

August 7, 2020

City of Sunnyvale Planning Division
Community Development Department
456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94088

Attn: Betty Avila, Assistan Planner

Regarding Subject Property: Joseph B. Didone, 1590 Lewiston Drive

Planning Application Number: 2020-7438 Tree Removal Permit Application (1) Tree Approved
& (2) Trees Denied for Removal 7/27/20

On 7/28/2020, Arborwell, Inc. was contracted by Joseph B. Didone to evaluate the trees, located at 1590 Lewiston Drive in order to evaluate (3) three Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) trees in the front yard of his residence.

The letter dated 07/27/20; from the City of Sunnyvale, states that only (1) tree in a group of (3) trees has been approved for removal, while the other (2) have been denied.

“Redwood closest to the house- Tree needs pruning with maintenance and care. No removal.

Redwood closest the the street (middle) - Tree needs pruning with maintenance and care. No removal.”

It is my understanding that the homeowner is concerned about the root systems of the (3) Redwood trees which have already caused costly damage to the main sewer line to the house, having the potential for damage to the foundation.

I have assigned identification numbers to each tree for the purpose of this report, see Fig 1.1 on the next page.

On Wednesday, August 5, 2020 I visited the site to inspect the trees and noted the recent soil disturbance where the excavation took place to repair the sewer line. The trees have also lifted the sidewalk in the public right-of-way, which has been ground-down in several places to reduce potential trip hazards in the public in the right-of-way.

The main walkway to the house is comprised of a sectioned concrete walkway, surrounded by an exposed aggregate border that runs between the garage and Redwood Tree #1. The sections of concrete and exposed aggregate are lifting in several places, causing a liability for the homeowner should someone be injured entering or exiting their home as a result of the trip hazard.

On a larger scale, there is also concern for the foundation as the base of Tree #1 and Tree #3 are within 15-20 feet from the house and garage foundations. All are within 20-25 feet of the house and garage



Fig 1.1

foundations, including the neighboring property at 1594 Lewiston Drive.

According to the University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources; Forest Research & Outreach, Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), publication, "Redwood has no taproot but its roots spread out over large areas."

The California Department of Parks and Recreation publication, About Coast Redwoods, also states, "These trees have shallow root systems that extend over one hundred feet from the base, intertwining with the roots of other redwoods. This increases their stability during strong winds and floods."

When considering the shallow root systems covering a large area, the proximity of these (3) Redwood trees to 1590 Lewiston; as well as the neighboring property at 1594 Lewiston, it is very likely that all three of these trees root systems will have an impact on the hardscape and potentially the structural foundation of both properties. The potential for damage will increase over time as the trees and their roots increase in size.



Tree #3 has been approved for removal, per the letter dated 07/28/20 as it has caused significant damage to the sewer line at 1590 Lewiston Drive. This tree is also leaning toward the neighboring property at 1594 Lewiston Drive, though this is a corrected lean as it is in competition for light, growing in close proximity to Tree #1 and VERY close proximity to Tree #2. These trees are growing within 5 to 8 feet of one another,

so it is safe to assume that the roots are well intertwined together, as described in the California Department of Parks and Recreation publication, About Coast Redwoods above.

With this in mind, removal of Tree #3 (which has been approved); will require stump grinding and/or possibly treatments of the stump to prevent regrowth; "The coast redwood is a prodigious sprouter. It can sprout from stumps and root crowns within 2 to 3 weeks of being cut. Over a hundred sprouts may arise from the stump of one cut tree..." according to the University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources; Forest Research & Outreach, Coast Redwood (Sequoia sempervirens), publication. Obviously, as the trees are in such close proximity to one another with intertwining root systems, there will be significant damage to the roots of Tree #2, and some damage to the roots of Tree #1 during the grinding process for Tree #3 removal. This will result in a residual risk for both Trees #1 & #2 moving forward, as damage to the roots can cause instability and potential for pathogenic infestations.

Tree #3 is the smallest of the three trees with the trunk approximately 1 to 2 feet away from the sewer line. The trunk of Tree #2 is approximately 6 to 8 feet from the sewer line and has already impacted the sidewalk, which is approximately 10-12 feet away from the trunk; so it is highly likely that these roots are also impacting the sewer line, in addition to the roots from Tree #3.



While I understand each jurisdiction follows their own guidelines, I am referencing the, Redwood Guidelines as outlined by the Town of Portola Valley at the Town Council meeting on September 11, 2013:

"C. Inappropriate Planting Locations ...in redwoods developing a shallow and very extensive lateral root system which can extend 100 feet from the trunk in a mature tree (a mature redwood can consume 500 gallons of water a day). This root system often causes problems with the foundations of nearby buildings, septic tanks and leach fields. Furthermore, redwoods can grow rapidly, and unless carefully sited, can block views causing strife between neighbors. Based on these characteristics, the Committee discourages the planting of redwoods in the following locations:

1. Oak woodlands.
2. Grasslands and meadows.
3. Anywhere that requires supplemental summer watering.

4. Within 50 feet of any existing or proposed structures, septic systems or leach fields where the roots will eventually cause problems.”

While removal of healthy redwood trees is always a difficult decision to make, we are asking for an appeal to the denial for removal of Redwood Trees #1 & #2, taking the proximity to one another as a “stand,” of redwood trees in addition to the proximity to the surrounding residential structures on the homeowner and neighboring properties alike.

Trees will be replaced, per City approval with more suitable species for the given location and space provided.

Sincerely,

Dustie

Dustie Rushing, Account Manager
ISA Certified Arborist WE-10084A
ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified



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Certification

I, Dustie Rushing, CERTIFY to the best of my knowledge and belief:

1. That the statements of fact contained in this tree health assessment and report are true and correct.
2. That the analysis, opinions and conclusions are limited only by the reported assumptions and limiting conditions, and that they are my personal, unbiased professional analysis, opinions and conclusions.
3. That I have no present or prospective interest in the plants that are the subject of this appraisal and that I have no personal interest or bias with respect to the parties involved.
4. That method(s) found in this appraisal are based on a request to determine the overall health of plant(s) considering reasonable factors of assessment.

Appraiser's Credentials

Dustie Rushing, ISA Certified Arborist #WE-10084A

Tree Risk Assessment Qualified

2005 Awarded AS Degree in Horticulture in 2005, Las Positas College, Livermore, CA

References

Coast Redwood (Sequoia sempervirens) University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources; Forest Research & Outreach;
https://ucanr.edu/sites/forestry/California_forests/http_ ucanrorg_sites forestry California forests Tree_Identification_/Coast_Redwood_Sequoia_sempervirens_198/ 8/7/2020

About Coast Redwoods California Department of Parks & Recreation;
https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=22257 8/7/2020

Redwood Guidelines Planting of Redwoods Town of Portola Valley at the Town Council meeting on September 11, 2013; <http://www.portolavalley.net/home/showdocument?id=6448> 8/7/2020