



Memo

To: The Atherton Planning Commission
From: Sally D Bentz, Town Arborist
CC: Brittany Bendix, Consulting Town Planner
Date: March 26th, 2025
Re: Heritage Tree Removal Application and TPZ exception at 53 Euclid

I have reviewed the application at 53 Euclid Ave. and offer the following observations and recommendation for your review:

In June 2024 the applicant applied to remove 3 Redwood trees and Tree Protection Zones (TPZ) for a proposed parking space 34' x 67'. It was denied by the Planning Commission. On January 22nd the applicant applied again with the removal of 2 Redwood and 3 TPZ exceptions. It was denied.

I received an update site plan on 3/6/25. Please see the following. The applicant requests the below:

- TREE 1 – 19" Redwood – requesting removal
- TREE 2 – 19" Redwood – proposing to preserve. TPZ exception 3x
- TREE 3 – 19/27" Redwood. – I can approve at staff level
- TREE 4 – 26" Redwood – proposing to preserve. TPZ exception 3x
- TREE 5 – 21" Redwood – proposing to preserve. TPZ exception 5.5x

The applicant previously stated that the project wouldn't create any adverse effect on the neighborhood, property or vicinity of the current location. Further we have exhausted 100% of all other options with this remedy, the removal of the tree is the only option. The applicant states the parking area will be topset and not obstruct roots or harm the trees.

There is one owner for both 37 and 53 Euclid. There is a driveway and garage at 37 Euclid. It was stated the proposed parking space is for staff. I don't feel I can approve of the one healthy redwood and the TPZ exceptions for staff parking. Staff parking is not a requirement, and the public can park in the right way.

Previously the applicant made the following findings:

3) The number, species, size and location of existing trees in the area and the effect of the requested removal upon shade, noise buffers, protection from wind damage, air pollution, historic value, scenic beauty, health, safety and general welfare of the area and town as a whole; -- **The property contains in excess of 200 trees, both small, medium and large Redwood trees, Live oaks and many other species. The removal of these trees would NOT affect shade, noise buffers, general welfare, scenic beauty or otherwise. The removal of these 3 trees would be approx. 1 % of the total trees currently on the site.**

6) 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. **There IS a necessity to remove these trees to allow reasonable use and enjoyment and in so doing the removal of these 3 trees with the replacement of 3 to 1 ratio would not create any adverse effect to the neighborhood, property or vicinity of the current location of these trees. Further we have exhausted 100% of all other options with this remedy, the removal of 3 trees as the only option.**

I reviewed the trees, and my recommendations are:

Tree removal request – Tree #1 -Redwood 19” –I can approve the removal based on the below:

- Explored 3 locations. This is only the location for the pad.
- The applicant has worked to find the best location with the least amount of impact to heritage trees on site.
- The three trees for a TPZ exception can be granted as the pad is on grade and arborist will be site during construction. Minor impact on roots. No roots over 2” are proposed to be cut. The retaining wall that is proposed is because tree #2 is in a raised planter and because you do not want to change the grade the wall is the best option.

If the Planning Commission approves the removal of tree #1, then the below exceptions must be approved by the Planning Commission. Per town code a new driveway must be 8x away from any heritage trees. This new pad would need to meet the TPZ zone requirements for a new driveway. If they want new portions of the parking pad to comply with TPZ then anything under 8x would require the Planning Commission approval of lower TPZ zones.

TPZ exceptions:

- TREE 2 – 19” Redwood – proposing to preserve. 3x
- TREE 4 – 26” Redwood – proposing to preserve. 3x
- TREE 5 – 21” Redwood – proposing to preserve. 5.5x

If the Planning Commission approves the one tree for removal as well as the 3 TPZ exceptions than I would require the below:

- Arborist to be on site when pad is being installed
- Report to be submitted by arborist about root cutting, photos and dates the arborist was on site
- Required to only hand dig the pad 8x away from any heritage tree(s)
- No grading in 8x TPZ zone
- Deep water the trees 2x a month for 6 months. Provide proof 6 months after permit issuance.
- No roots over 2” diameter to be cut.

At the discretion of the planning commission, for each heritage tree permitted to be removed the permittee may be required to plant three trees of fifteen-gallon container size, two trees of twenty-four-inch box container size, or one tree of fifteen-gallon container size and one tree of thirty-six-inch container size. The planning commission may also attach other reasonable conditions to ensure compliance with the intent and purpose of this chapter.

The applicant states the replacement trees are not recommended as the area is fully landscaped with heavy tree crown cover. This parking area with the adjacent gate is proposed for local and international, plus staff parking. This plan reflects the site review to locate the pad with minimal impacts. This parking facility will not be visible from Euclid Avenue or adjacent residences.

I do not agree with the applicant I would recommend a 36” box tree planted in the right of way or another location on site within 37 or 53 Euclid.

The information included in this memo is believed to be true and based on sound arboricultural principles and practices.

Sincerely, Sally Bentz
Town Arborist, Certified Arborist WE#9238AM