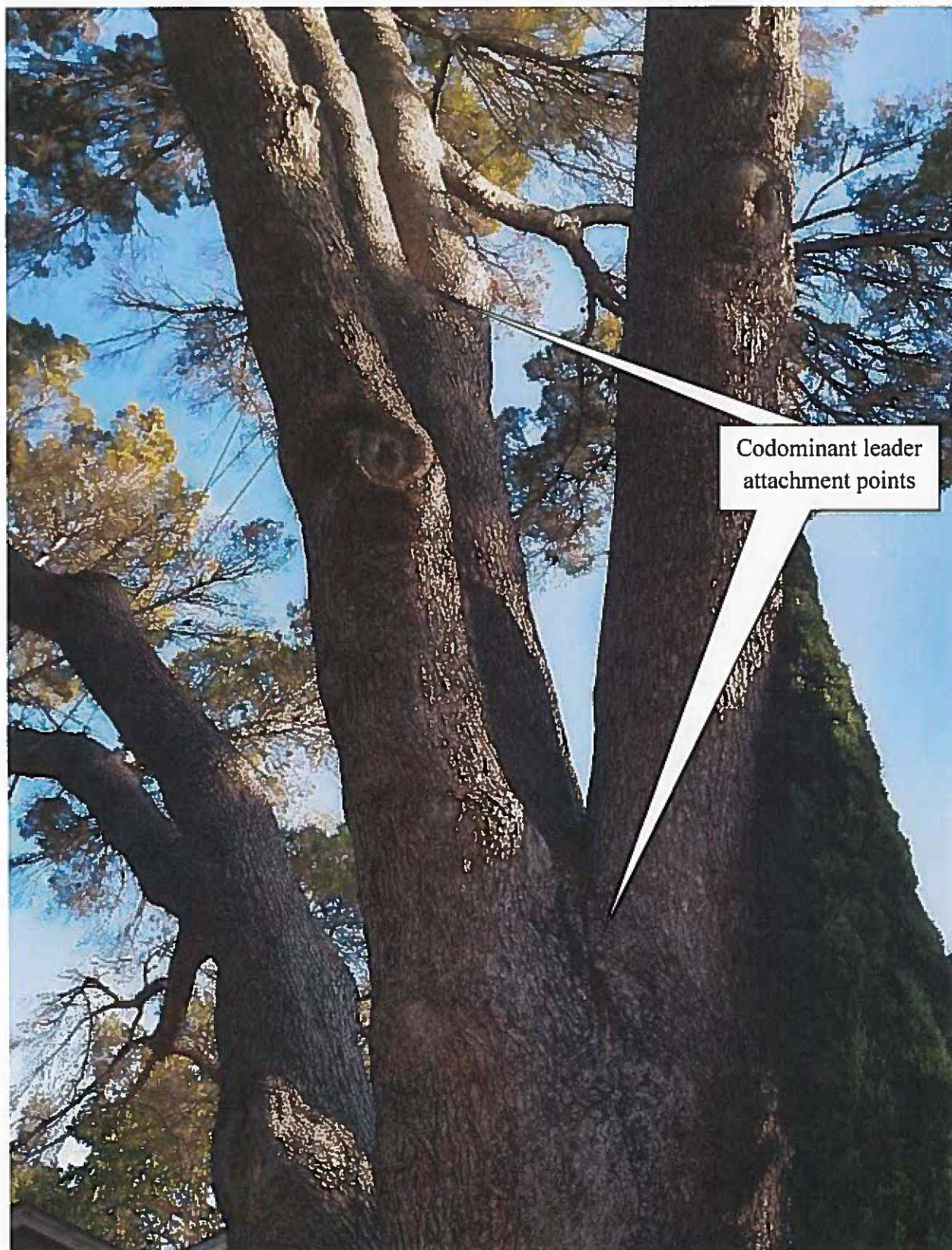


Image 5: large, low limb



Image 6: coast live oak and shrubs under canopy of Aleppo pine

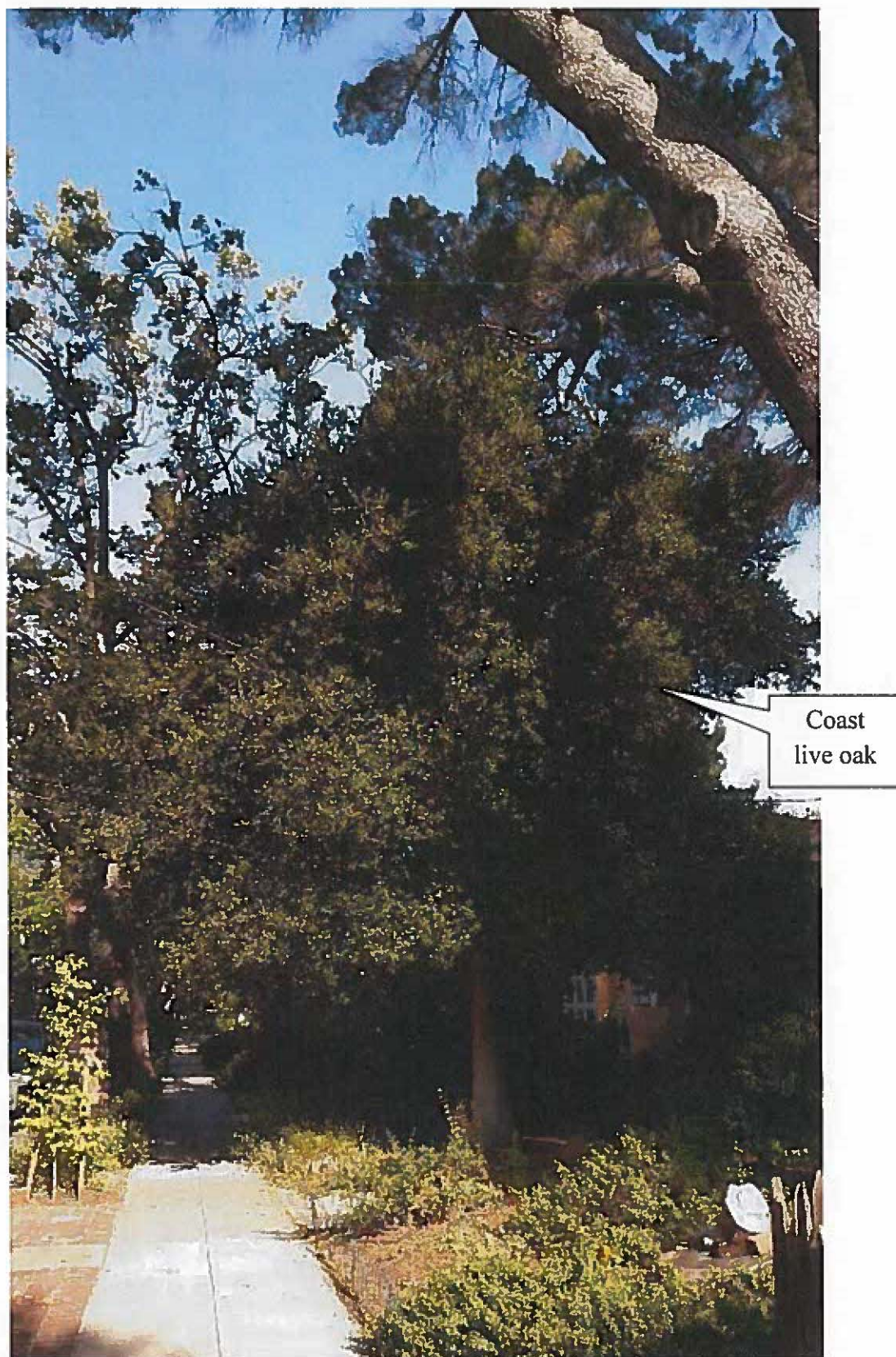
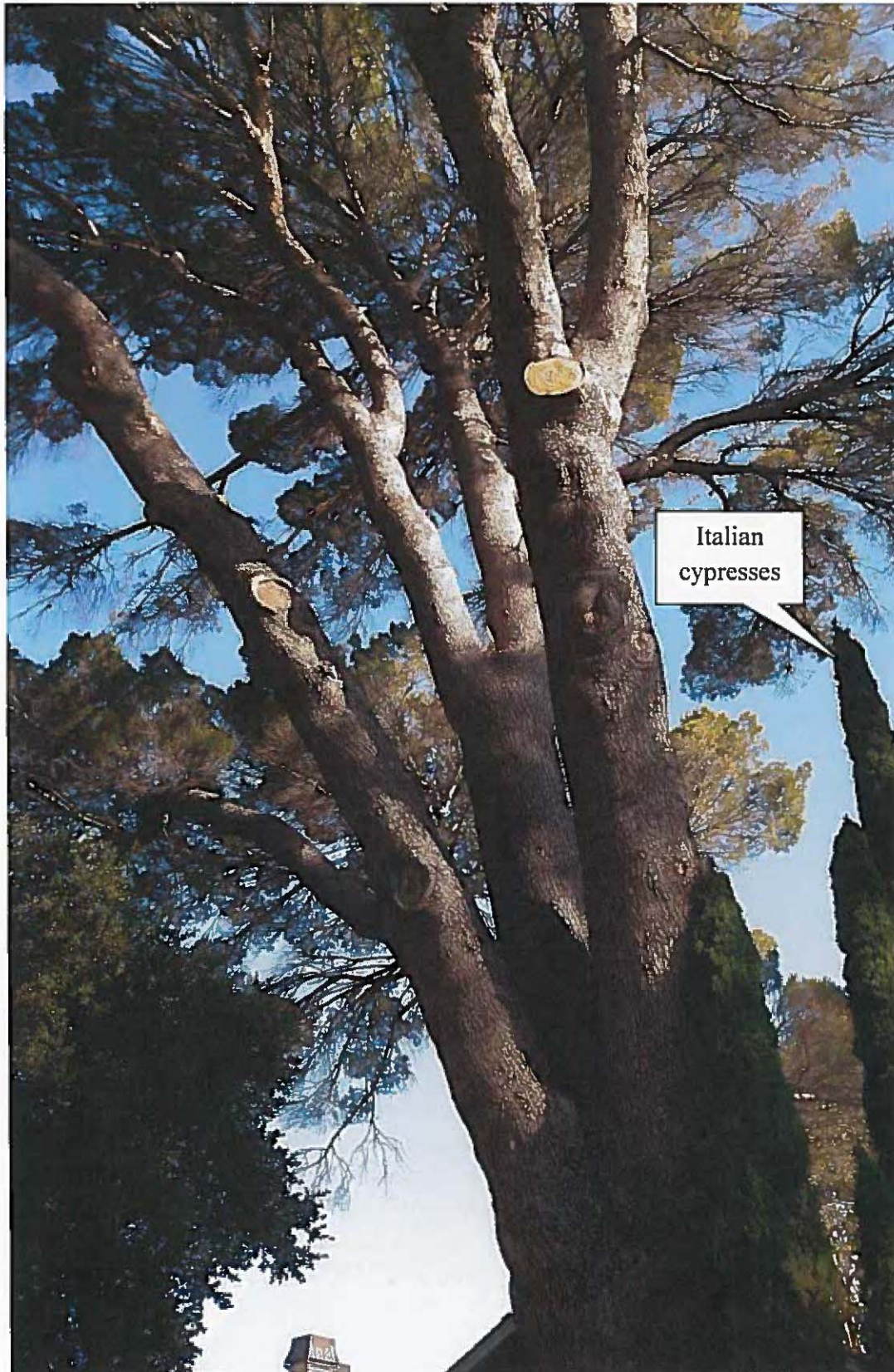
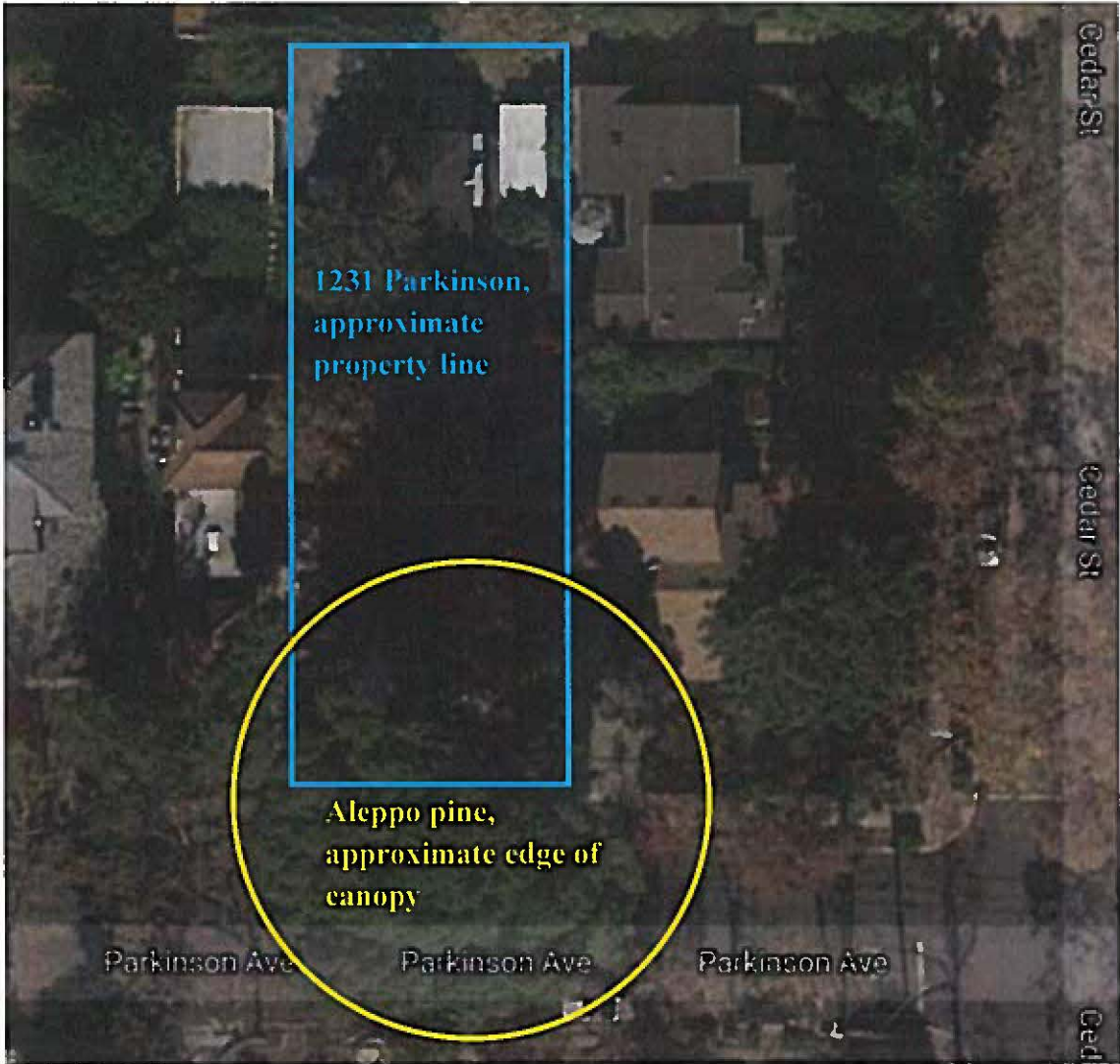


Image 7: Italian cypresses under canopy of Aleppo pine



Site Map



ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITING CONDITIONS

1. Any legal description provided to the consultant/appraiser is assumed to be correct. Any titles and ownerships to any property are assumed to be good and marketable. No responsibility is assumed for matters legal in character. Any and all property is appraised or evaluated as though free and clear, under responsible ownership and competent management.
2. It is assumed that any property is not in violation of any applicable codes, ordinances, statutes, or other government regulations.
3. Care has been taken to obtain all information from reliable sources. All data has been verified insofar as possible; however, the consultant/appraiser can neither guarantee nor be responsible for the accuracy of information provided by others.
4. The consultant/appraiser shall not be required to give testimony or to attend court by reason of this report unless subsequent contractual arrangements are made, including payment of an additional fee for such services as described in the fee schedule and contract of engagement.
5. Loss, alteration, or reproduction of any part of this report invalidates the entire report.
6. Possession of this report or a copy thereof does not imply right of publication or use for any purpose by any other than the person to whom it is addressed, without the prior expressed written or verbal consent of the consultant/appraiser.
7. Neither all nor any part of this report, nor any copy thereof, shall be conveyed by anyone, including the client, to the public through advertising, public relations, news, sales or other media, without the prior expressed written or verbal consent of the consultant/appraiser particularly as to value conclusions, identity of the consultant/appraiser, or any reference to any professional society or initialed designation conferred upon the consultant/appraiser as stated in his qualification.
8. This report and the values expressed herein represent the opinion of the consult/appraiser, and the consult/appraiser's fee is in no way contingent upon the reporting of a specified value, a stipulated result, the occurrence of a subsequent event, nor upon any finding to be reported.
9. Sketches, diagrams, graphs, and photographs in this report, being intended as visual aids, are not necessarily to scale and should not be construed as engineering or architectural reports or surveys.
10. Unless expressed otherwise: 1) information in this report covers only those items that were examined and reflects the condition of those items at the time of inspection; and 2) the inspection is limited to visual examination of accessible items without dissection, excavation, probing, or coring. There is no warranty or guarantee, expressed or implied, that problems or deficiencies of the plants or property in question may not arise in future.

Respectfully submitted,



Katherine Naegele
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ISA Certified Arborist #WE-9658A
ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified
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Not Yet Approved

Resolution No. ____
Resolution of the Council of the City of Palo Alto Designating a Heritage Tree
at 1231 Parkinson Avenue

R E C I T A L S

A. Pursuant to Palo Alto Municipal Code section 8.10.090, upon nomination by any person and with the written consent of the property owner(s), the City Council may designate a tree as a heritage tree.

B. A tree may be designated as a heritage tree upon a finding that it is unique and of importance to the community because it is an outstanding specimen of a desirable species or it is one of the largest and oldest trees in Palo Alto or it possesses distinctive form, size, age, location, and/or historic significance.

C. Urban Cummins and Christine Clark the owners of 1231 Parkinson Avenue have requested the Aleppo pine on their property be designated as a heritage tree.

D. The City Council finds that the tree is unique and of importance to the community because it is a desirable species, healthy, sizable, and perhaps the best example of an Aleppo Pine in the City.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council of the City of Palo Alto RESOLVES as follows:

SECTION 1. The Aleppo Pine tree located at 1231 Parkinson Avenue is designated as a heritage tree.

SECTION 2. The Council finds that the adoption of this resolution does not meet the definition of a project under Public Resources Code Section 21065, thus, no environmental assessment under the California Environmental Quality Act is required.

INTRODUCED AND PASSED:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

City Clerk
140527

Mayor

Not Yet Approved

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

APPROVED:

Assistant City Attorney

City Manager