

Urban Forestry Council Landmark Tree Evaluation Form and Criteria

Pursuant to Ordinance 0017-06 and Public Works Code Section 810, the UFC has developed these criteria for evaluating potential landmark trees in San Francisco. When evaluating or considering potential landmark trees, please consider the context of the tree within its site location. For example, a tree on PUC land may not have the same community importance that a street or park tree would. Use comment sections, as appropriate, to explain or support evaluation. Attach sheets if more space is needed.

Evaluator's name: Malcolm Hillan

Date of evaluation: May 23, 2014

Scientific name: *X Cupressocyparis leylandii* (Both trees)

Common name: Leland cypress

Street address: 38 Newman Street

Cross streets: Bennington Street

Rarity ___ Yes ___ Partially _x_ No

Rarity: ___ Rare ___ Uncommon _x_ Common ___ Other

Unusual species in San Francisco or other geographic regions.

Comment: No Comment

Physical Attributes ___ Yes ___ Partially _x_ No

Size: ___ Large _x_ Medium ___ Small

Notable size compared to other trees of the same species in San Francisco.

Comment: No Comment

Age: ___ Yes _x_ No

Significantly advanced age for the species.

Comment: Short-lived species, very fast growing. This pair appears to be advancing quickly.

Distinguished form: ___ Yes _x_ No

Tree is an example of good form for its species, has a majestic quality or otherwise unique structure.

Describe: Largely obscured by *Distictis*.

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Tree condition: Good Poor Hazard

Consider overall tree health and structure, and whether or not tree poses a hazard

Describe: Both appear in fine health

Historical Yes Partially No

Historical Association: Yes None apparent

Related to a historic or cultural building, site, street, person, event, etc.

Describe nature of appreciation: No comment

Profiled in a publication or other media: Yes Unknown

Tree has received coverage in print, internet, video media, etc. **Attach documentation** if appropriate.

Describe coverage: N.A.

Environmental Yes Partially No

Prominent landscape feature: Yes No

A striking and outstanding natural feature.

Describe, attach photo if possible: Imposing, perhaps, (certainly on the rear neighbor's yard) but not striking or outstanding. *Distictis* ruins the appearance of tree form.

Low tree density: Low Moderate High

Tree exists in a neighborhood with very few trees.

Describe: Nearby Holly Park has a number of fine Monterey Cypress, closely related.

Interdependent group of trees: Yes No

This tree in an integral member of a group of trees and removing it may have an adverse impact on adjacent trees.

Describe: Not part of an interdependent group.

Visible or Accessible from public right-of-way: Yes No

High visibility and/or accessibility from public property.

Describe: Not visible from Newman, but quite visible from Bennington. Big, but not impressive.

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High traffic area: Yes No

Tree is located in an area that has a high volume of vehicle, pedestrian or bike traffic and has a potential traffic calming effect.

Describe: No comment

Important wildlife habitat: Yes No

Species has a known relationship with a particular local wildlife species or it provides food, shelter, or nesting to specific known wildlife individuals.

While I am sure these trees provide shelter, rest and more to local birds etc. the known importance and significance of wildlife relationships to these trees does not rise to the level of landmark status.

Erosion control: Yes No

Tree prevents soil erosion.

Describe: No comment

Wind or sound barrier: Yes No

Tree reduces wind speed or mitigates undesirable noise.

Describe: Insignificant

Cultural Yes Partially No

Neighborhood appreciation: Yes None apparent

Multiple indicators such as letters of support, petition, outdoor gatherings, celebrations adjacent or related to tree, etc. Attach documentation:

Describe: No Comment

Cultural appreciation: Yes None apparent

Particular value to certain cultural or ethnic groups in the city.

Describe nature of appreciation: No comment

Planting contributes to neighborhood character: Yes No

Tree contributes significantly to, or represents, neighborhood aesthetic.

Describe contribution: No Comment

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Profiled in a publication or other media: Yes Unknown

Tree has received coverage in print, internet, video media, etc. **Attach documentation** if appropriate.

Describe coverage: No comment

Prominent landscape feature: Yes No

A striking and outstanding natural feature.

Describe, attach photo if possible: While these trees are large, and provide some welcome greenery to the neighborhood backyards, the unfortunate position of the trees (more than 50% overhanging the rear neighbor's garden) and the problems relating to too-close planting and being over-run by the *Distictis* vine, render these trees less than outstanding.

Additional comments:

While I appreciate the sincere and welcoming owner's enthusiasm for her backyard garden and the trees that have found a home there, this is once again, and more obviously, a misguided attempt to protect trees that are not worthy of landmarking.

In the last case, the attempt was to use the Landmark Tree Ordinance and political process to impose the will of a sincere and well-organized group of neighbors on a tree owner. In this case, the effort is by an owner to use the LTO to protect trees that are clearly an imposition on at least one neighbor. In the past, we have seen both kinds of cases for what they are: a misuse of the Landmark Tree Ordinance and civil process to further private rather than public interests. This is an easier case to judge, since these trees are even less "landmarkable", and are a clear liability to the rear neighbor. I hope I barely need to urge the Committee to deny this request for landmarking.

Use of the Landmark Tree Ordinance as a means of tree protection was not the intention of those who drafted the Ordinance, and is inappropriate. Until we send a clear message that this is a waste of time and effort for those who would misuse the Ordinance, we will continue to waste our own time and resources considering these misguided proposals.