



November 25, 2024

Town of Atherton Planning Commission
80 Fair Oaks Lane
Atherton, CA 94027

RE: 50 Lilac Court, Atherton – Tree Removal Application

Written Description for Removal of Tree #10 Request

The property at 50 Lilac is undergoing a remodel to both the home and landscape. The overall design goal for the property is to create a home that suits the needs of an active family with children while utilizing the existing main home foundation. This property has a few unusual conditions. The lot configuration, combined with its entry location at the end of the cul-de-sac, contributes to its limited building envelope and available outdoor spaces adjacent to the home. The tree protection zones from the redwood tree grove planted by the neighbor significantly impacts the developable area of this property as shown on the site plan. Adding to this, tree #10 in the backyard poses additional concerns as outlined below.

Tree #10 Sequoia Sempervirens – See Site Plan and arborist reports for reference:

We are requesting the removal of this existing tree #10. We propose replacing this tree with a 60" box oak tree. While this tree is in good condition, we are requesting its removal for the following reasons.

- 1. The probability of a public safety hazard, personal injury or significant property damage as a function of proximity to existing structures and objects of value and interference with utility services.*

Foundation concerns - Tree #10 is located approximately 10' from the garage foundation and 12' from the main house foundation. Redwood trees have aggressive horizontal root systems that can spread horizontally for 50 to 80 feet as the tree matures. In fact, the roots of a mature redwood can spread out over an acre of land and contain more than 90,000 cubic feet of soil. Due to their mature size and potential for damage to foundations, it is not recommended to have Redwood trees near homes.

Roof concerns - Tree #10 is located approximately 9' from the garage roof and 11' from the main house roof. Currently tree #10 drops a lot of debris onto both the main house and garage roofs year-round. This debris is a fire hazard and can also damage the roofing material. As the tree grows and continues to lean toward the house, this situation will only get worse.

Insurance Concerns - Insurance companies in California have tightened their requirements for homes that can be insured. They now require roofs to be kept free of tree debris and overhanging branches. They have begun refusing to insure homes if this requirement is not satisfied, putting properties and their contents at great risk. Per the general contractor, tree #10 has presented a serious and constant debris issue on the new roof that they are constantly

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dealing with. As tree #10 continues to grow and lean, this will become a bigger issue. The property owners have received a notification from their insurance expressing their need to have their roofs clear of any trees.

2. *The necessity to remove the heritage tree(s) to allow reasonable use or other enjoyment of the property when there is no demonstrated feasible alternative to the removal while meeting other adopted goals and policies of the general plan to the greatest extent feasible.*

Tree #10 significantly impacts the ability to have an outdoor BBQ counter and dining terrace in the backyard adjacent to the kitchen and living spaces of the home. Even with the removal of tree #10, the BBQ counter and dining terrace will have to be pushed up close to the main house due to the neighbor's trees and their TPZ's. Without the removal of Tree #10 the outdoor eating area would need to be pushed up against the living, dining, and family room floor to ceiling windows which would remove any garden views from the house. For the property owners this is not a reasonable solution. In our experience, locating the outdoor kitchen/dining up against the living/dining room windows is not desirable, representative of what most homes in Atherton have, and would possibly decrease the value to the property. For this reason, we have not included an alternate location.

3. *Water use.*

Redwoods require a lot of water. Their aggressive root system will spread out as far as they can to ensure they capture all the water in the area. In doing so they rob the surrounding plant material of water and require additional water to be provided to all of them combined. We have seen this play out in many of our past projects. The WELO water use is satisfied initially, but as the landscape grows in the adjacent redwood tree roots expand to capture the water and the entire landscape ends up requiring much more water than otherwise needed.

4. *Allergy Issues:*

The daughter is allergic to redwood tree pollen, especially if it touches her skin. While nothing can be done about the neighbor's grove of redwoods, reducing the amount of pollen that drops in their yard would be desirable.

The other trees that affect the backyard development opportunities and present concerns to foundations are #2 - #9, and #11 - #15. However these trees were planted by the neighbors on their property, so we are not requesting anything regarding these trees.

With best regards,



Cristin A Franklin
Principal
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