

MACNAIR
&
ASSOCIATES
CONSULTING ARBORISTS AND HORTICULTURISTS



September 30, 2015

San Francisco Urban Forestry Council
1455 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Review of Landmark Tree Nomination- Norfolk Island Pine, 46 Cook Street, San Francisco-
Report Addendum

Dear Committee Members,

This letter is an addendum to my August 2, 2015 letter in which I expressed my opinion on the nomination of the Norfolk Island pine for Landmark status.

This addendum addresses the issue of species identification, the issue of rarity, and the historical references inferring the possible age of the tree.

Species Identification:

Dr. Matt Ritter is clear in his opinion that this tree is a hybrid between *A. heterophylla* and *A. columnaris*. This explains the different identification opinions that have been presented. Dr. Ritter also commented on the "Summarized Key Attributes" document. He states, "*The sources you are using are not authoritative. Hortus Third is a low quality resource for the genus Araucaria. There are true differences between these species, as demonstrated by the published works of Aljos Farjon and others. None of those differences are delineated in this document. As for the quote from George Staples, I agree with him and he and I have talked about this. Both species are in Hawaii (A. heterophylla is rare and A. columnaris is common). Hybrids are also in Hawaii and in my observations of coning trees in CA, they do overlap in their pollen producing cycles.*"

In my experience Cook pine grows in warmer climates than San Francisco. For example, it is very common in Florida and commonly seen in Southern California. While the Urban Forest Map lists 15 occurrences of Norfolk Island pine in San Francisco, there are no listings for Cook pine.

I suspect the hybrids of these two species is more common than previously realized and probably is due to nursery propagation sources and the widespread distribution of this tree as an ornamental. Hybrid status is not necessarily significant, unless a hybrid has exceptional qualities that are deemed preferable or superior to the parent species. In this situation, this tree is in good condition, but is not demonstrated to be superior genetically.

Rarity:

It has been noted by nomination reviewers that the Urban Forestry Map of San Francisco shows 15 Norfolk Island pines. This number has been used to justify a rating of uncommon in the evaluations. I would like to point out that this map inventory is not comprehensive, as even the subject tree is not shown on the map. Further, I checked with Peter Erlich, forester for the Presidio, on the number of Norfolk Island pines in his inventory. He reports that within the Presidio there are at least 20 trees. None of these are recorded on the Urban Forest Map.

Deciding on whether or not a species is common or uncommon depends upon the specific definition. The nomination form provides the guidance “unusual species in San Francisco or other geographic regions”. Based upon this criteria, and the fact that there are at least 36 documented trees in San Francisco (and probably more) as well as the species is common in coastal California, the species (or hybrids) should be classified as common.

Historical Significance:

I opined in my initial report that the tree probably dates back to the 1940s based upon the trunk diameter, size of the crown, and condition of the tree. A document was produced that purports to show the tree in a 1946-1951 photograph from the SF Assessors Archives. Following are the historical image and a current image from the same perspective.

Attachment C: Photograph from the SF Assessors Office archives dated between 1946 and 1951 (found in SF Public Library's Historical Center). The tree is 13 feet behind the back wall of the house, and is clearly taller than the building, when the angle of the photograph is taken into account.

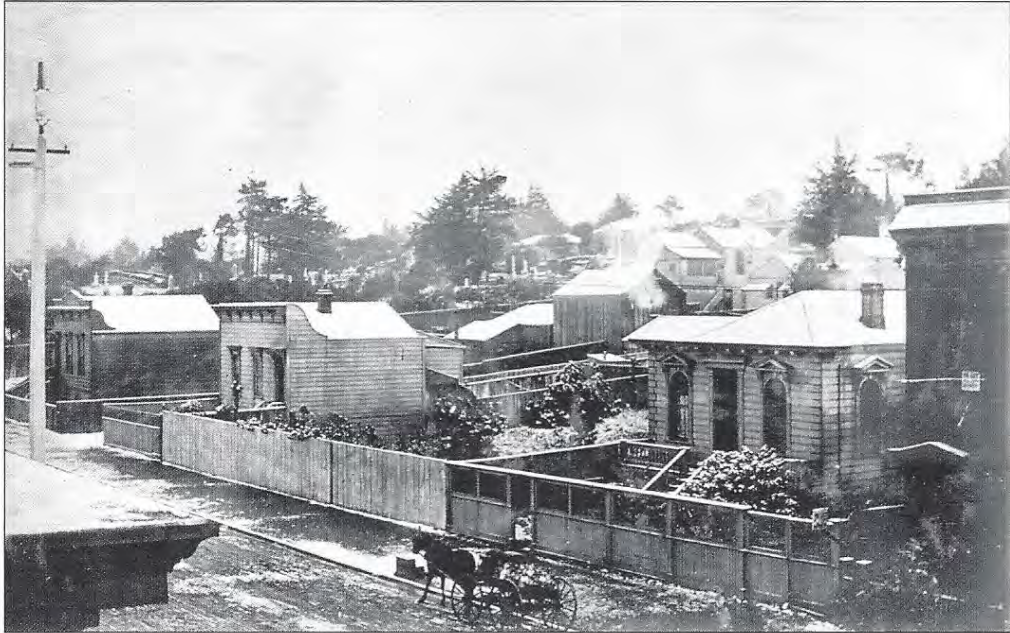


Circa 1946 image showing a Norfolk pine close to the apparent property line. The trunk is barely visible.



Current image showing subject tree located in different location than that shown in the circa 1946 image.

The subject tree is clearly in a different location than the tree shown in the 1946 image. The subject tree is probably a volunteer seedling from the original tree or was planted in that time period. The tree referenced in Christine Svane's August 3, 2015 letter is implied to have been growing in 1908. It is likely that the tree shown in the 1946 image is the 1908 tree that was subsequently removed. The current tree's size and good condition would not be consistent with a tree over 110 years old.



This 1885 image shows no significant trees growing on the property. This image supports the probability that the Norfolk Island pines (or hybrids) were planted after this image, and, one of which is the tree referenced as present in 1908 and shown in the circa 1946 image.



Cook pine in Florida.

Please contact me with any questions, or if additional information is required.

Sincerely,

James MacNair
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International Society of Arboriculture Qualified Tree Risk Assessor