

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: J. Malcolm Hillan

Date of evaluation: 9/ 30/2016

Scientific name: *Sequoia sempervirens*

Common name: coast redwood

Street address: 4 Montclair Ct.

Cross streets: Lombard St.

Rarity ___ Yes ___ Partially _x_ No

Rarity: ___ Rare ___ Uncommon _x_ Common ___ Other
Unusual species in San Francisco or other geographic regions.

Comment: Common in San Francisco and the Bay Area. Two more large specimens on the street.
(North of Lombard)

Physical Attributes ___ Yes _x_ Partially ___ No

Size: ___ Large _x_ Medium ___ Small
Notable size compared to other trees of the same species in San Francisco.

Comment: Small to medium for the species. Medium to large for the neighborhood/setting.

Age: ___ Yes _x_ No
Significantly advanced age for the species.

Comment: No comment.

Distinguished form: _x_ Yes ___ No
Tree is an example of good form for its species, has a majestic quality or otherwise unique structure.

Describe: Tree is well-formed, typical of the species and relatively free of wind-damage . . .not easy in San Francisco for this species.

Tree condition: _x_ Good ___ Poor ___ Hazard
Consider overall tree health and structure, and whether or not tree poses a hazard

Describe: Tree appears sound, and little hazard potential considering the density of the setting.

Historical ___ Yes ___ Partially x No

Historical Association: ___ Yes x 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 x Unknown
Tree has received coverage in print, internet, video media, etc. **Attach documentation** if appropriate.

Describe coverage: No comment.

Environmental ___ Yes x Partially ___ No

Prominent landscape feature: x Yes ___ No
A striking and outstanding natural feature.

Describe: Tree is prominent and contributes positively to street/neighborhood atmosphere and appearance. One of only a handful of large trees on the street.

Low tree density: ___ Low x Moderate ___ High
Tree exists in a neighborhood with very few trees.

Describe: Lots of gardens/horticultural presence in the neighborhood, but large trees are lacking.

Interdependent group of trees: ___ Yes x No
This tree in an integral member of a group of trees and removing it may have an adverse impact on adjacent trees.

Describe: No comment.

Visible or Accessible from public right-of-way: x Yes ___ No
High visibility and/or accessibility from public property.

Describe: Among the most heavily traveled, viewed and photographed locations in the city.

High traffic area: x 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: Un-frickin'-believable. This tree is at the epicenter of what must be the highest volume of pedestrian and vehicle traffic in the city. Non-stop. Any and all "calming effect" is helpful in this location.

Important wildlife habitat: ___ Yes x No
Species has a known relationship with a particular local wildlife species or it provides food, shelter, or nesting to specific known wildlife individuals.

Not observed. I would think some bird life finds this tree helpful habitat.

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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: Hard to quantify or specify, but there is so much noise and activity, the tree must have some positive effect.

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: While I observed no documentation of neighborhood appreciation to date, I can't help but think there are many neighbors who appreciate the presence of this tree, without thinking about it.

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: The strong-suit of this tree, and what in my mind makes it landmarkable. In the context of this most "San Francisco" location, the presence of this most "California" tree contributes directly to the virtually international appeal of this neighborhood's character. Its contributions are visual, natural and cultural. Slam dunk.

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: While I am unaware of any specific publication, it is unimaginable that this tree has not appeared (albeit unlikely featured) in countless travel publications, photo-essays and family photo albums.

Prominent landscape feature: Yes No

A striking and outstanding natural feature.

Describe, attach photo if possible: Contributes to the natural elements of this location. Complemented by two other coast redwoods (one of which is outstanding, downhill on the same side of the street) and a date palm (across the street). Collectively, a significant natural feature for the street.

Additional comments

In short, I support landmarking of this tree. While not particularly outstanding as coast redwoods go, the overall form, soundness and amazingly safe location of the tree (considering site density) make it a reasonable candidate for landmarking. What makes it an excellent candidate is its visual, natural and cultural contribution to this, one of the most heavily traveled and photographed locations in the City and County of San Francisco.

A couple of side notes:

- While not appreciated from the street, this specimen has an interesting and somewhat unusual bark texture . . . a kind of “lion-maned” quality one does not always see.
- Appreciation to the owner of the tree for good and considerate care. The placement of this tree is about as good as one could ask for in consideration of the adjacent property owners, with regard to safety and encroachment. A redwood is a big tree for this setting, but this one has less negative impact on neighbors than many trees the Council has seen.
- The tree shows evidence of having been pruned in deference to view concerns of uphill neighbors (thinned vertically, and primary laterals headed to “pull in” the tree.) While this pruning was well-done, and bears witness to the good intentions of the owner and consideration toward specific uphill neighbors, it detracts from the natural beauty and perhaps even the vigor of the coast redwood. (Compare to the downhill specimen that has not been pruned in the same manner.) Looking beyond landmarking, I would discourage too much similar pruning going forward beyond what is absolutely necessary.