



City of Palo Alto City Council Staff Report

(ID # 14233)

Meeting Date: 5/9/2022

Report Type: Consent Calendar

Title: Adoption of a Resolution Designating Redwood Tree at 1019 Forest Court as a New Heritage Tree #5 and Removing Previously Designated Silver Maple at 1872 Edgewood Drive From the List of Heritage Trees

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Public Works

Recommendation

Staff recommends that Council adopt a resolution (Attachment B) designating a Coast Redwood located at 1019 Forest Court as a “heritage tree” at the request of the owner of the property and remove the former heritage tree located at 1872 Edgewood Drive from the heritage tree list.

Background

In 1996, Council enacted the Tree Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 8.10 of the 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 1019 Forest Court, Ms. Enid Pearson, has applied to designate a Coast Redwood as a heritage tree (Attachment A).

Heritage tree #5, a silver maple located at 1872 Edgewood Court had reached the end of its life span and was in decline and becoming hazardous. The property owners, the Starner Family, applied for and received a protected tree removal permit in December 2021 and have since removed the tree. It now needs to be officially removed from the heritage tree list.

Discussion

Staff has reviewed the application for the coast redwood at 1019 Forest Court and the benefits, restrictions, and obligations for a tree on private property being designated as a heritage tree by Council. The owner, Ms. Pearson, is committed to maintaining the tree according to the standards of practice, care, and stewardship outlined in the Palo Alto Tree Technical Manual; disclosing this obligation to future owners of the property; and allowing the address and tree location to appear on City inventory lists, maps, and in online heritage tree 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 is visible from most locations in 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 Coast Redwood meets the standard for heritage tree designation and satisfies criteria 1 & 2 as set forth above. Written request, consent, and photographs from the owner have been received, along with a written analysis of the tree's specific location, size, dimensions, quality, economic value, and the cultural and familial significance included in the arborist report prepared by consulting arborist David Dockter of Arbor Advisor, (Attachment A). The tree is a desirable species, healthy and sizable, is of cultural and familial significance and is one of the best examples of a Coast Redwood in all of Palo Alto. Roughly 48 years old, the tree has been well maintained and has a favorable prognosis for the future and contributes approximately \$40,600 to the property value.

Timeline, Resource Impact, and Policy Implications

There is no staff or funding resources required for this action, nor any policy changes required. The tree at 1019 Forest Court will be designated as a heritage tree once the resolution is adopted.

Stakeholder Engagement

No formal engagement was undertaken; however, the property owner did include a letter of support for designating this tree as a heritage tree from a neighboring property owner.

Environmental Review

Adoption of this resolution does not require environmental review.

Attachments:

- **Attachment4.a:** Attachment A: 1019 Forest Ct Heritage Tree Documents
- **Attachment4.b:** Attachment B: Resolution Designating a Heritage Tree at 1019 Forest Court and removing a Heritage Tree at 1872 Edgewood Drive

Enid Pearson, 1019 Forest Court, Palo Alto, CA 94301 January 12, 2022

Palo Alto City Council
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Re: Heritage Tree Designation by City Council

Dear Mayor Burt and Members of the Palo Alto City Council:

This is my application for a Heritage Tree Designation by the City Council for a beautiful coast redwood tree that is on my property at 1019 Forest Court. It would be an extraordinary addition to Palo Alto's Urban Forestry program for Heritage Trees.

I have included a report from one of Palo Alto's finest arborists, David Dockter, and several pictures of the tree, including a painting of the tree by my granddaughter, Bryn Barton.

When I moved into my Forest Court home in 1977, the yard was barren, except for two badly trimmed and topped eucalyptus trees and one desperate oak in the middle of the yard. This was also the year we had one of our unusually rainy storms and during the night the poor oak just fell over taking out part of the fence, leaving my house intact.

After the cleanup, I consulted with my friend Mary Gordon, Landscape Architect, and she recommended planting the African Linden and the Coast Redwood. I have kept the African Linden (which was from a pot at my former house) well in check and the Redwood was allowed to grow at will, with regular watering. Today this wonderful tree is over 65 inches in diameter and 163 feet in height. I think it is magnificent. It belongs on Palo Alto's list of significant trees – El Palo Alto's neighbor!

One of Palo Alto's most beloved assets is its trees. It is quite wonderful to drive (or walk) down our streets and marvel at the great variety and number of trees. It was always my aim when I was on the council that any development that proposed taking out a tree was obligated to plant a replacement. It was most painful when developments replaced trees with what I called "buggy-whip saplings" which usually took another 20 years to grow to 20 feet tall, if they even survived that long. I compliment you on your recently revised tree ordinance; you recognized Palo Alto's great tree value.

If you read David Dockter's assessment of my proposed designated heritage tree I think you will appreciate my desire to protect this tree for future Palo Altans. I request that this Council add this incredible tree to its list of Heritage Trees. Thank you.

Enid Pearson, former Councilmember, 1965-75.

Enid Pearson, signature