

MEMORANDUM

October 27, 2023

11898

To: Jaclyn Rackerby – Planner for the City of Calabasas
From: Noah Stamm – City of Calabasas Contract Arborist

Subject: *Peer-Review Memo Letter for submitted Revised Oak Tree Report for 23720 Summit Drive, Calabasas, California*

1 Introduction

This memorandum provides the results of a third-party peer review of the submitted Revised Oak Tree Report and associated Oak Tree Map (with a revised date of August 21, 2023) completed by International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist Matthew South for the Azimi Project located at 23720 Summit Drive, Calabasas. Dudek conducted a follow-up site visit on August 31, 2023; it should be noted that a previous site evaluation was originally conducted on February 26, 2021; neither the City of Calabasas Planner nor the applicant were present at the time of the most recent site evaluation. The purpose of the revised Oak Tree Report and the site inspection was to address the focused tree survey of 81 oak trees within a 200-foot buffer of the Project site, which includes 16 protected coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) trees, 49 protected scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*) trees, clumps, and groups, and 16 additional scrub oaks not protected because they do not meet the size requirements. Further, there is an approximately 0.31-acre dense patch of protected scrub oak chaparral habitat in the southwest corner of the survey area.

Specifically, Dudek completed a follow-up visual Level 2 Basic Tree Assessment from the ground to verify the validity of the recommendations regarding the oak trees that are within the project site boundaries and therefore, will be impacted or encroached on by the construction activities associated with the proposed construction of a new 2-story single-family residence, 2-car garage, sloped driveway, and a series of retaining walls. A Level 2 Basic Tree Risk Assessment consists of an ISA Certified Arborist walking completely around the trunk of a tree and look for defects in all visible areas of the tree from the ground, including surrounding areas. Typically, the assessment could include using a rubber mallet to sound the tree or a probe that can be used to evaluate open cavities. Due to the steep topography, construction will require grading, leveling, and slope control with the retaining walls over nearly the entire site; the construction of retaining walls along the east and south sides of the property will happen first followed by the construction of the house from the southeast corner to the northwest corner. The construction of the proposed single-family residence, 2-car garage, sloped driveway, and retaining walls will cause minimal pruning and encroachment upon the tree “protection zone” of one (1) protected coast live oak tree no. 233, as well as the removal of three (3) non-protected scrub oak trees (tree nos. 234, 235, and 236), one (1) non-protected scrub oak group (tree no. 237); the construction related activities will no longer require the removal of two (2) protected scrub oak Tree nos. 219 and 238. Tree nos. 210 through 222, 238 through 240, 240b, 253, and 254 are located just outside the project boundary and will not be encroached upon during the construction activities.

The purpose of this arborist peer review is to ensure applicant compliance with the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Ordinance (Chapter 17.32.010 of the City’s Municipal Code) and the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guidelines (April, 1993).

2 Discussion and recommendations

Dudek’s arborist found the submitted revised Oak Tree Report and associated Oak Tree Map prepared by Matthew South, to be generally accurate to the observed site conditions, was prepared in accordance with the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Ordinance (Chapter 17.32.010 of the City’s Municipal Code) and the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guidelines, and identified both of the items required In the Peer Review Memo Letter Report of the revised Oak Tree Report dated September 18, 2023. The Peer Review Memo required that the Oak Tree Map be revised to clearly illustrate which trees are going to be protected-in-place and remain on the property and which are going to be removed/relocated. In the first submittal, all oak trees were identified by a colored “o” tree symbol. According to the Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guidelines – Site Plan and Oak Tree Map, Section 6 (Pg.20), trees to remain shall be identified with an “X”, trees to be removed shall be identified with an “o” and trees to be relocated shall be identified with an “*”. This condition of approval was satisfied and completed within the most recent revision of the Oak Tree Report.

Furthermore, the second item that was required included identifying the location of/the installation of protective fencing shall be installed at the outermost edge of the “protected zone” of each oak tree prior to commencement of site construction. The location of the fencing was identified on the Oak Tree Survey Map, **however, did not completely extend around the crown of coast live oak tree no. 233 nor scrub oak tree nos. 234 through 236, which are located in the southwest corner of the property. Coast live oak tree no. 233 is to remain in place, however, scrub oak tree nos. 234 through 236 are proposed to be removed, therefore, the tree protective fencing shall be shown to extend around the protective zone of coast live oak tree no. 233.** In addition to identifying the location of the fencing, the revised Oak Tree Report also included language in the “Recommendations” section that stated, “the fencing shall be a five-foot high chain link fence set in concrete footings with posts installed every eight feet and two feet deep. It is recommended that the trees be irrigated both prior to and after the installation of the privacy fence to provide a deep soaking beneath the trees’ drip lines, but not within approximately four feet of their trunks. An ISA Certified Arborist shall be on-site during all site construction activities in or around the “protection zone” of the protected oak trees.”

Therefore, the revised Oak Tree Report was found to be prepared in accordance with the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Ordinance (Chapter 17.32.010 of the City’s Municipal Code) and the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guidelines. However, a condition of the approval requires that the Oak Tree Map be updated to show protective fencing around the tree protection zone of coast live oak tree no. 233. Therefore, the request is warranted to grant approval of the Oak Tree Report and associated Oak Tree Location Map once this condition of approval has been completed.

3 Conclusion

Based on the information provided in the submitted revised Oak Tree Report and associated Oak Tree Map, Dudek is in agreement that the Oak Tree Report was prepared in accordance with the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Ordinance (Chapter 17.32.010 of the City's Municipal Code) and the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guidelines. However, a condition of the approval requires that the Oak Tree Map be updated to show protective fencing around the tree protection zone of coast live oak tree no. 233. Therefore, the request is warranted to grant approval of the Oak Tree Report and associated Oak Tree Location Map once this condition of approval has been completed.

This latest version of the Oak Tree Report and Associated Oak Tree Map includes a revised plan design that includes a reduced construction footprint of the house and location of the retaining wall, likely resulting in a reduction in the number of oak trees impacted by the project. It is anticipated that the proposed construction activities will cause impacts/encroachment upon the tree protection zone of one (1) protected coast live oak tree no. 233, as well as the removal of three (3) non-protected scrub oak trees (tree nos. 234, 235, and 236), one (1) non-protected scrub oak group (tree no. 237); the construction related activities will no longer require the removal of two (2) protected scrub oak Tree nos. 219 and 238. Tree nos. 210 through 222, 238 through 240, 240b, 253, and 254 are located just outside the project boundary and will not be encroached upon during the construction activities. The TPZ is an area surrounding a tree and includes all area within the dripline of the tree, plus five feet beyond the dripline. This area cannot be less than 15 feet from the trunk of a tree. For Heritage oak trees, the area is increased to a minimum distance of 50 feet from the trunk. The arborist also updated the Oak Tree Map to identify which trees are to be removed and which will remain in place, as well as the location of the tree protective fencing; currently, the tree protective fencing is shown as extending from the southeast corner (around tree no. 219) and along the southern property boundary (around tree nos. 210 through 216), stopping in the southwest corner just before the crown of tree no. 233. As part of a condition of approval, the tree protective fencing should extend around the crown of tree no. 233 as well.

This report provides conclusions and recommendations based on an examination of the tree and surrounding site by an ISA Certified Arborist. Arborists are tree specialists who use their education, knowledge, training, and experience to examine trees, recommend measures to enhance the beauty and health of trees, and attempt to reduce the risk of living near trees. Arborists cannot detect every condition that could possibly lead to the failure of a tree. Trees are living organisms that fail in ways not fully understood. Conditions are often hidden within trees and below ground. Arborists cannot guarantee that a tree will be healthy or safe under all circumstances, or for a specified period of time. There are no guarantees that a tree's condition will not change over a short or long period due to weather or cultural or environmental conditions. Trees can be managed but not controlled. To live near trees is to accept some degree of risk.

CITY OF CALABASAS

SUBJECT: PEER-REVIEW MEMO LETTER OF THE REVISED OAK TREE REPORT FOR 23720 SUMMIT DRIVE, CALABASAS, CALIFORNIA

If you have any questions or require any additional information, please call me at 760.642.8379.

Sincerely,



Noah Stamm, Calabasas Contract Arborist
ISA-Certified Arborist WE - 11995A
ISA TRAQ Qualified

Att: Attachment 1, Representative Site Photographs