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REQUEST FOR APPEAL

2025 NOV -7 PM 2:02

CITY CLERK  
CITY OF PASADENA

**APPLICATION INFORMATION**

Project Address: 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena CA, 91191  
Case Type (MCUP, TTM, etc.) and Number: DHP2024-00261  
Hearing Date: October 28, 2025 Appeal Deadline: November 17, 2025

**APPELLANT INFORMATION**

APPELLANT: Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff Telephone: [ ] 213-422-4987  
Address: 541 S. Oak Knoll Ave. Fax: [ ] \_\_\_\_\_  
City: Pasadena State: CA Zip: 91101 Email: ae01@msn.com  
brian.fulcher21@hotmail.com  
APPLICANT (IF DIFFERENT): \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby appeal the decision of the:

- Hearing Officer
- Design Commission
- Historic Preservation
- Zoning Administrator
- Director of Planning and Development
- Film Liaison

**REASON FOR APPEAL**

The decision maker failed to comply with the provisions of the Zoning Code, General Plan or other applicable plans in the following manner (use additional sheets if necessary):

- 1) Findings For Concept Design Approval. The design as accepted does not comply with the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts (Design Guidelines) as stated in the findings.
- 2) Environmental Determination: Environmental impacts/effects from noise, light, traffic, and parking, street lighting and other previously noted concerns have not been adequately studied or addressed in the Conditions of Approval. The reports also contain errors that would likely contribute to incorrect conclusions.
- 3) Findings for Compliance with the City's Tree Protection Ordinance: The City's tree protection ordinance is cited for the City's Trees, however protection of the tree "OS1" is not sufficiently addressed in the Concept Design or the conditions of approval.

Amanda Elioff Brian Fulcher  
Signature of Appellant

7 November 2025  
Date

See attachments for additional reasons

\* OFFICE USE ONLY  
PLN # \_\_\_\_\_ CASE # \_\_\_\_\_ PRJ # \_\_\_\_\_  
DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE APPEAL RECEIVED: \_\_\_\_\_ APPEAL FEES \$ \_\_\_\_\_ RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff  
541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue  
Pasadena CA 91101  
213.422.4987

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CITY CLERK  
CITY OF PASADENA 07 Nov 2025

Pasadena Planning & Community Development Department  
Pasadena Permit Center  
175 Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101

**Attention:** Stephanie Cisneros and Kevin Johnson

**Subject:** **511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA**  
*Proposed Multi-Family Development*  
*Request for Appeal of 28 Oct 2025 Design Commission Decision of the Concept Design*

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Dear Mr. Johnson and Ms. Cisneros

This letter provides our written **Request for Appeal** of the decision by the Pasadena Design Commission (Design Commission) to move forward with the **Concept Design** for the proposed multi-family development located at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue in Pasadena. Please find attached, a completed Request for Appeal form (Appendix A), signed by Brian Fulcher and Amanda a Elioff (Appellants). We reside in the single-family home located at 541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, immediately adjacent to the proposed property development. Concurrence with this Request for Appeal from many of our neighbors on S. Oak Knoll Avenue is demonstrated by the list of signatures attached (Appendix B).

Our appeal of the decision made at the Public Hearing on 28 Oct 25 at the Pasadena City Hall is based on objections to the Design Commission's Findings presented in the City's letter to Burke Farrar of Odyssey Development Services (the Applicant) on 29 Oct 2025:

- **Findings For Concept Design Approval:** The design as accepted **does not** comply with the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Districts (Design Guidelines) as stated in the City's Findings for Concept Design Approval.
- **Environmental Determination.** Environmental impacts/effects from noise, light, traffic, and parking, street lighting, trash collection and other previously noted concerns have not been adequately studied or addressed in the Conditions of Approval. The reports also contain several errors that would likely contribute to incorrect conclusions and decisions.
- **Findings for Compliance with the Tree Protection Ordinance:** The City's Tree Protection Ordinance is cited for the City's trees, however, protection of the tree "OS1" is not sufficiently addressed in the design or the Conditions of Approval.

These points are more fully detailed in this letter and its Attachments.

Given the above, and the extremely short review process for the Design Commission and the public (3 Business Days) we find it essential to appeal the Design Commission decision so that the Concept Design can be more fully reviewed. We further articulate the reasons and provide constructive ideas for improvement of the proposed development in this letter and its Attachments.

In addition to the objections to the Staff and Design Commissions findings, we also object to the apparent lack of consideration of public comment and response to those comments. We count over 20 letters and E-mails providing comments and concerns by the community. Comments were also given in person at the Preliminary and Concept Design Review Hearings (Appendix D). As we understood from the City's announcements of the Public Hearing for the proposed building development, we were expecting to offer comments in a public forum on a Concept Design submitted by the Applicant and represented on drawings that were labelled, "**Concept Design**". Relying on AIA references, a **Concept Design** may be described as follows.

*"Concept design is the initial phase of architectural design where the architect explores high-level ideas, vision, and basic layout through sketches, models, and diagrams to answer fundamental questions about purpose, function, and form. This process involves analyzing the site, understanding client needs, developing a core concept statement, and creating initial visualizations that form the foundational framework for the project before moving on to more detailed design stages".*

While listening to the dialogue at the hearing between the Commission and the Applicant, it became very clear that both the Applicant and the Commission were reticent to make any substantive changes to the submitted Concept Design, notwithstanding the significant issues, errors, and overall lack of respect the design had for the immediate neighborhood. This has been the universal outcry from the residents of S. Oak Knoll (and beyond) since the Preliminary Design was first exhibited in September 2024, at the Preliminary Design Review Public Hearing, during informal discussions with the developer in December 2024, informal meetings with City Staff, and numerous letters and E-mails from the community.

In spite of all the meetings and comments, there were no substantive changes made to the Preliminary Design and subsequently represented on the Concept Design, even though the Commission in September 2024 had remarked that the Applicant "had a lot of work to do" and to significantly rethink its approach to the building to better fit into the community and architectural context of the neighborhood.

We seek to correct a design that fails on several design standards of excellence to achieve a positive relationship with the neighborhood and a design that better relates to the existing historical landmarks and residential density. So much of what we and our neighbors have commented on starting 14 months ago remains unattended, uncorrected, and consequently, the Concept Design remains substantially out of context with the community. As stated on the City's website, the Commission is:

*(an) Advisory of the City Council on the establishment of design standards, criteria, concepts and policies for the implementation of public and private projects. Reviews projects for the purpose of creating uniform design concepts and to **ensure the maintenance of design excellence***

To this end, we looked to the Commission’s experience and guidance to positively influence design and function related aspects of the proposed 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue development that is virtually surrounded by landmark designated and historical buildings, homes and residential buildings ranging in height from 1 to 3 stories, and more importantly, buildings less than 40 feet high. Instead, the project design ignores the requirements presented in the City’s Design Guidelines – particularly those related to Block Character and Relating to Neighbors by massing and scale (page 30 of Design Guidelines inserted below for ease of reference): None of these recommendations have been addressed, and it is, therefore, difficult to find “design excellence” represented in the Concept Design submitted to the Commission. The City of Pasadena prides itself on design excellence and green space, this design will not provide that. For reference, please see excerpt from Block Character, Section 5 of the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial & Multi-Family Districts (Adopted by the City of Pasadena) page 30, next page.

While the attached Request for Appeal form briefly summarizes the reasons for appeal, the following provides a summary of the key points, issues and suggested corrective actions that in our view are needed to amend the Concept Design before proceeding further. These would address community comments to mitigate severe and pervasive impacts and improve construction efficiency Appendices E - K to this letter provide additional basis for appeal related to environmental and safety concerns.

### **Summary of the Appeal**

The basis for this Request for Appeal is focused not only on the Concept Design, but also on what appear to be errors, and inconsistencies found in the documents (~450 pages) provided only three Business Days in advance of the 28 Oct 2025 Public Hearing for Design Commission review and public comments. These documents were the basis of a decision by the Design Commission on the proposed Concept Design that the Appellant (and neighbors listed in Appendix B) find significantly non-compliant with the written goals of the City of Pasadena, are incomplete with respect to environmental mitigations, and contain some errors. As such, the project will be detrimental to the S. Oak Knoll Avenue community. The design lacks respect for the community’s block character and will present environmental impacts if not satisfactorily mitigated. While this is not a formal legal complaint, it comes after an intensive “page-turn” assessment of the City of Pasadena provided documents representing the Concept Design and written after a review in a very compressed period of time.

We seek reasonable adjustments to the proposed Concept Design with a minimum delay or costs to the Applicant. We also consider it reasonable to seek a refund of the Appeal filing fee once the Commission reviews our collective observations, findings and recommendations in this matter as substantially described in this letter and all Attachments. Had the Applicant fulfilled its responsibilities when submitting its Preliminary and Concept Designs, much of the enclosed discussion would have been addressed and finalized.

## V. Block Character

### 7. RELATING TO NEIGHBORS BY MASSING AND SCALE

*New buildings over two stories in height should respect adjacent buildings by responding to their massing, scale, and need for light, natural ventilation, and views.*

#### Recommendations:

- 7.1 **Scale.** Buildings should be scaled to respond to their context by sensitively and positively addressing the scale and massing of their adjacent neighbors. This can be accomplished by:

- Matching existing building heights or exceeding them by only one story. Additional stories should be modulated by setbacks.
- Modulating side yard and rear yard volumes to provide as much distance as possible between the facades of a proposed building and existing buildings in order to preserve the privacy of the outdoor spaces of both.
- Orienting the side yards of proposed buildings to face the side yards of adjacent buildings.
- Including elements such as porches, galleries, arcades, etc. to relate the scale of facades to those of existing buildings.
- Reducing building bulk by introducing dwelling space in attic spaces.
- Introducing landscape and/or trees as a screen between existing and new buildings.

- 7.2 **Side and rear elevations.** The rear and/or side elevations of new buildings that are visible from the public realm should be designed with equal care and quality as the front or principal facade.

- 7.3 **Side and rear windows.** The placement and size of windows in side yards and rear yards should respect the privacy and need for light and air of existing buildings.

- 7.4 **Existing site features.** Unique natural characteristics, such as mature trees and topography, on both the project site and adjacent sites should be respected and taken into account in new building design.

- 7.5 **Multiple Lot Projects.** The massing of projects on combined lots should be broken down into increments that relate to surrounding buildings. On very large lots, the division of projects into two or more separate buildings of different type, density, height, and massing is encouraged.

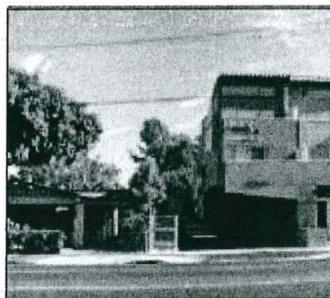
#### Discussion:

*Buildings designed in isolation and without regard to their surroundings can appear to be glaringly out of context. This is especially true when large mixed-use or multi-family infill buildings are inserted into lots surrounded by single-family houses or small multi-family buildings or are located on a parcel within a higher density zone that is immediately adjacent to a lower density zone. As a result, people living in such buildings so negatively affected by new ones, see the quality of their lives diminished.*

*The compatibility of new buildings inserted into existing contexts can be ensured by fitting their scale and mass to that of their neighboring existing buildings. This process of transforming existing settings has been the key to forming Pasadena's exemplary building fabric over the decades.*

(Left)  This mixed-use building overwhelms the neighboring house by not setting back its third floor and by cantilevering over the entry to its garage.

(Right) A mixed-use building steps down to the scale of the adjacent single-family house.



We believe the changes we request the Concept Design, are a benefit to the Applicant and the community, and attainable with modest time and effort. Therefore, they should be further considered by both the Design Commission and building developer with the goal of designing a far more suitable building for the neighborhood while avoiding the objectionable “Big Box” building, fully built-out to the lot lines that is **unquestionably out of character** as it is presently designed.

### Changes We are Seeking – Appellant and Local Residents

The requested changes are needed for compliance with City of Pasadena Goals, Plans and Guidelines as well as to address environmental concerns.

1. Adjustments to the building design to reduce the massive uniform appearance and be more consistent with the neighborhood context and Pasadena Design Guidelines. For another example, the Block Character described on page 25 of the Design Guidelines relates:

*“The successful fit of a new project into an existing context depends on how it relates to neighboring buildings to its side and rear in terms of setbacks, height, massing, scale, arrangement of shared and private open space, and landscape. This is especially important for lots located along the boundary between higher-density and lower-density zones where taller, larger buildings that are insensitively designed could pose a visual nuisance to existing, smaller scale buildings. For zones that are in transition from less intense to more intense uses, the issue of compatibility is particularly important. New higher-density projects need to respond to lower-density, existing buildings through compatible massing and thoughtfully designed side yard elevations.”*

The project as presented needs to be more sensitive to the neighboring buildings, including space to allow both privacy and light to the adjacent properties and to reduce the perceived scale of the building. Many other examples of good design are provided in the Design Guidelines.

The City of Gardens Ordinance has been cited by the Applicant as a mandatory reason for design of the long narrow courtyard in the center of the U-shaped building. This causes the building to be set back only 5 ft from the property lines on the north, west and partial south sides. However, City of Gardens (RM District Gardens requirements) allows for alternatives with approval. Gardens on the sides of the building - rather than only in the center, would allow a smaller building footprint and allow more sunlight, landscaping and privacy for the adjacent properties – and the building residents. Gardens can still be readily seen from the street with good design.

There are better and less expensive solutions to the transformer substation noise than surrounding the entire building with enclosed exterior corridors. As the Concept Design stands, the courtyard garden can only be seen from the sidewalk/street from a very limited area.

2. Provide specific mitigations for the environmental concerns related by the public comment. While City staff has given us some assurance that our collective concerns will be addressed, why not put it in the Conditions of Approval? In particular, since to date these have been overlooked in both the Preliminary and Concept Design submissions, please consider the following.

- Excessive light from the enclosed exterior corridors (if those corridors should remain in the design).
  - Nighttime noise from 46 air conditioning units operating simultaneously.
  - Potential additional noise from 4 story vertical walls against the substation reflecting noise to adjacent properties.
  - Parking plans – The Conditions of Approval say there will be no nighttime parking for new residents – however, parking at night is not currently restricted on S. Oak Knoll Avenue.
  - Traffic studies. The current reports do not adequately reflect the new McKinley School population – at least 8 new classrooms have been added and other facilities. Estimates are that there are 200 to 300 additional students, staff and teachers. They require transportation to the school and parking; most twice per day.
3. Provide extensive tree protection plan for the Canyon Live Oak Tree designated OS1 on the drawings – including protection of canopy branches during construction and final landscaping and water. As shown in the concept plan, part of the area under OS1 would be use for “pet relief”, meaning it would be washed down regularly. This water would be detrimental to OS1.
  4. Provide a fire protection plan to demonstrate access to the new building and adjacent properties given the minimal 5-foot set-back from property lines, 4 stories and interior corridors.

Our comments need to be addressed. The community has been passionately commenting on this proposed development for over 12 months since the Preliminary Design package was provided to the public expressly for this purpose. With a single exception (small change in foundation layout for OS1 tree roots that is still inadequate), and to extent that we are aware of, none of the submitted verbal and written comments have been addressed by the City – either in writing or within design changes. Meanwhile, the proposed development presents numerous significant impacts to the S. Oak Knoll Avenue neighborhood. Please refer to the letter references enclosed in Appendix D – *Comment Letters and Communications – Preliminary and Concept Designs*.

#### **Pasadena Design Commission Staff Report Conclusions**

The Planning Department’s Staff Report is a comprehensive and report based on the Applicant’s Concept Design and includes a number of the supporting reports prepared by or for the City. It also included a few (but not all) of the letters and communications submitted by local and concerned residents. Please reference Appendix D for a summary of known letters and communications from the Appellant and local residents expressing concern over both the Preliminary Design (September 2024) and Concept Design (October 2025).

We are deeply concerned that the Staff Report (28 October 2025) and Notice of Decision Letter concluded that the Findings for Concept Design Approval were:

*“The Project... will comply with the purposes of design review the design-related goals and policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan and the design-related goals and policies in the Central District Specific Plan, and the Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family Residential District...”*

and

*“Found that approval of the project will not result in any significant effects relate to traffic, noise, air quality, water quality, or cultural resources.”*

Our review of the design and environmental analysis has revealed many impacts and conflicts with the City’s goals of allowing denser development within transitional areas, but in a form sensitive and compatible to neighbors. Additionally, we have found errors, incomplete studies, and inconsistencies in the Concept Design Review package that should have been corrected (or clarified) by the Applicant well in advance of the Public Hearing. as well as before any “go”, or “no go” or “hold for clarification” decision by the Commission at the Hearing. And, at this juncture, we find ourselves faced with making this formal Appeal of the Concept Design Decision. This should have been substantially avoidable with responses to neighborhood concerns and a process seeking continuous input, rather than a hearing with 3 days to review documents and no opportunity for an informational dialogue with the Commissioners.

#### **Design Commission’s Vote on the Concept Design**

We note that two of the six Design Commission Members present at the Public Hearing voted **not to accept** (or proceed) with the Concept Design in its current form (notwithstanding the **Recommended Conditions for Approval** drafted by the Staff). In the dissenting Members’ view, significant design adjustments were needed to achieve their approval at the Concept Design stage – and comply with the City’s published Design Guidelines. These same Members continuously pressed (in the Hearing) for more definition and adjusted exterior façades, finishes and most importantly, the issues, waste and inefficiency resulting from the interior garden in the rectangular footprint of the proposed building. Other issues were discussed between the Members and the Applicant are a matter of public record in the recording from the Hearing. This dissent from two Commissioners supports our Appeal.

#### **Conditions of Approval of the Applicant’s Concept Design**

As stated above, several of the Members of the Design Commission were truly concerned about the design, mass of the building, perimeter set-backs, enclosed exterior corridors and overall inappropriateness to the neighborhood. We note that even though these and many other issues, concerns and suggestions were openly discussed between the Commission Members and the Applicant, none were recorded into “adjusted” Conditions of Approval subsequent to the Hearing for the Concept Design. To comply with design guidelines a number of good solutions were proposed, but none pursued:

- Massing adjustments
- Building set-backs

- Changes in brick façades
- Mansard roof adjustments
- Landscaping plan
- Interior garden re-arrangements to allow more green space and smaller building scale

Our more detailed comments on issues related to the Conditions of Approval are included in Appendix C and should be read in conjunction with all other focused Appendices.

### **Potential Path Forward**

This building is 4 stories tall and fully extends to the property lines, presents a massive box in an otherwise Pasadena zoning compliant neighborhood. We realize that the State of California now allows for a “density bonus”, but there are conflicts and competing goals such as Pasadena’s Design Guidelines, City of Gardens and the State’s “Density Bonus.” This has resulted in a Concept Design that will be detrimental to our neighborhood and the City. The impact is lose-lose for all. The neighborhood, the building occupants and the City. The building with a 4 story deep narrow interior courtyard clearly “turns it back” on its neighbors surrounding and nearby properties to protect itself from the adjacent substation noise (only impacting about a 1/6 of the property perimeter). The 4-story height means that virtually no direct sunlight reaches much of the interior courtyard. Additionally, the minimal lot line clearances along with the building height, prevent natural light and green space to the neighboring properties.

An obvious alternative would be to change or eliminate the interior courtyard as designed (and discussed at the Public Hearing on 28 Oct 2025) and instead, allow more space for elegant garden landscaping on the exterior of the building. This would allow more light to the proposed building AND adjacent buildings, as well as additional privacy and green space. This would also reduce the non-guideline compliant building’s footprint and address privacy concerns with additional building spacing.

### **Closing Remarks**

We understand the City and State’s need for more housing, and do not object to the density. However, the project design as currently represented in the Applicant’s Concept Design could be vastly improved for all – the residents of the proposed development, the neighbors and the City. Please do not allow this experiment with housing density, noise mitigation, and completely secluded interior gardens for the new occupants (only) to proceed without really understanding what the lasting impacts will be to all. Is this the new standard that Pasadena can accept? It certainly does not comply with existing guidelines. A bit more study is truly warranted here – a few more months of design work will be minor compared to lifetimes of living with the current design. As stated in the City’s Design Guidelines:

*“The City’s Comprehensive General Plan promotes architectural and design excellence in buildings, landscape, open space, and urban design. It also stipulates that preservation of Pasadena’s character and scale, including its traditional urban design form, shall be given the highest priority in consideration of future development. (P.1)*

*“The long-term character and vitality of Pasadena’s neighborhoods, districts, and corridors are more important than any one architectural project. Yet, because the development process is incremental, the insertion of an infill project into an existing context can contribute either to a long-term process of harmonious city building or its slow unraveling.” (P. 26 Section V, Block Character)*

This project will surely start a slow unraveling of our block – if not a fast raveling. There are solutions, and in our collective view at this Concept Design stage, it is not too late to set a good and creative example for better and far more efficient multi-family building design. This building, with the “moat inspired” fortress like design, protects itself to the detriment of the neighbors and the Concept Design is contrary to the goals and spirit of the Pasadena Design Guidelines.

Thank you for your attention to this letter, Appendices and **Request for Appeal** of the Design Commission Decision to proceed with the Concept Design of the proposed multi-family development at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue. We and many members of the neighborhood would be pleased to discuss further how we can improve this project to the benefit of all.

Sincerely,



**Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff**

541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

cc: Jason Lyons, Pasadena District 7 Representative

**Attachments:**

**Appendix A – Request for Appeal – Pasadena Permit Center, Planning and Development Department**

**Appendix B – Request for Appeal – Endorsements from Local Residents**

**Appendix C – Issues Related to Conditions of Approval of the Concept Design**

**Appendix D – Comment Letters and Communications – Preliminary and Concept Designs**

**Appendix E – Documents Reviewed in Preparation for Request for Appeal for Pasadena Design Commission Decision to Approve the Concept Design with Conditions of Approval**

**Appendix F** – *Public Utility and Public Safety Considerations*

**Appendix G** – *Building Design Optimization and Construction Cost Saving Suggestions*

**Appendix H** – *Excess Light Issues Related to the Concept Design*

**Appendix I** – *Protected (Landmark designated) Canyon Live Oak Tree and Issues Related to the Concept Design and Impactful Encroachments*

**Appendix J** – *Noise Study Issues Related to the Concept Design*

**Appendix K** – *Traffic Study Issues Related to the Concept Design*

**Appendix A**  
**Request for Appeal – Pasadena Permit Center, Planning and Development  
Department**

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Please find enclosed, a completed and signed ***Request for Appeal*** form (APP-RFA Rev 1/18/07) issued by the Pasadena Permit Center, Planning and Development Department.

Please note that this letter and all attachments are considered part of the ***Request for Appeal*** to the Pasadena Design Commission decision on 28 Oct 25 related to the Concept Design submission for 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA.

The Appellant understands that the accompanying filing fee for the ***Request for Appeal*** may refunded to the Appellant subject to the outcome of the Appeal



REQUEST FOR APPEAL

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Project Address: 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena CA, 91191  
Case Type (MCUP, TTM, etc.) and Number: DHP2024-00261  
Hearing Date: October 28, 2025 Appeal Deadline: November 7, 2025

APPELLANT INFORMATION

APPELLANT: Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff Telephone: [ ] 213-422-4987  
Address: 541 S. Oak Knoll Ave. Fax: [ ] 201-290-6050  
City: Pasadena State: CA Zip: 91101 Email: ae01@msn.com  
brian.fulcher21@hotmail.com  
APPLICANT (IF DIFFERENT):

I hereby appeal the decision of the:

- Hearing Officer  Zoning Administrator
- Design Commission  Director of Planning and Development
- Historic Preservation  Film Liaison

REASON FOR APPEAL

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*Brian Fulcher* Signature of Appellant 7 November 2025 Date

See attachments for additional reasons

\* OFFICE USE ONLY  
PLN # \_\_\_\_\_ CASE # \_\_\_\_\_ PRJ # \_\_\_\_\_  
DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE APPEAL RECEIVED: \_\_\_\_\_ APPEAL FEES: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B Request for Appeal – Endorsements from Local Residents

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The following lists 42 individual local residents who endorse this **Request for Appeal** of the Pasadena Design Commission’s decision allowing for Conditions of Approval for the proposed Concept Design at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA based on the Applicant’s Concept Design. We have also noted those local residents who attended the Public Hearing held at the Pasadena City Hall on 28 Oct 2025 as well as those who have voiced their comments, concerns and issues through letters, messages and other forms of communications since mid-2024 when the Preliminary Design was first provided to the public for comment by the Pasadena Design Commission. Please refer to Appendix D.

### Appellants

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Brian Fulcher | 541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101 |
| Amanda Elioff | 541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101 |

### Local Residents in Support of the Request Appeal for the Design Commission’s Decision

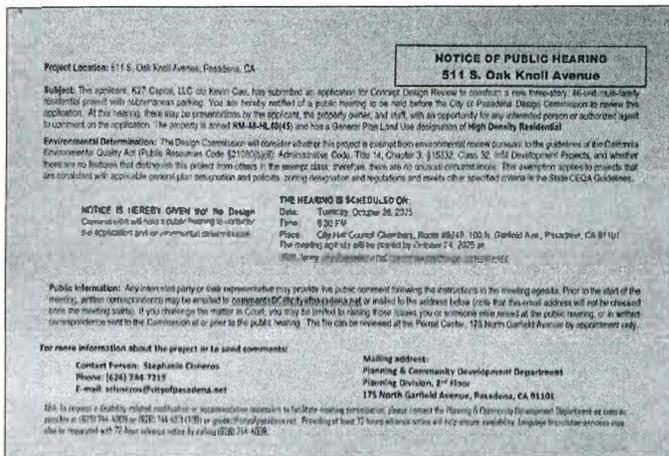
|                      |                                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| William H. Beckhardt | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Christine B. Cooper  | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| James Moore          | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Saraid Donnelly      | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| T. A. Chen           | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Noelle Ito           | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Sharon Jarrett       | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Kevin Brown          | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Blaire Wilson        | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| David Fairris        | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Chris Saylor         | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Ashley Finnance      | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Michael Armstrong    | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Jane McMahon         | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Mary K. Hansen-Adams | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Dominic deFazio      | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Hem-Young deFazio    | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Marwin Goble         | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Nancy Goble          | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Tanita J. Brown      | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Buff Gontier         | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Arthur J. Gontier    | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Ricardo Sosapavon    | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Robert M. Adams      | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Ben Bock             | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Paula Gooden         | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Debby Tannenbaum     | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |
| Sarah Jane Ball      | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident |

|                        |                                       |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Christina A. Smith     | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident       |
| Valery Widing          | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident       |
| Janet L. Davis         | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident       |
| Jennifer Mario McCardy | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident       |
| Michael R. McCardy     | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident       |
| Camila Rison           | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident       |
| Nicole Roberts         | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident       |
| Andy Yan               | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident       |
| Jun Yan                | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident       |
| Ellen Yu               | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident       |
| Enrique Cadenas        | South Oak Knoll Avenue resident       |
| <br>                   |                                       |
| Doug Ewing             | South Oak Knoll Avenue business owner |

There are some important and sensitive communication and process issues related to advising and conducting the Public Hearing to consider and resolve. In our view, these contributed (poorly) to Hearing discussions and ultimately to a Commission decision that did not fairly engage the immediate neighborhood for the proposed development. Respectfully, please consider the following.

**Physical Notifications and Errors for the Public Hearing**

We asked the Pasadena Planning Department (09 Oct 25) about signage posted on the lot to notify the public of the proposed building development and the Public Hearing that the signage stated a 3-story building.



The Pasadena Planning Department Planning Department subsequently changed the poster board but failed to correct or change the numerous 8.5" x 11" paper notices that were placed on the utility poles around the neighborhood. In fact, one of our neighbors told us after the hearing that he did not attend the Public Hearing on 28 Oct 25, because once he read the posted paper notice, he saw that the building height had been reduced to 3-stories. He was satisfied with this adjustment.

Residents of 534 S. Oak Knoll Ave

6 NOV 2025

13 a

I agree to be listed as a signatory on the appeal of the Pasadena Design Commission's approval of 511 S Oak Knoll Ave development.

1. William H. Beckhardt William H Beckhardt
2. Christine B. Cooper Christine B. Cooper
3. James Moore James Moore
4. Saraid Donnelly Saraid Donnelly
5. T.H. CHEN T.H. CHEN
6. Nrelle If Nrelle If
7. Sharon Jarrett Sharon Jarrett
8. Kevin Brown Kevin Brown
9. DAVID FAIRIS DAVID FAIRIS
10. DAVID FAIRIS DAVID FAIRIS
11. Chris Saylor Chris Saylor
12. Ashley Finrose Ashley Finrose
13. MICHAEL ARMSTRONG MICHAEL ARMSTRONG
14. Jane McMahon Jane McMahon
15. Mary K Hansen-Adams Mary K Hansen-Adams
16. Dominic deFazio Dominic deFazio
17. Marwin Goble Marwin Goble
18. Nancy Goble Nancy Goble

- 19. *Tanika J. Beamon*      *Tanika J. Beamon*
- 20. *Buff Gontier*      *Buff Gontier*
- 21. *Arthur J Gontier*      *ARTHUR J GONTIER*
- 22. *Ricardo Susapavon*      *RICARDO SUSAPAVON*
- 23. *Robert M Adams*      *ROBERT M ADAMS*
- 24. \_\_\_\_\_
- 25. \_\_\_\_\_
- 26. \_\_\_\_\_
- 27. \_\_\_\_\_
- 28. \_\_\_\_\_
- 29. \_\_\_\_\_
- 30. \_\_\_\_\_
- 31. \_\_\_\_\_
- 32. \_\_\_\_\_
- 33. \_\_\_\_\_
- 34. \_\_\_\_\_
- 35. \_\_\_\_\_
- 36. \_\_\_\_\_
- 37. \_\_\_\_\_
- 38. \_\_\_\_\_
- 39. \_\_\_\_\_
- 40. \_\_\_\_\_

17 Nov 2025

13c

I agree to be listed as a signatory on the appeal of the  
Pasadena Design Commission's approval of 511 South Oak  
Knoll Ave. development.

500 S. OAK KNOLL

1. Paula Lopez
2. Suzanne Paul
3. Christina Smith
4. Valerie Wilby #6
5. Robert F. Davis
6. Joseph Marko McCurdy
7. Michael R. McCurdy
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_
17. \_\_\_\_\_
18. \_\_\_\_\_

p 101

7 NOV 2025

13d

I agree to be listed as a signatory on the appeal of the Pasadena Design Commission's approval of 511 South Oak Knoll Ave. development.

1. Deborah Tannenbaum <sup>323-405-4062</sup> 500 S. Oak Knoll Ave, #5, Pas
2. Judith Jacobs 500 S Oak Knoll #17 818-631-2876
3. Kevin R. Risden 500 S Oak Knoll Ave #32 626-644-2724
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_
17. \_\_\_\_\_
18. \_\_\_\_\_

P191

I agree to be listed as a signatory on the appeal of the Pasadena Design Commission's approval of 511 Oak Knoll Development.

*Enrique Cadenas*  
Enrique Cadenas

*Nicole Roberts*  
Nicole Roberts

*Andy Yan*  
*Jun Yan*

*V. DeFazio*  
Hem-young DeFazio \*

*Ellen Yu*  
Ellen Yu

all residents 501 S. Oak Knoll, except for \* (534)

## Appendix C Issues Related to Conditions of Approval of the Concept Design

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As the Appellant and in full recognition of our neighbors and other local residents, we are very concerned with many the **Conditions of Approval** of the Concept Design approved by the Commission at the conclusion to the Public Hearing on 28 Oct 25. Whereas it was briefly discussed that the Commission was really not on a clear position to move forward with and decision, pending numerous clarifications and more abundant discussion with the Applicant, a formal approval (with Conditions of Approval) was nonetheless granted. It is for this reason that we are now compelled to submit and **Request for Appeal** (together with a substantial fee) with the Pasadena Permit Center to stay or overturn the Commission's approval of the Applicant's Concept Design that our collective view is flawed and, in several cases, non-compliant with the City's Codes and related guidelines.

As noted in the oral presentations, numerous letters and messages to the Commission, beginning in September 2024, **we simply want our collective voices to be heard and duly recognized and considered in the building development and design approval process** to achieve a more desirable outcome and a distinctive structure nestled into the mature South Oak Knoll neighborhood.

The following summarizes a critique of the published **Conditions of Approval for the Concept Design** as noted in the City's letter dated 29 Oct 25 to Burke Farrar of Odyssey Development Services. As of this writing, this letter has not been posted at any announced City website or sent to Oak Knoll neighborhood attendees at the Public Hearing.

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### Environmental Determination (page 1 of letter dated 29 Oct 25 to Burke Farrar)

"2. Found that approval of the project will not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, water quality or cultural resources."

#### **Appellant's Comment:**

*The Appellant as well as all referenced local residents and neighbors DO NOT agree with this statement. As abundantly noted in this letter (and attachments) and summarized on the enclosed **Request for Appeal** form (APP-RFA Rev 1/18/07), there are a considerable number of compliance issues currently represented on the Concept Design.....many carried-over from the Preliminary Design submission in September 2024 and remain unattended and uncorrected. These matters need to be addressed and rectified for the design to achieve compliance with Pasadena Codes, Ordinances and Guidelines, etc.*

*As depicted in the Conceptual Design submission from the Applicant, it is very apparent the project will suffer from significant effects (impacts) relating to traffic, noise, light pollution and protected tree issues.*

#### 17 Tree Protection Plan

The Appellants would like (and expect) the same protection provisions for tree designed OP1 on the Concept Design plans as provided under City Chapter 8.52 – City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance for the City street (and private) trees including the security deposit consistent with the mature Canyon Live Oak tree.

***Appellant’s Comment:***

1. *The Conditions of Approval for the Concept Design report did not require specific permanent landscaping to include protection of Canyon Live Oak tree OS1. In fact, shows a “dog relief” area. This would undoubtedly require frequent washing down and add detrimental water and sanitary waste to the tree root system – especially during dry seasons.*
2. *The Applicant should revise a small portion of its landscaping design to provide assertive protection for Canyon Live Oak tree OS1. This is a landmark tree on a designated landmark property and provides considerable distinction the adjoining properties. It is the first thing everyone notices when approaching the properties and should be well preserved and protected.*
3. *Concept Design drawings need to be corrected to show the Canyon Live Oak Tree OS1 in its correct position relative to the property line and the proposed building.*
  - *AG-1.0, A-0.5, A-2.6*
  - *Additionally, the tree is missing from drawing AG-2.1*
  - *Additionally, there may be a clash with landscaping proposed on drawing LP-1.0*

#### 14. Parking Permits

No permanent, on-street, overnight parking permits will be issued to future residents of this project. Future tenants shall be advised by the property management regarding the unavailability of permanent, on-street, overnight parking permits.

***Appellant’s Comment:***

*Oak Knoll Avenue presently does not have restricted parking at night – how will this be implemented? What about daytime parking permits?*

#### 15. Building Interior Parking

The layout and required number of parking spaces shall be reviewed and approved by the Pasadena Planning Department.

***Appellant’s Comment:***

*How many parking spaces are needed?*

#### 18. Department of Public Works

***Appellant’s Comment:***

*No drilling or tiebacks or any subgrade anchors (temporary or permanent) may be placed in the Appellant’s property. There are existing underground high voltage conduits present, among other utility systems.*

**22. Street Lighting**

The existing street lighting fronting the subject site is substandard. In order to improve pedestrian and traffic safety, the Applicant shall replace/renovate one streetlight on Oak Knoll Avenue, per the City requirements and current standards. The renovation shall include but not limited to new LED light, conductors, lamp socket, fuse, photocell, and miscellaneous related parts per the public comment Lights to match existing historic lighting on street.

***Appellant's Comment:***

*This point was discussed at the Public Hearing, and while it may seem minor, it is an important and distinctive feature of the neighborhood and to current residents also.*

**27. Tree Protection Zone for OS1 – Canyon Live Oak Tree**

***Appellant's Comment:***

*City Chapter 8.52 – City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance applies to all private trees also.*

**32. Tree Protection Deposit for OS1 – Canyon Live Oak Tree**

***Appellant's Comment:***

*A proper assessment of the replacement value of the landmark Canyon Live Oak tree OS1 needs to be made and verified. Additionally, a credible risk evaluation and cost estimate is needed should the Canyon Live Oak topple (due to 511 construction activities of any kind) and damage the Appellant's property or the nearby Pasadena Water and Power High Voltage Substation. A damage liability deposit is deemed to be appropriate in this case in the same manner as called for under the City Ordinances.*

**39. Building Area Limits as required for OS1 Tree Protection Canyon Live Oak Tree**

***Appellant's Comment:***

*As shown on the current Concept Design drawings, the building and its foundations will project well into the OS1 tree canopy with shoring and scaffolding placement for construction, an additional 5-feet (or more) and will be needed and will further impact tree OS1 roots and canopy.*

*The Applicant cannot encroach on the Tree Protection Zone (i.e. roots, canopy and drip line) for the Canyon Live Oak tree OS1).*

## Appendix D Comment Letters and Communications – Preliminary and Concept Designs

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Members of the community have been passionately commenting on this proposed development for over 12 months and since the Preliminary Design package was provided to the public expressly for this purpose. With a single exception, and to extent that we are aware of, none of the submitted verbal and written comments have been addressed by the Applicant and assertively incorporated into the Concept Design submitted to the Commission. Meanwhile, the proposed development presents numerous significant systemic impacts to the S. Oak Knoll Avenue neighborhood.

Please refer to the letters and messages listed below, all from local residents, many of whom attended the Public Hearing in person or via a virtual meeting connection. Many of these points were also repeated voiced during public comment portion at the Public Hearing. As an example, the Concept Design Review (and the Design Commission Public Hearing on 28 Oct 25), found no significant affects relating to traffic, noise, and excessive light emissions, etc. In our collective opinion, these conclusions as well as additional words recorded in a letter dated 29 Oct 25 to the Applicant (citation below) are flawed for the many reasons, most of which form the basis for this Appeal to the Commission’s decision.

*“2. Found that approval of the project will not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, water quality or cultural resources.”*

The following summarizes over 8 of the letters and 13 E-mail messages from local residents who considered both the Preliminary and Concept Designs for the proposed multi-family development in need of adjustments to better suit the community and fulfill the Pasadena Guidelines and Code requirements for multi-family developments. Attendees to the Public Hearing on 28 Oct 25 are shaded in green for reference. In addition to written communications. The Appellant and local residents have also attended informal meetings with the City Planning Division Staff and the Applicant.

Copies of the listed letters and communication are on record at the Commission and will not be attached here unless it was noted that there has been no apparent evidence of public circulation of the letter or communication in accordance with customary practice. Please refer to the Commission Staff Report dated 28 Oct 2025.

**Table D-1: Summary of Letters and Communications**

Summary of formal letters, messages and other communications submitted to the Pasadena Design Commission related to the Preliminary and Concept Design for the proposed multi-family development at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue. A matrix of the primary topics per communication is also listed for ease of reference. Persons who attended the Hearing on 28 Oct 25 are shaded in green

| Document Authors and Source Information |                                |                    |           | Primary Topic per Communication |        |     |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |   |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|--------|-----|-----------------------|--------|------|------|----------------|------|-------|---|
| Item                                    | Source                         | Location           | Date      | Bldg Design / Shape             |        |     | Environmental Matters |        |      |      | Street Related |      |       |   |
|   |                                |                    |           | Bldg                            | Herti  | Hgt | Noise                 | Light  | Tree | Gard | Traff          | Park | Trash |   |
| <b>A Letters – Formally Written</b>     |                                |                    |           |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |   |
| 1                                       | Brian Fulcher & Amanda Elioff  | Oak Knoll Resident | 23 Sep 24 | ●                               | ●      | ●   |                       | ●      | ●    |      |                |      |       |   |
| 2                                       | Nancy Goble                    | Oak Knoll Resident | 23 Sep 24 | ●                               | ●      |     |                       |        |      |      |                | ●    | ●     |   |
| 3                                       | Brian Fulcher & Amanda Elioff  | Oak Knoll Resident | 28 Jul 25 | ●                               |        | ●   | ●                     | ●      | ●    | ●    |                | ●    | ●     | ● |
| 4                                       | Brian Fulcher & Amanda Elioff  | Oak Knoll Resident | 06 Oct 25 |                                 |        |     | ●                     |        |      |      |                |      |       |   |
| 5                                       | Amanda Elioff                  | Oak Knoll Resident | 27 Oct 25 | ●                               |        |     | ●                     | ●      | ●    |      |                |      |       |   |
| 6                                       | Amanda Elioff                  | Oak Knoll Resident | 27 Oct 25 | ●                               |        |     | ●                     | ●      | ●    |      |                |      |       |   |
| 7                                       | Brian Fulcher                  | Oak Knoll Resident | 28 Oct 25 | Fire                            | Safety | ●   |                       |        |      | ●    |                |      |       |   |
| 8                                       | Sue Mossman                    | Madison Heights    | 28 Oct 25 | ●                               | ●      | ●   |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |   |
| <b>B E-Mail Messages and Calls</b>      |                                |                    |           |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |   |
| 1                                       | Buff Gontier                   | Oak Knoll Resident | 21 Sep 24 | ●                               |        |     |                       |        |      |      | ●              | ●    | ●     |   |
| 2                                       | Arthur Gontier<br>Buff Gontier | Oak Knoll Resident | 21 Sep 24 | ●                               |        |     | ●                     |        |      |      |                | ●    | ●     |   |
| 3                                       | Cybelle Sato                   | Oak Knoll Resident | 21 Sep 24 | ●                               |        | ●   | ●                     | ●      |      |      |                | ●    | ●     |   |
| 4                                       | Ben Bock                       | Oak Knoll Resident | 23 Sep 24 | ●                               |        |     | ●                     | ●      |      |      |                | ●    |       |   |
| 5                                       | David Fairris                  | Oak Knoll Resident | 23 Sep 24 |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      |      | ●              | ●    | ●     |   |
| 6                                       | Chris Sayler                   | Oak Knoll Resident | 23 Sep 24 |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      |      | ●              | ●    | ●     |   |
| 7                                       | Marwin and Nancy Goble         | Oak Knoll Resident | __ Sep 24 |                                 |        | ●   | ●                     |        |      |      |                | ●    | ●     |   |
| 8                                       | Lisa Jacobs                    | Oak Knoll Resident | 19 Oct 25 | ●                               | School |     | ●                     | ●      |      |      | ●              | ●    | ●     |   |
| 9                                       | Nicole Roberts                 | Oak Knoll Resident | 28 Oct 25 | ●                               | School | ●   |                       | Safety |      |      | ●              | ●    | ●     | ● |
| 10                                      | Andy Yan                       | Oak Knoll Resident | 28 Oct 25 | ●                               | ●      |     | ●                     | Safety |      |      | ●              |      |       |   |
| 11                                      | David Fairris                  | Oak Knoll Resident | 28 Oct 25 |                                 |        | ●   |                       |        |      |      |                | ●    | ●     |   |
| 12                                      | Chris Sayler                   | Oak Knoll Resident | 28 Oct 25 |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |   |
| 13                                      | Ben Brock                      | Oak Knoll Resident | 06 Nov 25 | ●                               |        | ●   | ●                     |        |      |      | ●              | ●    |       |   |

## **Appendix E**

### **Documents Reviewed in Preparation for Request for Appeal for Pasadena Design Commission Decision to Approve the Concept Design with Conditions of Approval**

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#### **Pre-Hearing Documents**

The following documents were briefly reviewed in the limited time allowed since publication very late on 23 Oct 25 from the Planning & Community Development Department, Planning Division in preparation for the Public Hearing that occurred on 28 Oct 25 at the Pasadena City Hall.

#### **1. City of Pasadena – Planning & Community Development Department**

- Pasadena Design Commission – Staff Report, dated 28 Oct 25
  - Attachment A – Recommended Conditions for Approval
  - Attachment B – Tree Inventory and Exhibit – Private Tree Removal Application
  - Attachment C – Current Plans and Elevations – Concept Design
  - Attachment D – Environmental Documentation
    - Air Quality and Global Climate Change Analysis Report
    - Noise Analysis Report
  - Attachment E – 505 S. Oak Knoll Avenue Residential Local Mobility Analysis Report
  - Attachment F – Dudek Tree Report - Review of Protected Tree Construction Impacts, 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, California
  - Attachment G – Pasadena Tree Protection Guidelines
- Pasadena Design Commission – Public Hearing Agenda, dated 28 Oct 25
- Pasadena Design Commission – Public Hearing Announcements, dated 23 Oct 25

## Appendix F Public Utility and Public Safety Considerations

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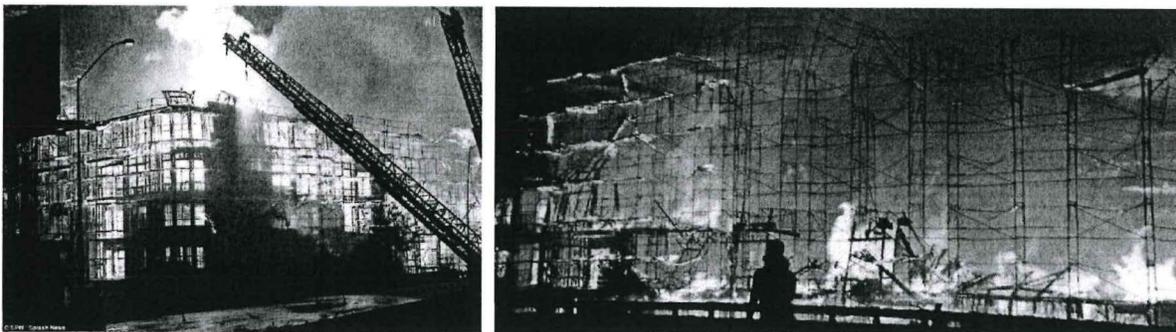
While we would not normally feel a need to address Public Utility and Public Safety concerns, a complete lack of reference to these matters in the Public Hearing on 28 Oct 25 reinforces the need to address at least the following and to be assured the adjusted Concept Design accounts for the particular site conditions, risks, and hazards present. Please, therefore, consider the following remarks as sent to the Pasadena Design Commission prior to the Hearing (28 Oct 25) but were not heard at the Hearing.

### 1. Fire Safety Concerns

- We have seen one mention in the Pasadena Design Commission Staff Report that the Concept Design Review documents had been sent to the Pasadena Fire Department. No apparent feedback provided to the extent we are aware of to date.
- In light of the recent extensive and tragic fires in Altadena, we request that a comprehensive *fire risk assessment* be made on the building design and configuration. What comes to mind are the following, to be further augmented by fire safety professionals;
  - Potential fire related damage to adjacent properties
  - Fire issues originating at adjacent properties
  - Firefighting; personnel and equipment access from the street
- The proposed development stretches to all four corners of the property with a nominal 5'-4" lot line clearance to perimeter walls, but is also the tallest, two stories higher than all adjacent properties and buildings. A fire risk assessment needs to take into account the difficulty in light of the proposed building geometry, length of lot and restrictive site condition (i.e. landscaping and overhead power lines) accessing a fire in a rear or elevated unit.

#### *Reference Documents sourced on-line at City of Pasadena Planning Department website*

- Planning & Community Development Department – Staff Report, dated 28 Oct 25, Page 9 under the heading, "Comments from Other Departments".



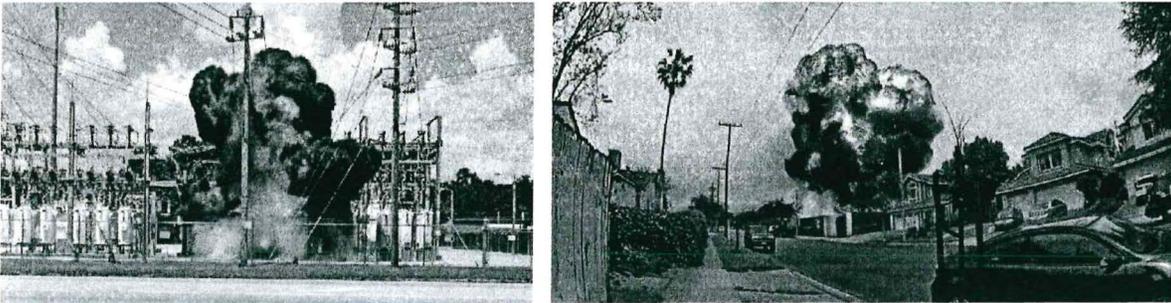
*Four story apartment fire (while under construction) in Los Angeles at the Highway 101 and 110 junction.*

## 2. Pasadena Department of Water and Power

- We did not see a mention in the Pasadena Design Commission Staff Report that the Concept Design Review documents had been sent to the Pasadena Department of Water and Power. They are the owner and operator of the high voltage electrical substation located on the south side of the proposed multi-family development.
- No apparent feedback provided to the extent we are aware of to date.
- In light of the recent extensive and tragic fires in Altadena, with ignition allegedly related to an electrical power source, we request that a comprehensive **risk and hazard material assessment** be made on the building design and configuration. What comes to mind are the following
  - Public Safety provisions
  - Fire protection (and fighting) issues originating in the substation
  - Collateral damage issues from heat, chemical and possible explosions
- The proposed development stretches to within 5'-4" of the property line of the electrical substation. At present, there is a only chain link fence separating the properties.

### ***Reference Documents sourced on-line at City of Pasadena Planning Department website***

- Planning & Community Development Department – Staff Report, dated 28 Oct 25, Page 9 under the heading, "Comments from Other Departments".



***Large transformer fire (and explosion) examples. Picture on the right occurred in a Burbank neighborhood.***

## **Appendix G**

### **Building Design Optimization and Construction Cost Saving Suggestions**

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During Public Hearing addressing the Applicant’s Concept Design held at Pasadena City Hall on 28 Oct 25, there was an abundant discussion on the location of the mandatory garden areas required for the property development under the Pasadena’s Residential Multi-Family District Garden Requirements (Zoning Code 17.22.080). This matter was also addressed in several prior letters to the Commission pointing out that there were considerable inconsistencies with the “City of Gardens” requirements and the State’s “density bonus” goals. Additionally, the interior gardens could not readily be seen from the street which is one of the key City goals. See drawings A-0.4 and A-0.7.

The Appellant was not permitted to speak on this matter at the Hearing but within this letter, offers several alternate solutions to the placement of the gardens and the very positive results that come forward. These include, for example the following for more consideration.

- Building space, mass and function optimization
- Improved property utilization, public viewing of the gardens
- Improved public safety (firefighting), access and mobility
- Capital cost reduction
- Construction schedule time reductions
- Building operating and maintenance costs reductions

It would appear that based on a very modest dialogue at the Hearing that the Commission is receptive to alternate garden locations / configuration and this is clearly supported by the City’s written Guidelines. Overall, and in the Appellant’s view, this would result in a far more attractive and merchantable development and would, quite frankly, solve so many of the pervasive issues raised by the local residents (after looking at the both the Preliminary and Concept Designs) and that are the core issues of this Appeal to the Commission.

#### **Overall Adjusted Building Concept – Suggested Scopes**

On the basis that some productive and commercially viable adjustments are made to the building and the property, many positive outcomes will emerge. Consider the following.

- The current interior garden (per drawings A-0.4 and A-0.7) that illustrate the nearly fully obstructed view of the interior gardens from the sidewalk and street, even with the entry gate open, is relocated to a far more attractive location surrounding the building.
- The north and south portions of the building mass are merged, using a central interior two-way corridor for access to the living units. Improved building and public safety too.
- The exterior (double-wall construction) corridors are removed in favor of an attractively appointed interior two-way corridor. Additionally, the garden-facing exterior walls are transitions to interior wall construction.

The above adjustments result in considerably more publicly visible exterior space for elegant landscaping including the mandatory gardens and protected trees. It also provides for a more efficient massing of the building along with economies in all mechanical + electrical + plumbing systems, etc. See Table G-1 below.

**Advantages Arising from Exterior Gardens**

There are many clear and subtle advantages arising out of locating of the gardens to areas outside of the building footprint. While a more in-depth study will reveal these more fully in a building and property optimization study, the following appear to be the initial advantages from such an adjustment. All should be carefully assessed and evaluated.

- Better (more efficient) use of the property (lot);
  - Gardens and area landscaping (developer’s key investment) are far more visible, appreciated and passively integrated into the existing neighborhood plantings and foliage.
  - Saving protected trees already present on the property.
  - Integrating the landscaping plan with the elegant mature Canyon Live Oak Tree designed OS1, making the 60-foot tall tree a show piece in the overall landscaping plan.
  - No encroachment on the roots or canopy of the Canyon Live Oak Tree OS1.
- Simplified subterranean structures
  - Fewer columns and more unified pattern development
- Building simplicities, resulting in reductions in costs and manpower requirements
  - Improved personnel mobility and access within the building
  - Optimized and centralized HVAC and MEP systems
  - Centralized fire / life / safety systems

**Building Construction Quantity and Cost Reductions – Initial Summary**

Segueing from the bulleted comments above, the following are some initial construction quantities and capital cost reductions resulting from suggested building and property design adjustments. Correspondingly there will be significant construction time savings too.

| <b>Table G-1: Initial Summary of Suggested Building and Property Design Adjustments</b>   |                |  |                                    |
|---|----------------|--|------------------------------------|
| <i>Based on relocating the interior gardens to more attractive outside areas of the building, merging the north and south portions of the building and utilizing and central two-way interior corridor for access and eliminate the costly exterior enclosed corridors, the following reductions and additions will accrue. Preliminary only and needs more brainstorming and evaluations to fully consolidate and integrate into an adjusted building and property design to be more efficient and cost effective.</i> |                |  |                                    |
| Item  | Description    | Adjustments and Outcomes (Initial Assessment only)   |                                    |
|   |                | Reductions in Scope, Quantities and \$\$   | Additional Scope(s) and Advantages |
| A   | Building       |  |                                    |
| 1   | Exterior walls | The north and south side exterior corridor walls would be eliminated   |                                    |
|   |                | The north and south side exterior walls facing the internal gardens would be transition to interior wall construction only |                                    |

| <b>Table G-1: Initial Summary of Suggested Building and Property Design Adjustments</b>   |                          |  |   |
|---|--------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Based on relocating the interior gardens to more attractive outside areas of the building, merging the north and south portions of the building and utilizing and central two-way interior corridor for access and eliminate the costly exterior enclosed corridors, the following reductions and additions will accrue. Preliminary only and needs more brainstorming and evaluations to fully consolidate and integrate into an adjusted building and property design to be more efficient and cost effective.</i> |                          |  |   |
| Item  | Description              | Adjustments and Outcomes (Initial Assessment only)   |   |
|   |                          | Reductions in Scope, Quantities and \$\$   | Additional Scope(s) and Advantages  |
| 2   | Exterior windows         | Potentially fewer windows needing cleaning following elimination of the enclosed exterior corridors and windows                        | Living units would have exterior windows on the north and south sides; improving outside views and overall building appearance, neighborhood harmony and buyer attractiveness |
| 3   | MEP systems              | Reduction in electrical cable lengths<br>Reduction of plumbing runs and grades<br>Reduction in HVAC ducting runs                       |   |
| 4   | F/L/S Systems            | Simplified Fire /Life / Safety systems<br>Greatly improved access for firefighting<br>Greatly improved access in emergencies           |   |
| 5   | Building Interior Spaces |  | Additional merchantable space for living units. \$\$\$ resulting from the reduction in inefficient exterior enclosed corridors. Better natural lighting conditions too.       |
| 6   | Building Operations      | High likelihood of reduction in building heating, cooling and lighting loads due to the elimination of the exterior enclosed corridors |   |
| 7   | Building Foundations     | Simplified structure relocated to a “denser” building mass and structurally efficient arrangement. Should result in a cost reduction   |   |
| <b>B</b>  | <b>Property</b>          |  |   |
| 1   | Sunlight                 |  | More sunlight to more living units<br>More sunlight exposure to landscaping   |
| 2   | Views                    |  | The northside building residents could actually see the mountains from the upper floors (and the annual Rose Parade flyover). Presently there are no views of the mountains.  |
| 3   | Protected Trees          | Issues related to Pasadena protested trees should be substantially reduced or eliminated entirely                                      |   |
| 3   | Canyon Live Oak Tree O51 | Fully integrated into an attractive exterior landscaping plan along with other attractive planting                                     | Harmonized and more fully integrated with the existing neighborhood plants and trees. Achieves the Pasadena Guideline requirements  |

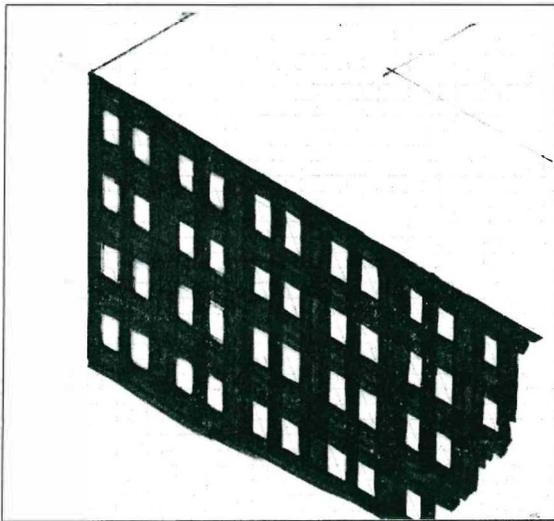
Given more time, the above initial listing could be expanded, refined and priced. It is very apparent that with the suggested building and property design changes, there will be significant construction time savings too, leading to an earlier completion and occupancy date.

## Appendix H

### Excess Light Issues Related to the Concept Design

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The current building design as represented in the Concept Design is unique and untested from the point of view of exterior enclosed corridors together with windowless walls for the living units, if only to provide a defense against the substation noise on the southwest side (only) of the building. The “doubling” of the exterior walls on the north and south sides of the building seems to be a wasteful expense when other noise mitigation (attenuation) options are plainly available. The Appellants live in an historic (landmark house) next to the substation without a double exterior wall or double-paned windows.



As we understand it, the north and south side exterior enclosed corridors need to be continuously lit 24/7 to comply with existing fire / life / safety codes. This light will continuously shine through the corridors' windows onto the adjacent properties all day and all night. Motion detecting switches will aggravate a poor situation even more during the dark hours of the day, with corridor lights switching on and off randomly as they detect movement. This is not Code compliant. The exterior enclosed corridors will require additional energy to light, heat and cool in all seasons and outside weather conditions. Building maintenance will be more substantial too.

*Hand sketch of the southwest facing portion of the proposed building as would be seen daily in dark hours.*

At a minimum exterior enclosed corridors need more study and mitigation, particularly at night.

Please refer the hand-drawn sketch of the proposed building as seen by all residents in view of the north and south sides of the building. This is commonly referred to “light pollution”.

*“Light pollution is excessive or misdirected artificial outdoor light that disrupts natural light patterns, impacting the environment and human health. It includes issues like sky glow, glare, and light trespass and is caused by sources such as streetlights, building lighting, and advertising. Overcoming it requires responsible lighting practices, such as shielding lights, using timers and sensors, and choosing appropriate light colors”.*

Another side note. The building living units themselves will actually be deprived of natural light by these exterior enclosed corridors. Meanwhile, the northside facing units could easily have mountain views.

**References:**

**Pasadena Building Code, Section 17.40.080 – Outdoor Lighting**

Exterior lighting on private property shall comply with the following requirements. Parking lot lighting shall comply with Section 17.46.220 (Outdoor Parking Area Lighting).

**A. *Lighting shall be energy-efficient, and shielded***

Lighting shall be energy-efficient, and shielded or recessed so that direct glare and reflections are confined to the maximum extent feasible within the boundaries of the site, and shall be directed downward and away from adjoining properties and public rights-of-way. No lighting on private property shall produce an illumination level greater than one footcandle on any property within a residential zoning district except on the site of the light source.

**B. *No lights shall blink, flash, or be of high intensity or brightness***

No permanently installed lighting shall blink, flash, or be of unusually high intensity or brightness, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

**C. *Lighting shall be appropriate in scale, intensity, and height***

All lighting fixtures shall be appropriate in scale, intensity, and height to the use they are serving.

**D. *Outdoor sports court lighting***

Lighting for an outdoor sports court or field within 300 feet of a residential zoning district shall require Minor Conditional Use Permit approval

## Appendix I Protected (Landmark designated) Canyon Live Oak Tree and Issues Related to the Concept Design and Impactful Encroachments

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Since our initial review the *Preliminary Design* package in September 2024, we have taken note of the proximity of the proposed multi-family development to the existing (+/-100-year-old and very healthy) Canyon Live Oak tree on our property located a mere 3 feet from the property line with the 511 S. Oak Knoll development.

This magnificent mature tree and our property (formerly Pasadena Fire Department Engine House 34) are considered City landmarks and as such deserve dedicated care and protection as generally described in the City Codes and Guidelines. There is no avoidance or sidestepping of these mandatory requirements. Accordingly, we (Appellant) have written on three occasions and participated in two Public Hearings regarding the proposed development on the 511 property. In each instance, we have expressed our great concern that the tree will be impacted by encroachment on the roots, canopy and drip line that are fully understood and even recorded in the Applicant’s Preliminary Design. Nonetheless and after writing the letters listed below, the *Concept Design* fails to fully recognize this grand tree and the City’s Chapter 8.52 – City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance that is expressly written the safeguard “protected trees.

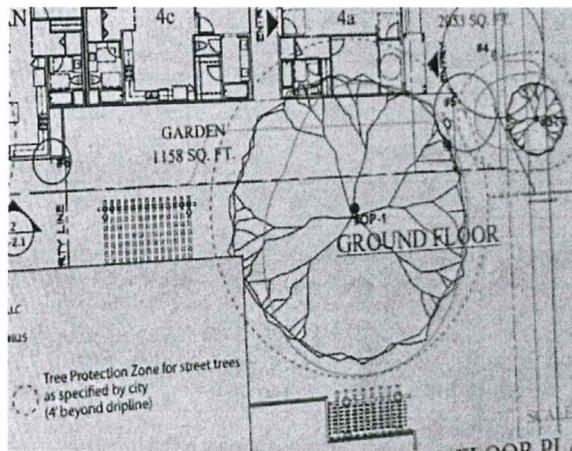
- 24 Sep 24**    **511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA Proposed Multi-Family Development**  
*Comments on Design and Environmental Review Submittal for Project*
- 28 Jul 25**    **511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA Proposed Multi-Family Development**  
*Comments on Design and Environmental Review Submittal for Project*
- 28 Oct 25**    **511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA Proposed Multi-Family Development**  
*Notes and Comments to be Provided at the Public Hearing – 28 Oct 25*  
*Protected Tree Preservation Construction Related Issues, Fire and Public Safety Concerns,*  
*Building Height*



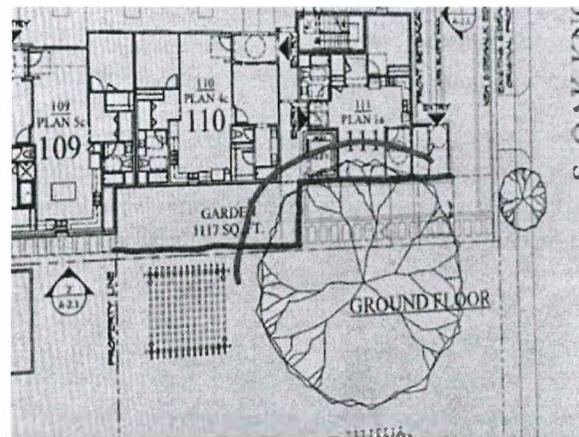
**East Profile of the Proposed 511 S. Oak Knoll Development.** Canyon Live Oak Tree OS1 is shown about 12 to 15 feet south of its true position. It actually crowds into (clash) the south building façade by many feet since the trunk is actually located approximately 3 feet from the property line.

The landmark tree is so important that we (Appellant) have hired a professional arborist to advise on tree health and long-term preservation strategies and to be our experienced advocate when discussing the tree with the City. This 35" DHS x 60' x 60' (approximately) Canyon Live Oak is the dominant feature of our property and a modest and sculptured overhang into the 511 property adds considerable natural elegance to both properties. We would like to suggest that there are very few other properties that enjoy the appearance, shade and beauty of such a mature tree. All agree this is a magnificent healthy tree and one this is very characteristic of the immediate neighborhood.

This grand tree needs to be afforded all care and protection measures outlined in the Pasadena City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance and Tree Protection Guidelines and cannot be impacted by the proposed multi-family development or any construction related operations.



**Plan View of the Canyon Live Oak Tree OS1**  
Note the location and clash with the building façade



**Plan view of the Canyon Live Oak Tree OS1..**  
Approx. drip line shown in red. Building foundation in blue

The Appellants recognize some modification of the building foundation design to move away from the OS1 tree roots, however this is not a compliant Tree Protection Plan and called for the City Ordinances. Moreover, it does not address potential damage to tree branches (canopy) and a landscaping plan that embraces the location and health of the Canyon Live Oak Tree.

The City of Pasadena's Tree Protection Ordinance protects public and private trees, including landmark, native, and specimen trees, from damage during construction or development projects. The ordinance requires permits for removing or significantly trimming certain trees and mandates that construction projects have an approved **Tree Protection Plan** that includes establishing a **Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)**. The TPZ is a **radius of four feet around the tree's widest canopy extent**, and the ordinance aims to prevent mechanical injury, soil compaction, and changes to the existing grade.

### Landmark Tree Conservation and Preservation Concerns

The following are condensed bulleted remarks related to the landmark Canyon Live Oak tree located on the property at 541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue (a landmark property) and whose roots, canopy and drip line extend in all directions and into the vacant property at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue. A "landmark tree" is generally described as following, pursuant to Chapter 8.52 – City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance.

*“Landmark tree” means a tree designated as a landmark under Chapter 17.62 of this code as a tree of historic or cultural significance and of importance to the community due to any of the following factors: It is one of the largest or oldest trees of the species located in the city; it has historical significance due to an association with a historic building, site, street, person or event; or it is a defining landmark or significant outstanding feature of a neighborhood.*

#### **General Comments**

- This is a protected “landmark” status mature tree
- Care and protection provisions protected “landmark” status mature tree fall under the formal Pasadena **“Tree Protection Guidelines”**, part of Chapter 8.52 – City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance
- Several qualified and experienced arborists have made assessments of the tree’s current size, health and general condition.
- This tree, including roots, trunk, canopy, drip line and the essential **Tree Protection Zone**, need to be correctly shown on many drawings and renderings related to the proposed multi-family development on the 511 property. To date, our observations of the Concept Design (as preceded by the Preliminary Design) include the following,
  - Incorrectly shown on some
  - Missing on others
  - Foundation and canopy have significant conflicts (clashes) with the proposed building superstructure.

#### **Protected Tree**

- A protected tree is generally described as following, pursuant to Chapter 8.52 – City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance.

*Protected tree” means a native, specimen, landmark, landmark-eligible, mature (except for the trees in RS or RM-12 zones), or public tree.*

#### **Tree Protection Guidelines**

- Tree protection Guidelines are referenced in Chapter 8.52 – City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance, Article 8.52.032 - Tree Protection Guidelines.

#### **Protective Fencing Defining the Mandatory Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)**

- The mandatory **Tree Protection Zone** is not currently shown on any documents reviewed to date. What is illustrated includes the following only on various, but not all drawings and sketches;
  - Tree canopy perimeter with notation confirming the drip line plus 4 feet
  - Tree canopy drip line (canopy + 4 feet radially from the tree trunk)
- The **Tree Protection Zone** needs careful definition, location coordinates and barrier fencing installation per the Pasadena Tree Protection Guidelines.
- At this time, and based on the current Concept Design, it is very likely the designated **Tree Protection Zone** will interfere with the proposed building foundations (per the Concept Design) and in particular, the subgrade Support-of-Excavation system needed to install the subterranean portion of the building.

- **Concept Design** drawing A-1.1 – Ground Floor Plan dated 19 Jun 24 (and 06 Aug 24) shows a layout of many trees including the canopy of Canyon Live Oak OS1.
  - Tree Protection Fencing is in the wrong place since it is violation of Chapter 8.52 – City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance.
  - Tree Protection Fencing is shown under the OS1 tree canopy and, therefore, well inside the OS1 tree drip line limits. It is also within the Root Protection Zone. Cannot be placed in this location. This drawing needs to be corrected, and the building façade correspondingly adjusted to avoid tree OS1 impacts.
- *What is needed before the design proceeds further in this sector of the proposed structure, is a detailed Support-of-Excavation system design and more particularly, a dimensional layout plan that fully respects and embraces the **Tree Protection Zone** and associated barrier fencing. The Support-of-Excavation layout has not been disclosed by the Applicant to date.*

#### **Building Foundation Construction – Tree Root Conflicts**

- The proposed multi-family building development will require a subterranean parking level, say about 14’ below grade.
- To accomplish this, construction of a Support-of-Excavation (SOE) wall will be placed “*outside*” of the design lines of the building foundation wall yet remain inside the legal property lines.
- It is uncertain whether the numerous tree assessment reports and root exposure inspections were performed in locations for the following;
  - Building foundation walls, or
  - Expanded Support-of-Excavation location that in this case, further encroaches on the subject Canyon Live Oak tree location and its roots
- This matter is crucial for the mandatory successful care and protection of the landmark tree.
- Additionally, and owing to the adjacent surface (heavy oak tree) loading and proposed SOE configuration, very careful attention needs to be paid to;
  - Deflections
  - Surface settlement
  - Ground and moisture loss
  - *Tree stability and its lean*

#### **Building Superstructure Construction – Tree Canopy Conflicts**

- The East Side rendering (Concept Design drawing AG-1.0) incorrectly shows the location the landmark Canyon Live Oak tree. It is actually located approximately 3 feet from the property line and considerably encroaches on the building superstructure (as currently drawn).
- Based on several Concept Design drawings and renderings posted to the Pasadena Planning website, a portion of the canopy (as drawn) conflicts with the building’s superstructure (by several feet) and perhaps on several floors.
  - Significant conflicts (clashes) would emerge during construction operations
  - Additionally, exterior scaffolding would be in conflict with the space
  - Material handling needs for building construction would be highly compromised.
- Several referenced documents mention that the landmark Canyon Live Oak tree could be “pruned” (under a professional arborist supervision) to suit the multi-story building configuration. This approach appears to be in conflict with the following goals and guidelines

and may result in a “one side shaved tree canopy” if only to suit the building superstructure encroachment.

- Development landscaping plan (preliminary)
- Pasadena “City of Gardens” goals (as further optimized)
- Attachment G: Tree Protection Guidelines
- In the Appellant’s view, no selective pruning should be permitted on the canopy of the landmark Canyon Live Oak tree OS1.
  - Creates unbalance loads and may quickly look “unnatural” if only to accommodate the encroaching exterior building wall location.
  - Fails to embrace several of the primary and very attainable objectives of the Pasadena landscaping critical guidelines.

***Reference Documents sourced on-line at City of Pasadena Planning Department website***

- Planning & Community Development Department – Staff Reports, dated 28 Oct 25
  - Attachment B: Tree Inventory and Exhibit, Private Tree Removal Application
  - Attachment F: Dudek Tree Report, dated 27 Aug 25
  - Attachment G: Tree Protection Guidelines [Chapter 8.52 – City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance, Article 8.52.032 - Tree Protection Guidelines]

***Reference Documents sourced on-line at City of Pasadena Planning Department website***

- Planning & Community Development Department – Staff Report, dated 28 Oct 25, Attachment C, “Current Plans and Elevations”.

## Appendix J Noise Study Issues Related to the Concept Design

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Several issues related to noise emanating from the proposed building are considered significant and at present, are unaccounted for in the Concept Design. The building design as presently represented could in-fact exasperate noise related issues and should, therefore, reconsider exterior surfaces and material selections as appropriate based on the following, for example.

- Reflective noise from the Pasadena Water and Power (PWP) transformers and substation yard located immediately south of the proposed building
- Building generated noise, say from mechanical and other systems and equipment

While we note that the Commission’s Staff Report under the heading, “Environmental Analysis” (page 10) states the following;

*“Based on the documentation prepared, which is included in Attachment D, this project would not have the potential to result in significant impacts related to noise, or air quality”.*

please consider the above noise issues needing correction, substantial abatement or elimination before the design progresses forward since in fact, they do present significant impacts to the environment and the community.

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### City of Pasadena General Plan

The Noise Element of the City’s General Plan (revised in December 2002) incorporates noise standards for various land uses, which are based on the California Office of Planning and Research’s (OPR) Noise Element Guidelines. Table 3, City of Pasadena Noise Compatibility Guidelines, presents the City’s noise guidelines for land use planning.

### City of Pasadena Municipal Code

Project operations will be subject to City ordinances. Chapter 9.36, Noise Restrictions (Noise Ordinance), of the Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) establishes exterior noise standards by land use and the maximum duration of time that the noise standards may be exceeded without being considered a nuisance punishable by law. As such, the City’s Noise Ordinance prohibits any “unnecessary, excessive, or annoying noises” in the City. The Noise Ordinance does not control traffic noise but applies to all noise sources located on private property.

According to Section 9.36.050 of the PMC, the City generally limits intrusive noises from exceeding the ambient level at the property line by more than 5 dB, with adjustments made for steady audible tones, impulsive noise, and noise emitted for limited durations. The ambient noise is the actual measured noise level. In addition, Section 9.36.060 sets the interior noise limit for multi-family residential uses to 60 dB during 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM and 50 dB during 10:00 PM to 7:00 AM.

#### EcoTierra Consulting – Noise Report to the City of Pasadena, dated October 2025

This report was commissioned by the City to address, measure and mitigate potential noise impacts resulting from the presence on the proposed building.

#### Section 4 – Summary of Impacts

##### *B. Operational Noise Impacts*

*The proposed project would not result in a perceptible increase in noise due to the increase of project related traffic on roadways in the project vicinity. As the project-related increase in traffic noise would not exceed 5 dBA, the project would not contribute to a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity. Impacts are considered less than significant. On-site noise sources (HVAC and parking lot noise) associated with the proposed project will not result in a significant increase in ambient noise levels at closest receptor locations. Impacts related to project operational noise would be less than significant.*

In the Appellant's view, several of these generalized conclusions are unsupported by the data as well the means for measurement to obtain noise and vibration data. Additionally, this reports states in Section 3 – Project Description, that the construction "**....and take approximately 6 months to complete....**". This is considered far less (say, 24 to 30 months) than a practical construction duration.

Please consider the following comment based on the statement and data written in the referenced report..

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#### Noise Studies and Reports

Within the City's Environmental Report, the EcoTierra Consulting Noise Report (aka the "Noise Report"), only three ambient noise measurements were made for a 15-minute duration at mid-day as stated in the report. Surprisingly, the "Noise Report" concluded that NO mitigations were needed. This conclusion is puzzling and completely unsupported with easily measured data obtained at different times of the day as needed to more thoroughly record ambient noise levels at the 511 S. Oak Knoll property in particular at night.

#### Building Generated Noise(s)

The City's Noise Report did not address nighttime noise or specifically consider the effects of 46 roof-mounted HVAC units operating simultaneously: As stated in Public Comments (and written comments) to the Pasadena Planning Department before the Public Hearing on 28 Oct 25, no nighttime operational noise(s) were formally addressed on the noise study, therefore, no baseline noise levels were established. This is clearly an oversight and needs to be reviewed again and corrected with additional data in accordance with Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Section 9.36.050.

Please reference Part II – Noise Fundamental, Section 1 – Noise Descriptions in the referenced report.

*".... to the sound levels at these times because during the evening and nighttime hours, when compared to daytime hours, there is a decrease in the ambient noise levels, which creates an increased sensitivity to sounds. For this reason, the sound is perceived to be louder in the evening and nighttime hours and is weighted accordingly....."*

Please note that nighttime ambient noise at the proposed building site is typically about 40 dB (about 20 dB less) than daytime and noise from 46 HVAC units (depending on unit noise rating and the type of roof-top enclosure) is considered significant and should have been clearly and analytically addressed in the “Noise Report”. If for some unexplained reason, the baseline nighttime ambient noise level is considered 60 dB this represents approximately 100 times increase in the true ambient nighttime noise level (sound intensity).

Meanwhile, we note the following from Part VI. Noise and Vibration Impact Analyses, Section 3 – Operational Noise in the City’s Noise Report.

**B. Stationary Noise Sources**

*As part of the Project, HVAC units are anticipated to installed for the proposed use. A typical HVAC unit operates at a noise level of 66 dBA Leq at 3 feet from the source. The HVAC units will be placed on the flat roof of the building and shielded from the neighboring uses the parapet that would be tall enough to completely block the HVAC units from view. The closest receptor would be located at least 20 feet from the closest HVAC unit. The noise generated from operation of the HVAC units would be less than 50 dBA at the closest receptor. As the existing noise levels in the project vicinity exceed 60 dBA (see Table 4), the HVAC would not exceed the ambient noise level.*

The conclusion in the above citation is erroneous. Actual nighttime ambient noise levels at the property are approximately 40 dB. The roof top HVAC units operating noise exceeds this level.

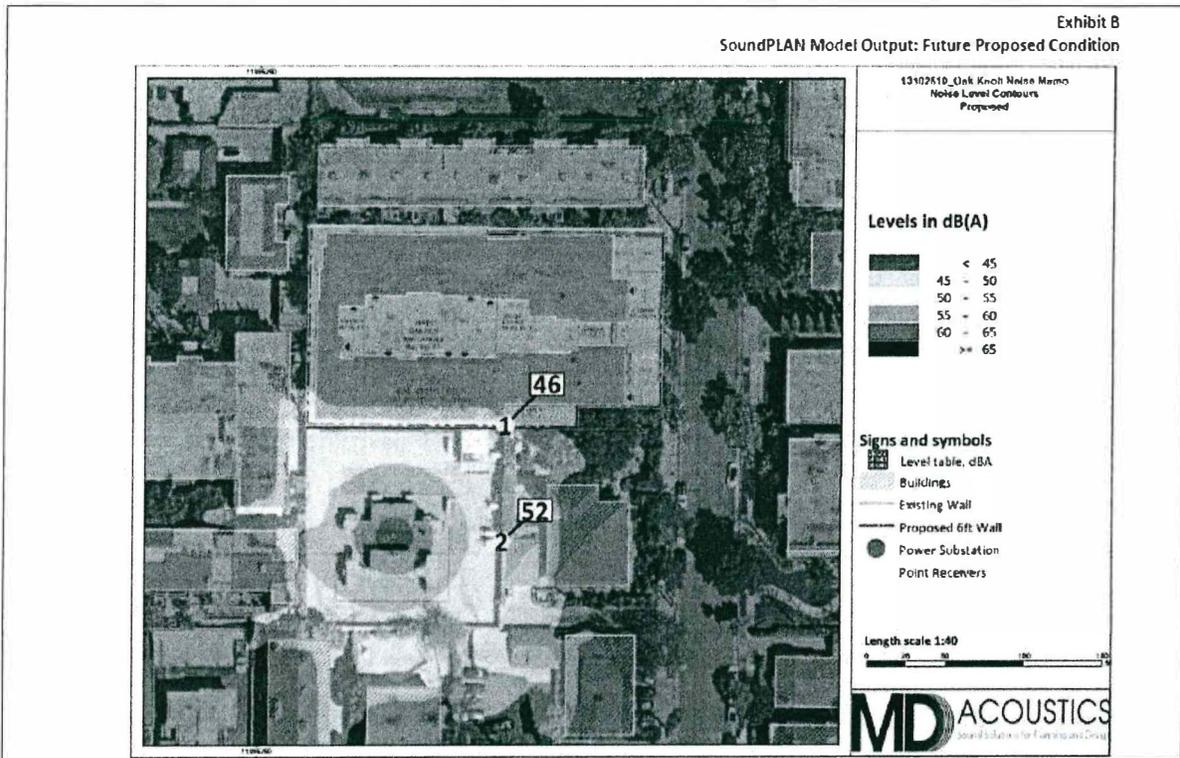
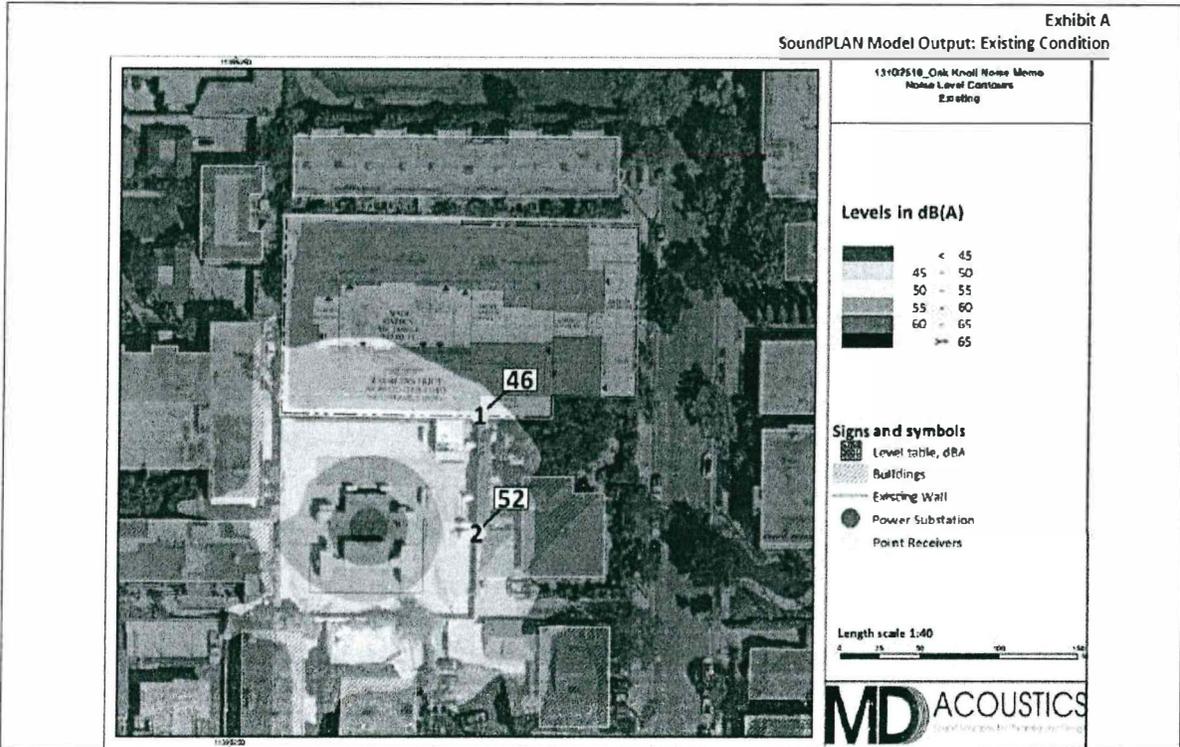
**Building Reflective Noise Issues**

We are concerned that the proposed 4 stories of vertical building walls will reflect and amplify noise originating from the PWP substation to the adjacent properties surrounding the existing substation. After reading the latest report (MD Acoustics, LLC - listed below) and some further discussions with others with expertise in this field, we request the City require the following

- An additional and more comprehensive acoustical analyses by an experienced noise and vibration specialist to study the impact of the **building height** next to the substation
- Building exterior surfacing materials (i.e. noise reflectivity and attenuation characteristics)

The report should study the impacts on existing residents for daytime and nighttime, and weekends considering current ambient conditions (day and night), and what mitigations are needed to minimize and/or eliminate these impacts. While the MD Acoustics report appears to provide a noise and vibration study related to reflection of substation noise, it falls short on many other critical requirements and measurements to assess contributing noise impacts on neighboring properties and residents directly resulting from the proposed building development.

Moreover, the conclusions of the MD Acoustics report state that presence of the proposed 4-story building located basically on the property line between the proposed building development and the PWP transformer yard **will have no net effect** on the noise level measured at surrounding buildings. This is very surprising - especially in light of the detailed graphic elements (i.e. yellow and light green shaded noise and vibration distribution levels) included in the report (see next page) that illustrate denser and redistributed noise levels (generally southward) from the proposed 4-story building development.



### **Final Comments on Engineering Studies and Associated Reports**

Since the City's Noise Report is considered a formal engineering work product, it needs to be stamped by a California registered Professional Engineer with experience and credentials for the work described. This is customary to assert authentication and reliance. Specialist consultants are fully aware of this requirement and the City should directly insist on it to be assured of professional *Standard of Care*, coverage and reliability.

#### ***Reference Documents sourced on-line at City of Pasadena Planning Department website***

- Planning & Community Development Department – Staff Report, dated 28 Oct 25,
  - Page 10 under the heading, “*Environmental Analysis*”
  - Attachment D, “*Environmental Documentation*”

#### ***Additional Reference Documents:***

##### **505-511 South Oak Knoll Avenue Residential Project Noise Analysis**

Prepared By: Katie Wilson, M.S. EcoTierra Consulting, Inc.

633 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 26<sup>th</sup> Floor Los Angeles, CA 90071

Dated October 2025

##### **MD Acoustics, LLC,**

510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue – Noise Evaluation/Survey, Review Memo and Substation Noise,

City of Pasadena

Dated 01 July 2025

## Appendix K Traffic Study Issues Related to the Concept Design

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The City's Environmental study related to local traffic did acknowledge and estimate another 209 car trips that would be generated by the proposed new development. The report, however, did not include additional trips that now exist and will continue to increase due to the new class-room buildings at McKinley School (K to 8) located at 325 S. Oak Knoll, on the same city block as the proposed multi-family building development. Informal estimates indicates that another 300 students, plus an additional unknown number of teaching and school operations staff are present now and require vehicle transportation to and from the school (i.e. two times per school day) and parking areas.

To our knowledge, none of the additional school generating traffic was included and needs to be in order for the Traffic Analysis and Report to be complete and credible. Parents typically drop kids off in the morning and collect them in mid-afternoon as seen in the images below. Mass congestion on South Oak Knoll that needs to be properly and correctly accounted for in a comprehensive adjusted Vehicle Traffic and Residential Local Mobility Report.



*McKinley School traffic at 3:00 PM daily*



*Parents, teachers and staff exiting the school*

**Reference Documents sourced on-line at City of Pasadena Planning Department website**

- Planning & Community Development Department – Staff Report, dated 28 Oct 25, Attachment D – Environmental Documentation.
  - *Iteris, Inc. - 505 S. Oak Knoll Avenue - Residential Local Mobility Analysis*  
Dated 28 Mar 25

Table D-1 from November 7, 2025 Appeal, revised to include additional correspondence

| Table D-1: Summary of Letters and Communications  |   |                               |                      |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |
|---|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------|-----|-----------------------|--------|------|------|----------------|------|-------|
| Summary of formal letters, messages and other communications submitted to the Pasadena Design Commission related to the Preliminary and Concept Design for the proposed multi-family development at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue. A matrix of the primary topics per communication is also listed for ease of reference. Persons who attended the Hearing on 28 Oct 25 are shaded in green |   |                               |                      |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |
| Document Authors and Source Information   |   |                               |                      | Primary Topic per Communication |        |     |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |
| Item  | Source  | Location                      | Date                 | Bldg Design / Shape             |        |     | Environmental Matters |        |      |      | Street Related |      |       |
|   |   |                               |                      | Bldg                            | Herti  | Hgt | Noise                 | Light  | Tree | Gard | Traff          | Park | Trash |
| <b>A Letters – Formally Written</b>   |   |                               |                      |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |
| 1   | Brian Fulcher & Amanda Elioff                 | Oak Knoll Resident            | 15 Sep 24(A)         | ●                               | ●      | ●   |                       | ●      | ●    |      |                |      |       |
| 2   | Brian Fulcher & Amanda Elioff                 | Oak Knoll Resident            | 23 Sep 24            | ●                               | ●      |     |                       |        |      |      | ●              | ●    |       |
| 3   | Brian Fulcher & Amanda Elioff                 | Oak Knoll Resident            | 28 Jul 25            | ●                               |        | ●   | ●                     | ●      | ●    | ●    | ●              | ●    | ●     |
| 4   | Brian Fulcher & Amanda Elioff                 | Oak Knoll Resident            | 06 Oct 25            |                                 |        |     | ●                     |        |      |      |                |      |       |
| 5   | Amanda Elioff                                 | Oak Knoll Resident            | 27 Oct 25            | ●                               |        |     | ●                     | ●      | ●    |      |                |      |       |
|   | Amanda Elioff                                 | Oak Knoll Resident            | 27 Oct 25            | ●                               |        |     | ●                     | ●      | ●    |      |                |      |       |
| 6   | Brian Fulcher & Elioff                        | Oak Knoll Resident            | 28 Oct 25            | Fire                            | Safety | ●   |                       |        | ●    |      |                |      |       |
| 7   | Sue Mossman                                   | Madison Heights               | 28 Oct 25            | ●                               | ●      | ●   |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |
| <b>B E-Mail Messages and Calls</b>  |   |                               |                      |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |
| 1   | Buff Gontier                                  | Oak Knoll Resident            | 21 Sep 24            | ●                               |        |     |                       |        |      | ●    | ●              | ●    |       |
| 2   | <del>Arthur Gontier</del><br>Buff Gontier (B) | <del>Oak Knoll Resident</del> | <del>21 Sep 24</del> | ●                               |        |     | ●                     |        |      |      | ●              | ●    |       |
| 3   | Cybelle Sato                                  | Oak Knoll Resident            | 21 Sep 24            | ●                               |        | ●   | ●                     | ●      |      |      | ●              | ●    |       |
| 4   | Ben Bock                                      | Oak Knoll Resident            | 23 Sep 24            | ●                               |        |     | ●                     | ●      |      |      | ●              |      |       |
| 5   | David Fairris                                 | Oak Knoll Resident            | 23 Sep 24            |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      | ●    | ●              | ●    |       |
| 6   | <del>Chris Sayler(B)</del>                    | <del>Oak Knoll Resident</del> | <del>23 Sep 24</del> |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      | ●    | ●              | ●    |       |
| 7   | Marwin and Nancy Goble                        | Oak Knoll Resident            | ___ Sep 24           |                                 |        | ●   | ●                     |        |      |      | ●              | ●    |       |
| 8   | Lisa Jacobs                                   | Oak Knoll Resident            | 19 Oct 25            | ●                               | School |     | ●                     | ●      |      | ●    | ●              | ●    |       |
| 9   | Nicole Roberts                                | Oak Knoll Resident            | 28 Oct 25            | ●                               | School | ●   |                       | Safety |      | ●    | ●              | ●    | ●     |
| 10  | Andy Yan                                      | Oak Knoll Resident            | 28 Oct 25            | ●                               | ●      |     | ●                     | Safety |      | ●    |                |      |       |
| 11  | David Fairris                                 | Oak Knoll Resident            | 28 Oct 25            |                                 |        | ●   |                       |        |      |      | ●              | ●    |       |
| 12  | Chris Sayler                                  | Oak Knoll Resident            | 28 Oct 25            |                                 |        |     |                       |        |      |      |                |      |       |
| 13  | Ben Brock                                     | Oak Knoll Resident            | 06 Nov 25            | ●                               |        | ●   | ●                     |        |      | ●    | ●              |      |       |

(A) Added - Was not included in 07 Nov Appeal letter table

(B) (B) Not included (not found or duplicate)

Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff

██████████  
Pasadena CA 91101  
██████████

A.1

September 15, 2024

Pasadena Planning & Community Development Department  
Design and Historic Preservation  
175 Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101

Attention: Kevin Johnson

**Subject: 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA  
Proposed Multi-Family Development  
Comments on Design Review Submittal for Project**

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Dear Mr. Johnson and the Pasadena Planning Department,

We are writing to provide comments on the subject proposed development submitted for the property located at 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue. This location borders on the north side of our property. We live at ██████████ Oak Knoll in the only single-family home adjacent to the proposed development. Our house is an *historic home* that was formerly Engine House 34 for the City of Pasadena Fire Department and has been restored for use as a family residence. The building is listed on the Pasadena City Historic Register and was designed in a Mediterranean Revival style by well-known Pasadena architect, Joseph J. Blick. The building was completed in 1917 and includes inlaid tilework by Ernest A. Batchelder. Please see Attachment A for more information on the building and its historic significance. We have also included two photos of the restored Engine House. Please note also that several other houses, from the 1905 and 1907 era, are located immediately south of our home.

In addition to the important historic context, there is a large and very mature oak tree on our property on the north side. While this tree is located on our property, its roots and canopy overlay a portion of the 511 South Oak Knoll property and proposed development. A formal Arborist Report has already been submitted to Pasadena Planning, but also attached for convenience (Attachment B). The site plan for the proposed development at 511 South Oak Knoll submitted to Pasadena Planning for review shows that the wall of its subterranean parking garage will significantly encroach on the tree roots by about 10 feet. Similarly, it appears the above grade walls will also encroach on the tree's drip line. City of Pasadena requires a set-back from the drip line (and corresponding roots) of at least five (5) feet. Clearly this is a violation of the tree restrictions and would harm the tree that must be carefully maintained. (please see Figure 1 below). Furthermore, the site plan of the proposed development shows a garden area under the existing oak tree. Watering of this area will harm the tree.

Solutions to the differential height and architectural style of the proposed development at 511 South Oak Knoll to both our and other immediately adjacent two-story houses and condos and as well as the distance to the existing mature oak tree would be to revise the layout of the proposed building(s) for additional distance (mandatory clearance) from the tree – both the subterranean and the above grade walls. Additionally, stepping back the upper floors of the proposed building development would also help with the visual transition between our single-family two-story home and the massive proposed new building.

**Pasadena Planning Department**

Re Proposed 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue Development

Page 2 of 7

The proposed four-story building – having a footprint generally fully extending (maxed-out) to the property line, with all stories extending vertically, will substantially overwhelm this neighborhood in several ways: Please consider the following.

- No other buildings on South Oak Knoll (and nearby El Molino) are four stories high. They are typically, one, two and three stories only. The proposed building plan submitted is “maxed-out” to the lot line at all levels. For context with the neighborhood, the height should be reduced to not more than three stories. Four stories might be acceptable if the upper two levels are sufficiently set back to reduce the appearance of the massive structure next to our single-family two-story home as well as the smaller two-story apartments and condos located on the west and north sides of the property at 511 South Oak Knoll.
- Four stories constructed vertically will prevent natural light from entering the surrounding buildings. The two-story buildings on the north and west sides of the property will have no sunlight! The upper two floors of the new building should, at a minimum be stepped back to allow natural light into these residences.
- The four-story vertical walls of the proposed development will also reflect noise emanating from the Pasadena Power and Water electrical sub-station located to south of the 511 South Oak Knoll property. At present, this noise is somewhat dissipated due to the existing open space. Consider the following.
  - Those of us who live next to the substation already tolerate the constant noise it produces.
  - The proposed high vertical four-story wall located opposite the north side of the substation will amplify the sound for the people who live adjacent to the substation – while protecting those in the new building.
  - Again, we believe stepping back the upper two floors (those higher than the existing substation walls) would reduce the noise reflection, but a noise and vibration expert must be consulted.

As for the architectural intent, it seems like the 511 South Oak Knoll building designer is not attempting to respect design elements from any buildings located immediately adjacent to the proposed development or on the block. As we were not able to fully read the design presentation on a computer screen at Pasadena Planning Department, we could not determine if any of the existing local architectural features were carried through in the proposed building development plan.

In addition to comments on the size, height and shape of the proposed massive building, this 46-unit development will have many impacts on the South Oak Knoll Avenue community including, the following:

- **Traffic and Public Safety**
  - There are already speeding cars on Oak Knoll Avenue and the intersection at Oak Knoll and California suffers from accidents frequently.
  - Additional traffic studies will be needed to see if traffic lights will now be required at that intersection.

**Pasadena Planning Department**

Re Proposed 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue Development

Page 3 of 7

- **Parking**
  - Street parking, especially during the daytime is currently congested.
  - Visitors and workers at the new building will only add to the current parking shortage, and local residents living on Oak Knoll will be forced to search to parking elsewhere.
- **Surface Drainage Issues**
  - As an adjacent property owner, we are also concerned about drainage from the new development. Currently the 511 South Oak Knoll lot is “undeveloped” and as such, absorbs much of the rainwater. When there are heavy rains, surface water from the property frequently spills over onto the sidewalk and into the street.
  - The property developer will need to address heavy rain conditions and where the run-off discharges. This should be part of the mandatory permanent SWPPP and other environmentally sensitive plans and facilities incorporated into the proposed development.

In summary, it is our view that this project will **significantly impact and overwhelm** our neighborhood in many ways. The scale of the building plan dimensions, and height needs to be reduced to be consistent with our neighborhood for the many reasons cited above.

Please feel free to contact us at any time for more information and informal discussions.

Regards,

Amanda Elioff, PE and Brian Fulcher, P.Eng.



Sent by email to [commentsdc@cityofPasadena.net](mailto:commentsdc@cityofPasadena.net)

cc: Jason Lyon, District 7

Attachment A – Historic Memo on Pasadena Fire Department Engine House 34

Attachment B – Arborist Report on the Existing Mature Oak Tree Located at 541 South Oak Knoll Avenue

**Pasadena Planning Department**

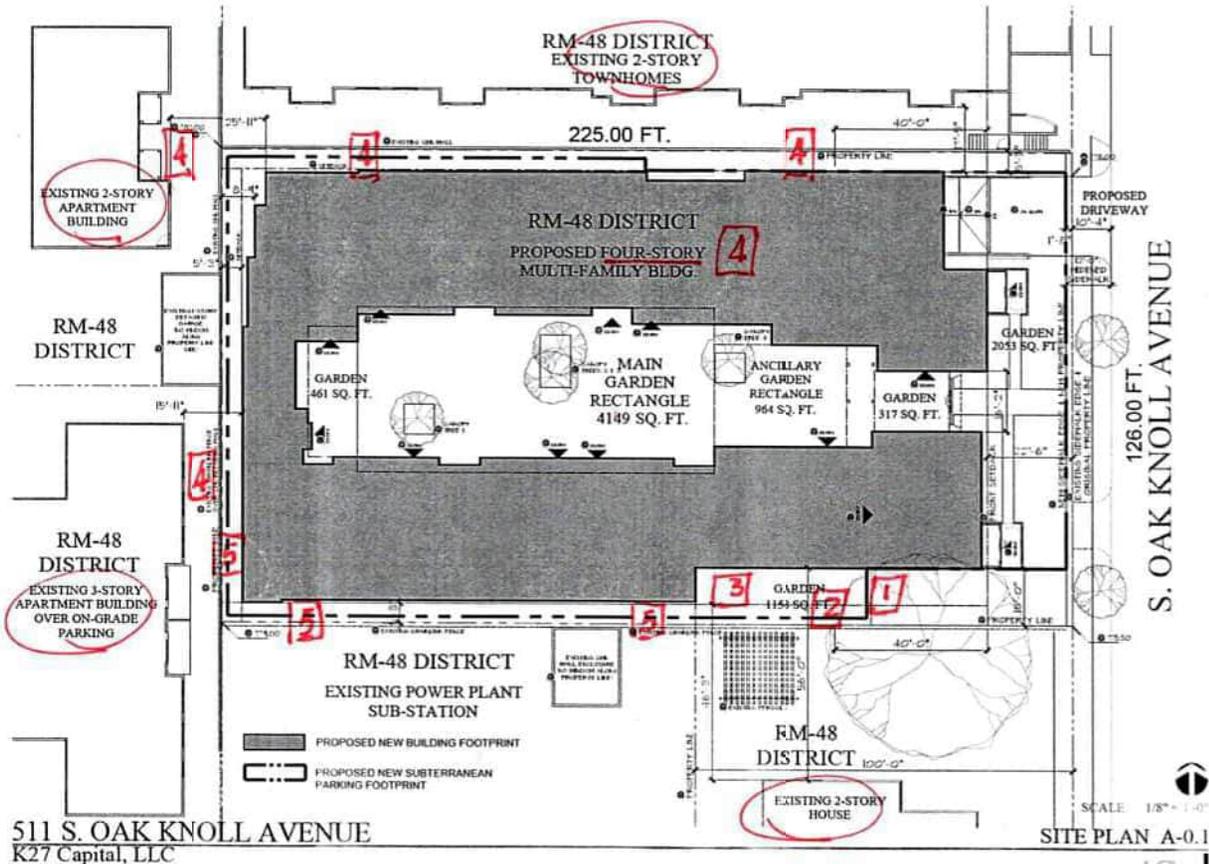
Re Proposed 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue Development

Page 4 of 7

**Photos of Historic [REDACTED] Oak Knoll (views from Northeast and from East)**



Figure 1 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA  
Proposed Development Site Plan with Comments



- [1] BUILDING WALL ENCLOSES ON TREE DRIP-LINE
- [2] SUBTERRANEAN WALL ENCLOSES ON TREE ROOT BULBS
- [3] PROPOSED GARDEN WILL HARM OAK TREE
- [4] PROPOSED 4-STORY BUILDING WILL OVERWHELM NEIGHBORHOOD AND BLOCK SUNLIGHT
- [5] VERTICAL 4-STORY BLDG WILL AMPLIFY NOISE FROM SUBSTATION

**Pasadena Planning Department**

Re Proposed 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue Development

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A.1

ATTACHMENT A HISTORIC MEMO



**THE BUILDING  
BIOGRAPHER  
TIM GREGORY**

- ❖ Building Histories
- ❖ Archival Consulting
- ❖ Cultural Resource Studies
- ❖ Historic Resources Surveys
- ❖ Local, State and National Landmarking

**██████████ OAK KNOLL AVENUE  
"The Oak Knoll Engine House"**

**PASADENA**

**Former Address:** 529 Franklin Avenue (1917-1918)

**Style:** Mediterranean Revival

**Years of Completion:** 1917—originally constructed as a City fire house

2000—converted into a single-family residence

**Original Building Permit:** #8077A, issued by the City of Pasadena on January 26, 1917 for a two-story, five-room "fire engine house." The building was to measure approximately 54 by 42.75 feet with a maximum height of 33 feet. It would have a concrete foundation, a wood frame, upper walls of brick, and a brick chimney with two flues.

A copy of this permit is attached.

**Cost to Build:** \$7,865—a significant amount of money in 1917.

**Architect:** Joseph J. Blick, Pasadena. Please see the attached biographical information on one of the City's earliest recognized architects. It is said Mr. Blick designed the firehouse so that its scale, setback, and appearance would give the impression of a single-family residence which was then the predominant property-type in the neighborhood.

**Builder:** Leonard Bukowski, Pasadena. Mr. Bukowski, a 40-year resident of Pasadena, had a 25-year-long career as a carpenter and building contractor, beginning in 1895. Known for his quality craftsmanship, he worked with some of Pasadena's most significant architects.

**Owners:** In 1916, the City of Pasadena purchased Lots 47 through 50 of the Samuel Stratton Subdivision from the East Pasadena Land & Water Company. The 225-foot-deep property stretched 252 linear feet along what is now Oak Knoll Avenue. Responsibility for the lots was shared by the City's Water Department, Light Department, and the General Fund. On Lots 47 and 48 the City built a new fire station. This structure would serve the City for the next 73 years. In 1918, the same year all the engine companies in Pasadena became motorized, it was named the "Oak Knoll Engine House."

The front of the engine house displayed three apparatus bay doors framed in brick with a segmental brick arch above each door. Cast stone and glazed diamond-patterned tile inlays enhanced the appearance of the exterior walls. The windows were paired double-hung sash and the roof was covered in barrel tiles, its exposed eaves supported by decorative brackets. On the north side of the station was a pergola supported by brick piers. A four-story hose-drying tower with a pyramidal roof dominated the rear of the building. The station had a small basement and an equally small captain's office at the rear of the apparatus floor. The living quarters, including a kitchen, were located on the second floor. The crew's lockers were said to be the largest in the City. The showers were one-of-a-kind with pipes twisting and turning on their way to the shower-head. Un-shaded bulbs supplied most of the interior lighting.

Lots 49 and 50 were used as a Girl Scout headquarters beginning in the 1920s, with the first improvements appearing on the parcel in 1927. All these improvements had been demolished by 1973 when the Girl Scouts moved elsewhere. The property has remained vacant for many years.

In 1919, when all the engine houses were given numbers, the Oak Knoll Firehouse became Fire Station #4. In 1962, the City's Water and Power Department installed an electrical substation in the rear yard. Fire Station #4 became Station #34 when the City joined the Verdugo Dispatch System in 1979. Fire Station #34 would eventually handle more paramedic calls than any other station in Pasadena.

In February 1989 the City decided to close Fire Station #34. As the oldest still-operating fire station in the City, it was built of unreinforced brick which led to seismic concerns following the 1987 Whittier earthquake. A newspaper article reporting on the closing is attached. A replacement station would ultimately be built at the southeast corner of Del Mar Blvd. and Holliston Avenue.

In November 1991, Lots 47 and 48 were subdivided, a 15,750-square-foot flag parcel being created in the westerly portions, its driveway running up the south side of Lot 47. The new parcel would remain under City ownership, accommodating the 1962 electrical substation. The easterly portions of the lots, a parcel containing 11,100 square feet and the old fire station, would eventually be put on the market.

In September 2000 the fire station parcel was sold to Randolph (Randy) G. and Judith (Judy) Weiss Wilson. They oversaw the building's conversion into a residence following historic preservation guidelines provided by the City. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson moved into their new home in 2001. A graduate of Skidmore College and Syracuse University, Mrs. Wilson served as Assistant City Manager of Pasadena in the 1980s and as the Deputy Director of the Los Angeles

County Transportation Commission in the 1990s. Mr. Wilson, a graduate of Stanford and the Wharton School of Business and Finance, worked in real estate development and investment. He also served on the boards of Five Acres and the Pasadena Historical Society.

**Other Building Permits:** A permit was issued in February 1986 to upgrade electrical service to 200 amps, but the job wasn't completed until May 1989.

An underground storage tank was to be removed in June 1987 for \$900.

In January 2000, Steve Dahl, representing the owner, presented plans to convert the old fire station into law offices.

A permit was issued in August 2000 to seismically upgrade the structure. The permit designated Nels Roselund of San Gabriel as the engineer/designer. The cost was estimated at \$50,000.

That same month, permission was given to convert the former firehouse into a single-family residence by rehabbing three bathrooms and a kitchen, removing and replacing interior walls, and remodeling bedrooms. Nels Roselund was again shown as the engineer/designer. The owner was to act as his own contractor. Cost of the project was to be \$160,000. (Note: the current owners have credited John Tongish with the contracting work following an architectural plan by Jennifer Giles.)

Copies of some of these permits are attached.

(Note: Permits for very minor alterations, such as water heater replacement, are not included. Also not included are permits missing from the file or whose microfilmed or digital copies are indecipherable and not otherwise recorded or described in Assessor's records.)

**Assessor's Records:** Because the City-owned firehouse was not on the property-tax rolls, there were no building records on file at either the City or County Assessor's offices.

However, in April 2002, the County Assessor created a building record for the property as a single-family residence. The Assessor recorded a two-story structure with a concrete-slab foundation, masonry walls, a hipped medium-pitched roof covered in tile, three-foot eaves, and sliding windows. The Assessor appears not to have examined the interior. A 9-by-20-foot pergola was attached to the northeast corner of the building and there was a 6-by-10-foot recessed concrete-floored covered porch at the entrance. Also on the property was a new 22-by-24-foot garage with a concrete floor, stucco walls, and a tiled roof. A separate barbecue area was also noted by the Assessor.

The Los Angeles County Assessor currently estimates the square footage of the house at 4,310. The number of rooms has not been specified by the Assessor.

Copies of the Assessor's building records are attached.

**Notes:** The current owners credit the installation of landscaping and water features to Ray Kettle. An ongoing adaption of the garden to Mediterranean conditions is being accomplished by Faith Coffman.

In May 2011, the Garden Conservancy featured the garden in its annual Open Days tour.

**Significance:** The property was designated a City Landmark by the City of Pasadena in 1990. It was considered an excellent example of Mediterranean Revival design by a well-known architect and builder, exceptional because it was originally a utilitarian, non-residential building. Also significant was the fact it was one of only a few untouched structures representing the neighborhood's original single-family appearance. Some of the City's documentation is attached.

**Sources:**

Los Angeles County Assessor (South El Monte district office)  
Los Angeles Public Library  
City of Pasadena, Planning and Development Department (Design & Historic  
Preservation Section)  
Pasadena Public Library  
Pasadena Museum of History (Research Library and Archives)

Gebhard, David and Robert Winter. *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*.  
Salt Lake City, Gibbs-Smith, 2003.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*.  
New York, Knopf, 1984.

*Pasadena Community Book*, 1947.

City Directories: 1918-

*Los Angeles Times*: January 22, 1984; November 18, 1990

*Pasadena Star-News*: September 6, 1947; July 25, 1980; May 1 and 27, 1984;  
March 9, 1989; October 8, 1991

Internet Resources, including California Index, California Death Index,  
Gale Biography Master Index, Ancestry.com, and Historic *Los Angeles Times*  
Database.

Tim Gregory  
The Building Biographer  
400 East California Blvd., #3  
Pasadena, CA 91106-3763  
626-792-7465  
[timgregory@sbcglobal.net](mailto:timgregory@sbcglobal.net)  
[www.buildingbiographer.com](http://www.buildingbiographer.com)

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by Tim Gregory

## JOSEPH J. BLICK

### Architect

Joseph J. Blick was born on September 20, 1867 in Clinton, Iowa. He moved to Pasadena with his parents at the age of 20. After working with his father, a contractor, Blick became associated with the well-known architect T. W. Parkes. Parkes had arrived in Pasadena from London, England around 1888. He became known for the elegant residences he designed for wealthy Pasadenans, especially along South Orange Grove Avenue. After six years, Blick went into partnership in Los Angeles with Lester S. Moore, their firm being known as "Blick & Moore." Blick remained active in architecture until his retirement in 1937. In 1891, he had married the former Daisy Russell in Pasadena. They had four children. The Blicks led an active social life, being affiliated with such organizations as the Shakespeare Club, the First Congregational Church, the Masons, Scottish Rite, the Shriners and the Overland Club. Joseph Blick designed and built a home for his family at 275 Madeline Drive in which they resided from 1901 until his death on September 5, 1947 at the age of 79.

Joseph Blick was responsible for the design of some of Pasadena's most recognizable buildings. He mastered a number of different styles, ranging from a massive shingle-style, such as in the Horatio West residence, to a type of Streamline Moderne (in the Scottish Rite Cathedral) that pre-dated other examples of the style by a good ten years. Unfortunately, many of his major residential works have disappeared due to redevelopment and freeway construction over recent years. The Design and Historic Preservation Section of Pasadena's Planning Department maintains two large files of information on Blick and can be consulted for a complete list of his remaining designs. Only a few are mentioned below:

Horatio West residence (1897)-412 E. Calaveras St., Altadena  
 Brown residence (1903)-515 West California Blvd.  
 Lunkenheimer residence (1906)-1215 Wentworth Ave.  
 Henderson residence (1906)-795 Oak Knoll Circle  
 Residences at 556 and 625 Prospect Blvd. (1907 and 1905 respectively)  
 Holloway Stuart residence (1909)-875 La Loma  
 George S. Patton estate (1910)-1220 Patton Ct., San Marino  
 Grosse residence (1910)-1133 Buena Vista St., South Pasadena  
 Reed residence (1911)-450 Bellefontaine St.  
 Gates family residences (1911)-499 Monterey Rd., 1209 and 1215 Indiana Ave.,  
     South Pasadena  
 Hiram Wadsworth residence (1912)-1090 Rubio St., Altadena  
 Firehouse (1917)-541 S. Oak Knoll Ave.  
 Scottish Rite Cathedral (1922)-150 N. Madison Ave.  
 The Star-News building (1924)-525 E. Colorado Blvd.

Tim Gregory  
 The Building Biographer  
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 626-792-7465  
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[www.buildingbiographer.com](http://www.buildingbiographer.com)  
 Copyright 2008

## Joseph J. Blick, A.I.A.

Joseph J. Blick, one of the few real old-timers still living in Pasadena, has resided here for sixty years. Born in Clinton, Iowa, on September 20, 1867, his father was James S. and his mother Phoebe Eleanor Blick. He went to school in Iowa, and arrived in Pasadena on his birthday in 1887, his parents having preceded him here by a few months. For a short time Mr. Blick worked with his father, who was a contractor; but it was not long before he became associated with the well known Architect of the day, T. W. Parkes, M.R.I.B.A., and he was with him for a period of six years. He then took up the practice

of architecture on his own account, and for the following forty years was actively engaged in practice, having permanently retired only ten years ago.

Mr. Blick has to his credit the architectural work on many of the noted structures of Pasadena, including the Hall of Justice, Scottish Rite Cathedral, Star-News Building, many of the early school structures, numerous commercial buildings, including the original office building on the southwest corner of Fair Oaks Avenue and Colorado Street, and literally hundreds of homes, including many of the most pretentious ones on Orange Grove Avenue, in San Marino, and even in Hollywood. It is particularly interesting to note that he was the architect for the George S. Patton home in San Marino, where the late General George S. Patton spent his early days.

Mr. Blick is a member of the Masonic Fraternity, and affiliated with the Scottish Rite Bodies and Al Malaikah Shrine Temple of Los Angeles. He was an early member of the Overland Club in Pasadena and was at one time a director.

In 1891 Mr. Blick married Miss Daisy Russell in the First Congregational Church, Pasadena, the Rev. D. D. Hill having performed the ceremony. There are four children: Elizabeth E., Field Secretary National Board Y. W. C. A., of New York; Donald R. Blick, who is with the Automobile Club of Southern California; Marie J., wife of William M. Thornburg, Petroleum Engineer, now operating in Fillmore, California; and Alice D., wife of George F. Drake, Jr., with the Los Angeles City Schools, living in the San Fernando Valley. There are four grandchildren.

Mr. and Mrs. Blick have traveled extensively, having visited a large part of the United States, and in 1928 they took a trip around the world. Their religious affiliation is with the First Congregational Church. Mrs. Blick has, for many years been a member of the Shakespeare Club.

The Blicks built their home on Madeline Drive in Pasadena in 1901, and they continue to reside in this attractive home place.

# J. J. BLICK, ARCHITECT, DIES AT 79

## Designed Star-News Building, Scottish Rite Cathedral

Joseph J. Blick, 79, veteran Pasadena architect who had lived in this community for 80 years, died late yesterday at his home, 275 Madeline Drive. He had been ill but a few days.

Mr. Blick, as a practicing architect, had designed many buildings of various types in Southern California, among them The Star-News Building and the Pasadena Scottish Rite Cathedral.

### Popular Clubman

Personally popular as well as prominent in his profession, Mr. Blick was a member of many clubs and societies. He was one of three remaining charter members of the Overland Club. He was a member of Corona Lodge of Masons, the Royal Arch chapter; was a past commander of Knights Templar of Pasadena, and a member of the Scottish Rite Masonic bodies. He was also a Shriner and a member of various professional societies.

He was born in Clinton, Iowa.

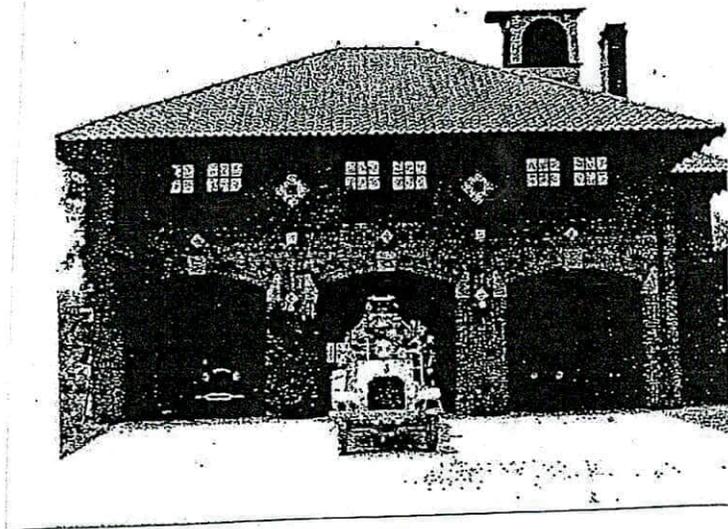
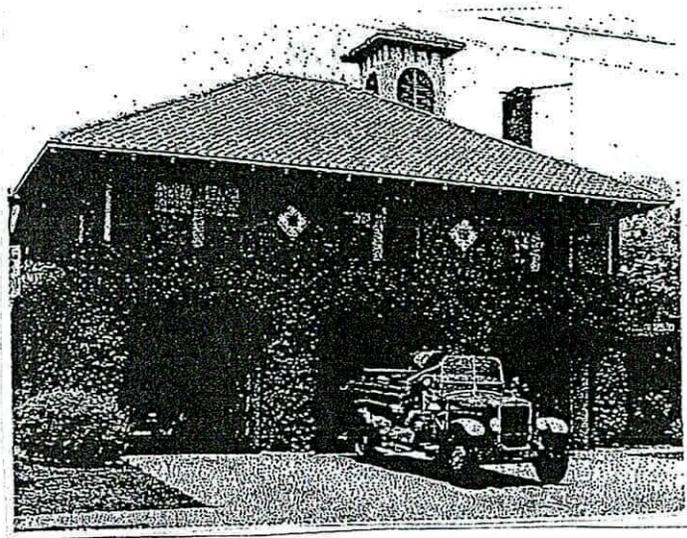
Surviving him are his widow, Daisy R. Blick; a son, Donald R. Blick, Los Angeles; two daughters, Mrs. Marie J. Thornbury, Pasadena, and Mrs. Alice B. Drake, Northridge, and four grandchildren. Also by two brothers and two sisters, John C. and Judd Blick, both of Los Angeles, and Mrs. Grace Ingram, Los Angeles, and Mrs. A. S. Wells, Visalia.

### Funeral Monday

Funeral services will be held Monday at 10:30 at Turner & Stevens Company's chapel, conducted by Rev. Raymond Waser, pastor of First Congregational Church, of which Mr. Blick was a member. There will also be a Masonic ritual. Burial will be private.

A sad sidelight on the bereavement to the Blick family was the circumstance that funeral services for the architect's brother-in-law, Maj. Frederick R. Burnham, explorer and lecturer, who died at his home in Santa Barbara Wednesday, was being held this noon in Glendale. Mr. Blick died unaware of Major Burnham's death. Major Burnham's wife, who died several years ago, was a sister of Mr. Blick.

Pasadena Star-News  
September 6, 1947; p. 9



Historical photographs from  
files of City's Historic  
Preservation archives



PASADENA MUSEUM OF HISTORY  
Pasadena Star-News Collection

Taken 1989

# Oldest fire station takes no more calls

By **DANNY POLLOCK**  
Staff Writer

PASADENA — The recent closing of the city's oldest fire station has had little impact on the delivery of emergency medical and fire services, even though the station handled more paramedic calls than any other in the city, the deputy fire chief said Wednesday.

City officials closed Fire Station 34 at 541 S. Oak Knoll Ave. on Feb. 23, after deciding they could no longer rely on the 70-year-old building's ability to withstand a major earthquake, Deputy Fire Chief Don Hughes said.

The station, one of two located south of Colorado Boulevard, may be the oldest occupied government building in the city, Hughes said.

"It's had its day," he said. "It's made of unreinforced brick. That doesn't bend very easy. ... If everything else

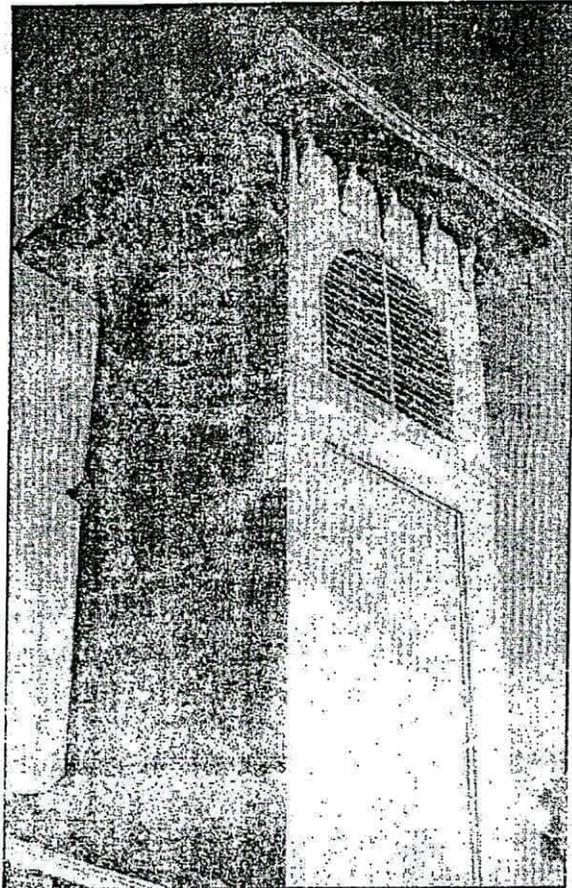
falls down during an earthquake, we want our stations to keep standing."

Hughes said the station's one paramedic unit and one engine company have been reassigned to Fire Station 31 at 175 N. Marengo Ave. while city officials search for a temporary station site in the South Lake Avenue area.

"Closing the station has had very little effect (on service)," Hughes said. "Paramedics are out in the field so much that it's not too significant where they're stationed. And our fire units are still out in that district all day doing prevention work."

Hughes said it will take about 60 days to open the temporary station and at least three years to build a new station planned for the area.

Hughes said the building,



Fire station's tower is a safety concern

built in 1919, sustained several cracks during past earthquakes but remained in good condition. The decision to close it came after two recent inspections by structural engineers, he said.

John Tennant, president of the Pasadena Firefighters Association, said a 5.0 earthquake that hit the area Dec. 4, increased concerns about the station among firefighters on duty there.

After firefighters voiced those concerns in a report to Pasadena Fire Chief Kaya Peckerol, the city hired an engineer to study the structure, Tennant said.

"The report identified safety hazards," he said. "It determined that something should be done to improve the building, but it set no time frame."

Tennant said the association commissioned its own study to clarify the city report and learn more details about what would happen to the station during a major earthquake.

"Our report basically said the same things as the city's," Tennant said. "But ours was a little stronger (concerning safety). ... Closing the station was not something the union forced the city to do. The city was prepared to act and it did."

Hughes said city officials considered the association's report while deciding to close the station. He said he does not believe it will be torn down.

"It's a historic building and I'm guessing it will be put to another use after it is brought up to modern (earthquake) standards," he said. "The building is in fine shape for one built in 1919."

### Fire Station a Landmark

LAT 11/18/90 J-2  
The Oak Knoll Fire Station, the city's second-oldest fire station, was declared a Cultural Heritage Landmark by City Directors on Tuesday.

Built in 1917 by architect Joseph J. Blick, the two-story, brick Mediterranean-style building at 541 S. Oak Knoll Ave. has been empty and boarded up since last year. City officials may soon declare the site surplus property and it could be sold. The designation will help preserve its look.

Los Angeles Times  
November 18, 1990; p. J-2

Application is hereby made to the Building Inspector of the City of Pasadena for the erection of the building herein described. All provisions of the building ordinances and state laws shall be complied with in the erection of said building, whether herein specified or not. It is also understood that the granting of a permit on this application does not grant any right or privilege to erect the building or structure herein described, or any portion thereof on any public street or alley or on any land or portion thereof, the title or right of possession to which is in litigation by, or is disputed by the City, County or State; or as giving or granting any right or privilege to use the said structure or building for any purpose which is or may hereafter be prohibited by ordinance of the City of Pasadena.

(SIGN HERE) ..... *L. Beckroski* ..... (Applicant)

TAKE TO ROOM NO. 10 FIRST FLOOR ASSESSOR PLEASE VERIFY

Lot No. *47448* Block .....  
*Samuel Stratton's Sub*  
*tract in Lots 11 & 12 Blk R SP*  
District No. .... M. B. page ..... F. B. page *101*

O. K. City Assessor  
Deputy  
Per

TAKE TO ROOM NO. 18 SECOND FLOOR ENGINEER PLEASE VERIFY

No. *529 Franklin Ave* Street

O. K. City Engineer  
Deputy  
Per

- PURPOSE OF BUILDING *Fire Engine House* Number of rooms *5*
- OWNER'S NAME *City* Address *Pasadena*
- Architect's name *J. J. Bleick* Address .....
- CONTRACTOR'S NAME *L. Beckroski* Address *222 N. Elm alma Ave.*
- ENTIRE COST OF PROPOSED BUILDING, \$ *7865<sup>00</sup>*
- Size of lot *1.29* x *2.25* Size of building *54* x *42-10"*
- Will building be erected on front or rear of lot? *Front*
- NUMBER OF STORIES IN HEIGHT *2* Height to highest point of roof *33 ft*
- Height of first floor joist above curb level, or surface *1 ft*
- Character of ground: rock, clay, sand, filled, etc. *Clay - (Adobe)*
- Of what material will FOUNDATION and cellar walls be built? *Concrete*
- GIVE depth of FOUNDATION below the surface of ground *2 ft*
- GIVE dimensions of FOUNDATION and cellar wall FOOTINGS *2'-9" x 1'-6"*
- GIVE width of FOUNDATION and cellar walls at top *3'*
- NUMBER and kind of chimneys *1 Brick* Number of flues *2*
- Number of inlets to each flue *one* Interior size of flues *8x8 & 8x12*
- Of what material will upper walls be constructed? *Brick*
- Are there any buildings within 30 feet of the proposed structure *No*

PERMIT NO. *80774* Date issued *JAN 26 1917* 1917 **OVER**

Application Received *JAN 26 1917*



### Permit Center

175 N. Garfield Ave. Pasadena, CA 91109-7215 (626) 744-4200

(Call before 5:00 p.m. for next day inspections)

Job Address: 541 S OAK KNOLL AV ST01  
Parcel No: 5734-020-902

Project Name:

Description of Work: CONVERT FIRE HOUSE TO S.F.R. (REHAB INTERIOR OF (3) BATHROOMS, KITCHEN, REMOVE INTERIOR WALLS & REPLACE, REMODEL BEDROOMS)

Permit No.: BLD2000-00161  
BUILDING PERMIT  
Issued Date: 10 / 04 / 00  
Expire Date: 04 / 02 / 01

Applicant:

Phone:

Owner:

Phone:

Contractor:

Phone:

Randy Wilson  
Pasadena, CA  
1785 Locust St #7  
Pasadena, ca 91106 License #:

Architect/Engineer:

NELS ROSELLUND  
8453 YARROW ST SO, SAN GABRIEL, CA 91770

License #: 1742

Phone: 626-573-2441

**LICENSED CONTRACTORS DECLARATION**  
I hereby affirm that I am licensed under provisions of Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7700) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code and my license is in full force and effect.  
Lic Number \_\_\_\_\_ Lic Class \_\_\_\_\_  
Contractor \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### BUILDING DATA

Current Valuation: \$180,000.00  
Original Valuation: \$160,000.00  
sq Construction: 3,800.00 Sq.Ft.

**OWNER-BUILDER DECLARATION**  
I hereby affirm that I am exempt from the Contractor's License Law for the following reason (check all that apply):  
I am owner of the property, or my employee who is acting as their sole compensation, will be employed, and the structure is not intended or altered for sale (Sec. 7946, Business and Professions Code). This Contractor's License Law does not apply to an owner of property who builds or improves thereon, and who does not seek reimbursement of or through his/her own employees, provided that such improvements are not fabricated or altered for sale. If, however, the building or improvements are sold within one year of completion, the owner-builder will have the burden of proving that he/she did not build or improve for the purpose of sale.  
I, as owner of the property, am exclusively contracting with licensed contractors to construct  
I am exempt under Section \_\_\_\_\_ of the B.P.C. for the reason:  
Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 10-4-2000

New Units: 1 Demo Units

#### PLAN REVIEW FEES

Code Compliance Plan Check \$164.54  
Current Planning Plan Check \$227.22  
Design & Historic Plan Check \$62.88  
Fire Department Plan Check \$78.35  
Building Plan Check \$1,587.00  
Plan Review Fees Subtotal: \$2,089.79

**WORKERS COMPENSATION DECLARATION**  
I hereby affirm under penalty of perjury one of the following:  
I have and will maintain a certificate of coverage to assure workers' compensation, as provided for by Section 3700 of the Labor Code, for the performance of the work for which this permit is issued.  
I have and will maintain workers' compensation insurance, as required by Section 3700 of the Labor Code, for the performance of the work for which this permit is issued. My workers' compensation insurance carrier is a policy number # \_\_\_\_\_  
Carrier \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_  
This section need not be completed if the permit being issued by the City is for one hundred dollars (\$100) or less.  
I certify that in the performance of the work for which this permit is issued, I shall not employ any person in any manner that is subject to the workers' compensation laws of California and shall not be liable for such workers' compensation provisions of Section 3700 of the Labor Code, in addition to the cost of compensation.  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 10-4-2000

#### PERMIT FEES

Processing Fee \$23.00  
PUSD- Residential New \$7,334.00  
Building Permit Fee \$1,587.00  
Construction Tax \$3,072.00  
SMIP: Residential \$16.00  
Records Mgmt 3% \$110.89  
Permit Fees Subtotal: \$12,122.89

**CONSTRUCTION LENDING AGENCY**  
I hereby affirm that there is a construction lending agency for the performance of the work of which this permit is issued (Sec. 3827 C.N.C.)  
Lender's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Lender's Address \_\_\_\_\_

Total Calculated Fees: 14,222.48  
Waived Fees Subtotal:

I certify that I have read this application and state that the above information is correct. I agree to comply with all city ordinances and state laws relating to building construction, and hereby authorize representatives to enter upon the above mentioned property for inspection purposes.  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 10/4/2000

Total Fees:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Owner  
Contractor  
Agent for Contractor

**PERMIT EXPIRATION**  
THIS PERMIT SHALL EXPIRE IF THE WORK AUTHORIZED BY THIS PERMIT IS NOT COMMENCED WITHIN 180 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THIS PERMIT AND VERIFIED BY INSPECTION, OR IF THE WORK AUTHORIZED BY THIS PERMIT IS SUSPENDED OR ABANDONED AT ANY TIME AFTER THE WORK IS COMMENCED FOR A PERIOD OF 180 DAYS. N.J.C. SECTION 16.44.  
A PERMIT FOR RESIDENTIAL WORK SHALL BE COMPLETED WITHIN A MAXIMUM OF 18 MONTHS FROM DATE OF ISSUANCE, UNLESS APPROVAL IS OBTAINED FOR AN EXTENSION, WITH A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN 1 YEAR AT WHICH TIME A NEW PERMIT AND FEES MAY BE APPLIED FOR.

**CONSTRUCTION HOURS**  
IF THE PROJECT IS ON WITHIN 800 FEET OF A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT, CONSTRUCTION WORK AND THE OPERATION OF CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT SHALL BE:  
MONDAY THRU SATURDAY 7:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.  
SUNDAY NOT PERMITTED (SEE MUNICIPAL CODE FOR EXCEPTIONS - P.M.C. 9.36.15)

**USE OF STREET OR SIDEWALK**  
IF THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY WILL BE OCCUPIED FOR THIS PROJECT, A PERMIT IS REQUIRED BY THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT. CALL (626) 744-1915 (P.M.C. 9.12.60)

**BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION**

Case No. 1502000-00161

|  |  |   |   |                    |
|--|--|---|---|--------------------|
| Job Address <u>541 S. Oak Knoll Ave</u>  |  | Unit/Floor <u>-</u>   | Zip <u>91106</u>                                  | Date <u>8-8-00</u> |
| ** Circle All Uses Below **<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional |  | Description of Work<br><u>Rehab interior - install bathroom, kitchen, remove interior walls + replace, remodel bedrooms</u> |   |                    |
| Change of Use <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |  | Proposed Use  |   |                    |
|  |  | Square Footage <u>3800</u>  | Valuation \$ <u>160,000 -</u>                     |                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING MINOR | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSORY   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MISCELLANEOUS |                    |
| New  | ROOF (BMN)   | PAVING (BMN)  | FIRE PERMITS (FIR)                                |                    |
| Addition   | FENCE / WALL (BMN)                                 | Parking lot improvement   | Alarms  |                    |
| Remodel  | CHIMNEY (BMN)                                      | Front yard paving/Driveway  | Monitors  |                    |
| Conversion   | POOL (BMN)   | SIGN (BMN)  | Suppression                                       |                    |
| Foundation only  | Public / Private                                   | Type (Wall / Pole)  | Sprinklers  |                    |
| Unreinforced masonry   | Elect Fixtures (qty)                               | Fixtures (qty)  | Underground Sprinklers                            |                    |
| After the fact Permit/Other  | Motor < 1hp (qty)                                  | Incandescent (qty)  | GRAND STANDS (TUP)                                |                    |
| GRADING (BLD)  | Motor < 5hp (qty)                                  | Ballast/Transformers(qty)   | Seats for sale (qty)                              |                    |
| Hillside / Non-hillside  | Pool Heater  | DEMOLITION (DEM)  | Seats not for sale (qty)                          |                    |
| SOLAR (BMN)  | Backwash Disposal                                  | Full / Partial  | Total toilets (qty)                               |                    |

DOES YOUR PROJECT INCLUDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING: No  Yes

If yes, please indicate which one(s) with a (✓):

Electrical: 600 or greater amps OR 600 or greater volts     Plumbing: 2" or greater water line

Mechanical: 500,000 or greater BTU's (Heating or Cooling)     Gas: 2" or greater gas pipe/medium or high pressure gas line

MPE Plan Review is required if any of the above thresholds are met. Two (2) sets of MPE plans must be submitted.

|  |  |   |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| CONTRACTOR/AGENT <u>Randy Wilson</u><br>Mailing Address <u>1785 Locust St, #7</u><br>City <u>Pasadena</u> State <u>CA</u> Zip <u>91106</u> |  | Phone No. <u>(626) 796-6000</u><br>City <u>Pasadena</u>       | Fax No. <u>(626) 796-7361</u><br>City <u>Pasadena</u>       | E-Mail Address <u>randy@earthlink.net</u><br>State <u>CA</u> Zip <u>91106</u> |
| ARCHITECT <u>Some</u><br>Mailing Address _____<br>City _____ State _____ Zip _____   |  | Phone No. _____<br>City _____                                 | Fax No. _____<br>City _____                                 | E-Mail Address _____<br>State _____ Zip _____                                 |
| OWNER <u>OWN - builds</u><br>Mailing Address <u>5453 Yarrow St</u><br>City <u>San Gabriel Blvd</u> State <u>CA</u> Zip <u>91770</u>        |  | Phone No. <u>626/573-2441</u><br>City <u>San Gabriel Blvd</u> | Fax No. <u>626/573-2572</u><br>City <u>San Gabriel Blvd</u> | E-Mail Address _____<br>State <u>CA</u> Zip <u>91770</u>                      |
| ENGINEER <u>Nils Rogeland</u><br>Mailing Address <u>8453 Yarrow St</u><br>City <u>San Gabriel Blvd</u> State <u>CA</u> Zip <u>91770</u>    |  | Phone No. <u>626/573-2441</u><br>City <u>San Gabriel Blvd</u> | Fax No. <u>626/573-2572</u><br>City <u>San Gabriel Blvd</u> | E-Mail Address _____<br>State <u>CA</u> Zip <u>91770</u>                      |
| Name of Tenant <u>None</u>   |  | Phone No. _____   |   |   |

\*\* I certify that I have filled out this application completely and state that the above information is correct.

Randy Wilson Date 8-8-00

Signature of Applicant or Agent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

| OVER THE COUNTER APPROVALS (for office use only)      |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| BUILDING APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | ZONING APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | D & H P APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | FIRE APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/><br><small>(as required)</small> |

PLEASE COMPLETE REVERSE SIDE





State of California—The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Primary #  
HRI # 1109-0471-0000  
Trinomial  
NRHP Status Code 5S1

Page 1 of 1 Resource Name or #: Engine Company No. 34

Continuation  Update

**P2. Location:** 541 South Oak Knoll Avenue

**B10. Significance:**

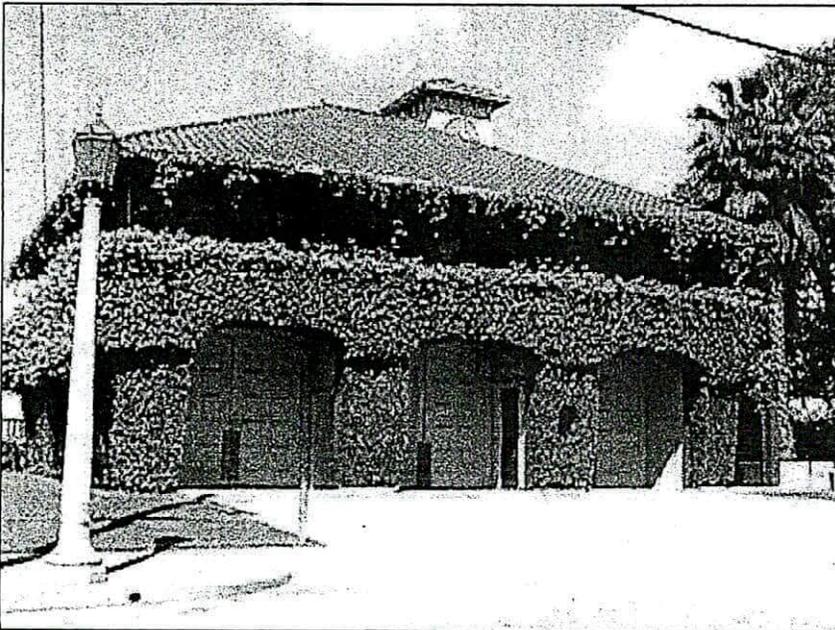
Engine Company No. 34 was designated a City of Pasadena landmark in 1990. In continuous use from 1917 until 1989, the station has been retired by the Fire Department and is now a single-family residence (following a major rehabilitation and adaptive use project in 2000).

Year of Construction: 1917

Architect: J.J. Blick

Builder: Leonard Bukowski

**P5b. Description/Date of Photo:** View of the east elevation/May 6, 1998



**P8. Recorded by:** Leslie Heumann, PCR, 233 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 130, Santa Monica, CA 90401

**P9. Date Recorded:** August 30, 2000



# CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL RESOURCES INVENTORY DATABASE

City of Pasadena

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A.1

## Resource Summary

541 S OAK KNOLL Ave

## Resource Summary

Address: 541 S OAK KNOLL Ave

APN: 5734-020-043

[print](#)

This property is designated by the city as an individual historic resource (see "designation type" field for the specific city designation type). \*

### Records

- Primary Record
- Bldg, Struct & Object Record

### Maps and Photos

### Local Information

### National/California Registers

### RESOURCE OVERVIEW

Address: 541 S OAK KNOLL Ave  
 City: Pasadena  
 Zip Code: 91101  
 County Code: 37

State: CA  
 County: Los Angeles

Historic Name: Engine Company #34  
 APN: 5734-020-043  
 Building Sq. Ft:  
 Year Built: 1917 Documented  
 District:

Common Name:  
 Zoning:  
 Site Size (Acres): 0.000  
 District:  
 Property Status: Designated

### Resource Description:

This fire station was closed in 1989 and rehabilitated as a single family residence in 2000. The South Oak Knoll Fire Station is a two-story, brick Mediterranean Revival style building with a hipped, tile roof and decorative brackets displayed below exposed eaves. A wood frame hose drying tower at the northwest corner of the building repeats a similar roof design, and holds arched windows, covered with horizontal lattice, on all four faces. The façade features three segmental arch vehicle entrances at ground level, and three bays of paired, double-hung sash at the second story. Decorative diamond-shaped tiles are located between the windows. Brick piers form a pergola over a pedestrian entrance at the northeast corner of the building, which is flanked by palm trees. Ivy conceals double hung sash on the side and rear elevations, and a single panel door at the rear. The rear of the lot is occupied by a paved parking and an electrical power plant. The interior remains in good condition, with only minimal alterations to the first and second floors. Original wooden paneling has been left intact in the garage space on the main level, and original round openings in the ceiling for fire poles are simply filled with plywood and easily visible. Although plumbing and kitchen alterations have been added to the living space on the second floor, the space plan is essentially the same and built-in storage lockers remain.

The surrounding neighborhood is being developed as high-density multi-unit housing, with a few scattered single family residences remaining. A single family residence directly to the south has been remodeled and used as office.

The Fire Department closed the station in 1989, leaving the building locked and boarded up. It has had relatively few interior alterations, and no apparent exterior alterations. The architectural features remain in remarkable good condition, in consideration of its continuous service as a fire station for over 70 years.

### Legal Description:

S. Stratton's Sub. Lots 47 and 48 (ex W. 70 ft)

### RESOURCE DETAILS

Primary Architectural Style: Mediterranean Revival

Secondary Architectural Style:

Architect: J.J. Blick

Builder: Leonard Bukowski

Contractor:

Context:

Original Owner:

Original Use:

Original Location:

continued...

Demolished: no  
Notes:  
Moved: no  
Date Moved: n/a  
Designation Date: n/a



\* This is a simplified statement of the property's status. Please review the NRHP Status Code field on the search screen for official, adopted status language.

State of California - The Resource Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
BUILDING, STRUCTURE & OBJECT RECORD

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_

\*NRHP Status Code: 5S1  
\*Resource Name or #: \_\_\_\_\_ Survey Title: \_\_\_\_\_

B1. Historic Name: Engine Company #34  
B2. Common Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
B3. Original Use: \_\_\_\_\_ B4. Present Use: \_\_\_\_\_

\*B5a. Primary Architectural Style: Mediterranean Revival  
B5b. Secondary Architectural Style: \_\_\_\_\_

\*B6. Construction History: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Built: 1917  
2000- Seismically strengthened, renovated interior and converted to single family residence from firehouse. 2 car garage added at SWC of property.

\*B7. Moved?:  Yes  No  Unknown Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Original Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\*B8. Related Features: \_\_\_\_\_

\*B9a. Architect: J.J. Blick b. Builder: Leonard Bukowski

\*B10. Significance: Theme: \_\_\_\_\_ Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance: \_\_\_\_\_ Property Type: Single Family Residence

Applicable Criteria: National Register Criteria: \_\_\_\_\_ California Register: \_\_\_\_\_ Local Register: \_\_\_\_\_

Context: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

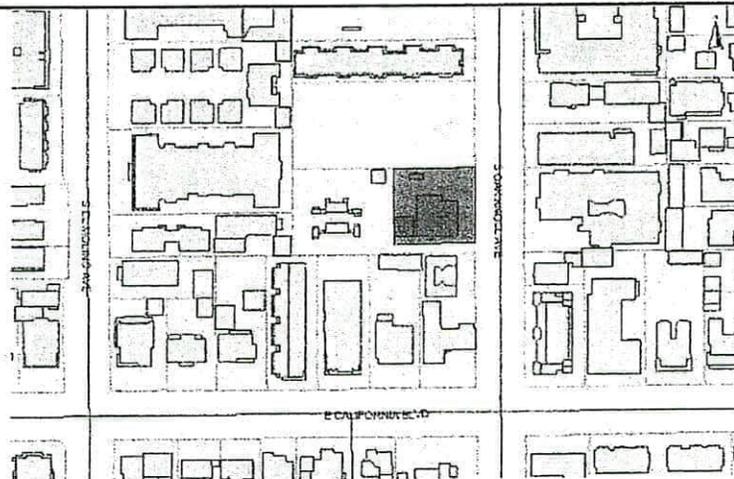
2839 The Oak Knoll Fire Station, historically known as Engine Company #34, at 541 S. Oak Knoll meets the Cultural Heritage Landmark Criteria through the following points: (a) value as part of the heritage of the city; (d) exemplification of a particular architectural style; exemplification of the best remaining architectural style type in the neighborhood; (f) as the work of a person whose work has influenced the heritage of the city; and (i) unique location and characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood. Built in 1917, the Oak Knoll Fire Station is the second oldest remaining station in the City, preempted only by the Old Fire House at 37 W. Dayton Street, circa 1889. The site was chosen for its accessibility to the Oak Knoll district, and... *Continued below...*

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: HP02, HP14

\*B12. References: \_\_\_\_\_

B13. Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

\*B14. Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_



**B10. Significance (continued):**  
the availability of land for a pumping station at the rear of the lot. Plans to build a new station at the corner of Lake and California, as the first unit of a civic center, were rejected in favor of this site. The most advanced fire-fighting equipment of the time, a self-propelled pumping engine with attached chemical tanks and hoses was moved to the station when construction was completed. A three story tower, of wooden construction, for drying fire hoses was also a necessity of the time. The historic tower, walled with narrow wooden paneling, features a built-in wooden ladder from floor to ceiling. The two story brick Mediterranean Revival style building was designed to complement the surrounding single-family residential neighborhood. Scale, massing and setback are similar to that of the neighborhood. The hipped tile roof with exposed eaves, paired double-hung sash at the second story and pergola above the pedestrian entrance lend residential character to the utilitarian structure as well. It is an excellent example of Mediterranean Revival design, but particularly exceptional because it is a non-residential building. In addition it is one of only a few untouched structures representing the original single-family neighborhood.

Both contractor and architect were well known Pasadena residents. Leonard Bukowski was a resident of Pasadena for 40 years, and served the community as a carpenter and building contractor from 1895 to the early 1920's. His relatively unaltered quality craftsmanship can be seen throughout the building. Architect Joseph J. Blick was highly acclaimed in the Los Angeles area, having designed hundreds of homes throughout Pasadena, San Marino and Hollywood's most prestigious neighborhoods in addition to many renowned buildings in central Pasadena. He is most often noted for the Hall of Justice, Scottish Rite Cathedral, Star-News building and numerous school buildings. A resident of Pasadena since 1887, Blick operated his own firm for over 40 years, retiring in 1937.

**Pasadena Planning Department**

Re Proposed 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue Development

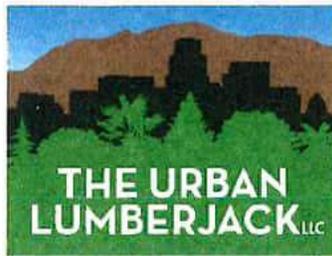
Page 7 of 7

A.1

ATTACHMENT B – OAK TREE REPORT

9/17/2023

Tree report  
 Elioff residence  
 541 South Oak Knoll  
 Pasadena, CA. 91101



To Whom It May Concern:

## OVERVIEW

On Saturday September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023 I visited the above-referenced property in order to gather information for this tree report. Once there I found a mature Oak (DSH of 36.6") in splendid condition. Photo A, taken from the opposite side of Oak Knoll street and facing west shows the height and spread of this specimen although the sidewalk-abutting hedge trees (the lighter-green foliage in the low foreground) prevents us from enjoying an uninterrupted view of the Oak. Note the house on the left side of the photo – that house is resident on this lot along with the tree and this house has an unusual and historically significant lineage.

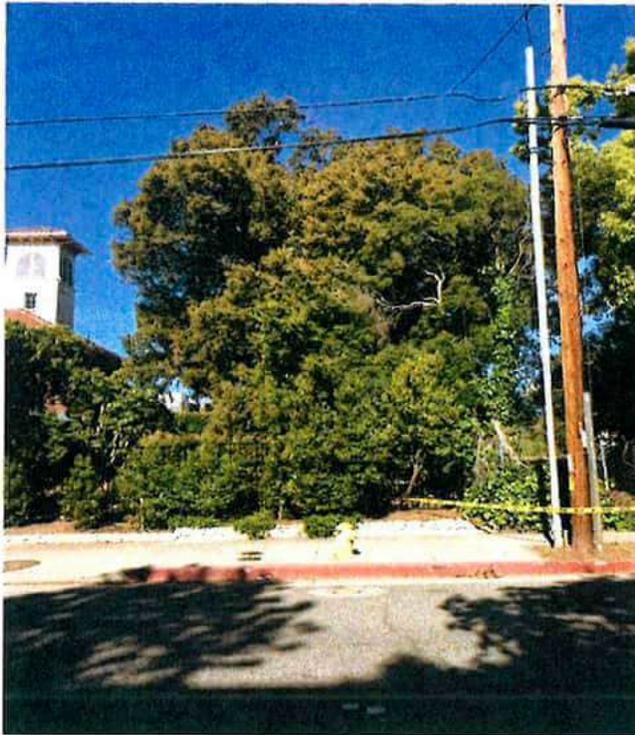


Photo A

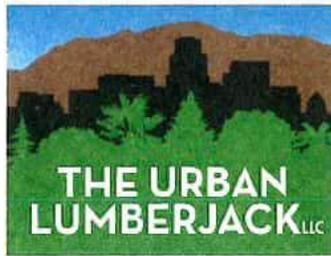


WE8930A

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Tree report  
 Elioff residence  
 541 South Oak Knoll



Page 2

When this lot was originally developed in 1917, the building was designed and used as a City of Pasadena fire house. It was not converted into a single-family residence until 2000.

This tree is an Engelmann Oak (*Quercus engelmanni*) though its morphology is slightly atypical, arguing that a degree of hybridization may have influenced this specimen. Whatever it's lineage, it is a native beauty. Given the shade footprint of the canopy and the girth of the trunk, it is likely that the tree was either a resident sapling at the time of development or was planted during that period.

The reason for the property owner's request for this report rise from concerns as to the fate of the vacant lot immediately to the north, 525 South Oak Knoll . Vacant lots are scarce in this part of Pasadena and it is only a question of time before this lot is developed, probably as a multi-family dwelling. Photo B, taken standing at the north end of this vacant lot and facing southwards shows the northern face of this tree.



Photo

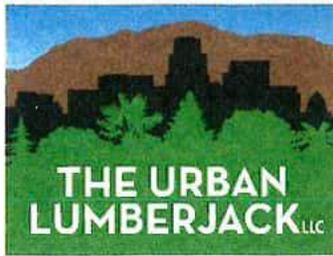


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Tree report  
 Elioff residence  
 541 South Oak Knoll



Page 3

Photo C shows the overhang of this tree above the vacant lot. This shot was taken while standing on the southern frontier of the empty lot and facing east. At the low left edge of the image are some leaves of a tree near the lens and to the left of that is a long dark low "wall". That wall is in fact the ivy-covered chain-link fence separating the subject property from the vacant lot of concern. Note the significant amount of overhanging foliage.

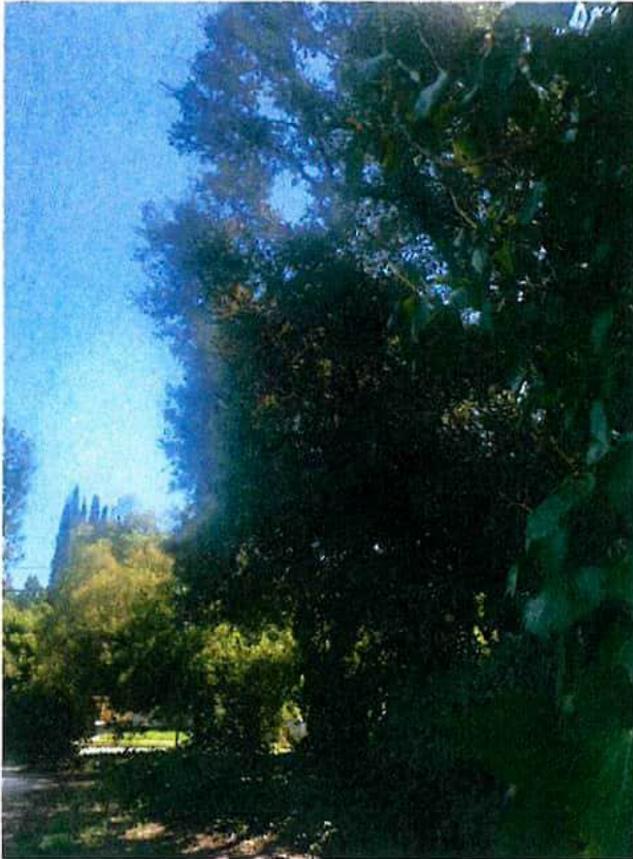


Photo C

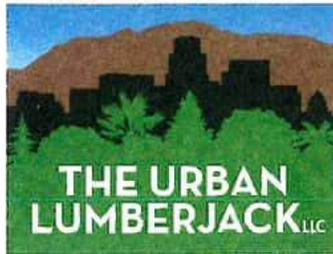


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Tree report  
Elioff residence  
541 South Oak Knoll



A.1

Page 4

## OBSERVATIONS

Developing vacant lots typically entails excavations, whether for pouring foundations or to create subterranean parking garages, resulting in root damage and the soil compaction that attends the process of construction.

Compaction of the soil is harmful, often lethal, to the 90% of the tree roots that are commonly found in the top 24" of the soil, to say nothing of the challenges to a tree posed by the outright severing of such roots that is the unavoidable concomitant to excavation.

This tree has developed asymmetrically to the south in the direction of the subject house as is commonly found when trees develop in the direction of year-round solar access. A close examination of Photo A will reveal, to the left of the power pole, a tangle of chain-link fencing that marks the property line dividing the subject property and the vacant lot at 525 South Oak Knoll. Note the presence of overhanging foliage in this photo which is the reverse angle of photo C.

The canopy of this tree stretches 17' north of the fence and 36' south of the fence. The trunk is located 5' south of the fence.

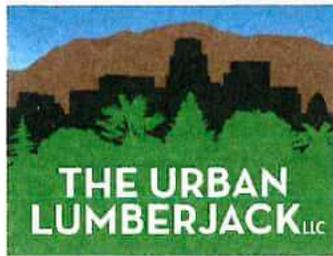
These dimensions tell us that this canopy stretches 31' south of the trunk and only 21' north of the trunk. This in turn informs us that the tension roots – those roots that prevent the toppling of a tree with an unevenly-distributed mass of weight – are located on the northern side of the tree and are anchored within the adjacent vacant lot.



WE-8830A

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Tree report  
 Eliooff residence  
 541 South Oak Knoll

Page 5

## DISCUSSION

The loss of these tension roots could lead to a catastrophic toppling outcome. It needs to be understood that such failures seldom follow hard on the heels of the root-severing events that cause them.

Trees are remarkably stable organisms, and they may remain upright for months or even years after the loss of critical anchoring roots. However, at some point down the road, a storm event with drenching rain followed by powerful winds can stress the compromised tree's support system beyond its diminished capacity – and down it comes. Building contractors fail to understand that such outcomes can result from actions they undertook years before.

Overall, this tree faces 4 potential perils from any forthcoming construction event:

**COMPACTION** of the soil which would destroy valuable roots, both the hair-fine roots that absorb water and nutrients and the larger structural roots.

**SEVERING** of the roots in the course of excavation, diminishing the structural integrity of and presenting challenges to the health of the tree.

**PRUNING** that would head back the tree towards the property line, reducing the vigor of the tree through foliar reduction and exacerbating the tree's asymmetrical weight distribution.

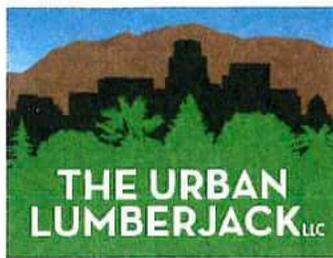
**CHANGES** in the Root Protection Zone of the this tree as development of the vacant lot potentially adds areas of hardscape (diminishing oxygen exchange in that portion of the RPZ and altering the hydration of the soil from rainfall) or landscape (where excavation, installation and irrigation of potential new plants may expose the tree to additional perils from the mortal foe of Oaks in this region, the Oak Root fungus (*Armillaria mellea*) which thrives when irrigation in hot weather encourages it to flourish and to seek hosts.



WE-8820A

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Tree report  
Elioff residence  
541 South Oak Knoll

Page 6

**DISCUSSION** (con't)

When contemplating these threats, it is important to remember that this is a mature tree. See Photo D.

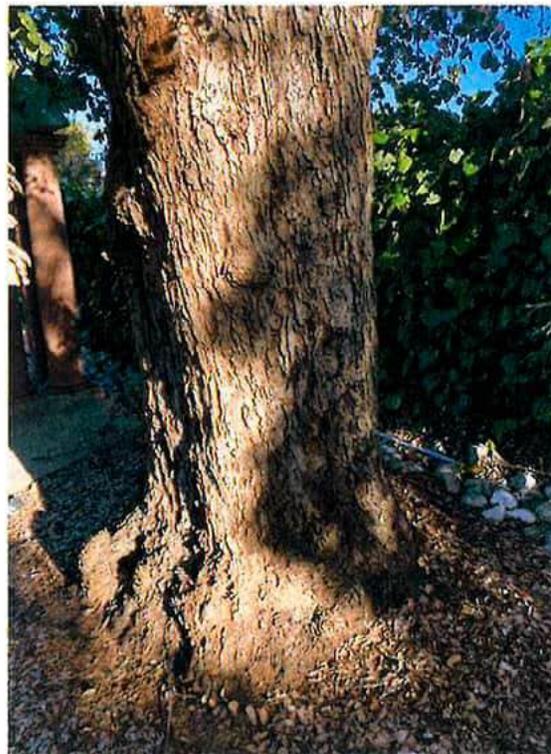


Photo D

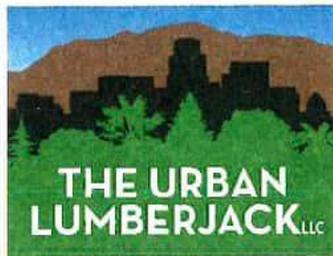
Mature organisms are far less elastic in response to perils to their well-being. What a young tree will readily tolerate may instigate a spiral of decline in an older specimen. Extra care must be exercised to shield this majestic resident from harm.



WE-6830A

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Tree report  
Elioff residence  
541 South Oak Knoll

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## DISCUSSION (con't)

This tree is not, however, over-mature. In Oaks in the Urban Landscape (Costello, Hagen and Jones, University of California Publication 3518, 2011) we read of the Engelmann Oak:

"100 to 200 years is the norm; some specimens, however, have been reported to reach 350 years"

So, if we can agree that this tree was either young at the time of the construction of the firehouse or was planted at the time, then this may well be a tree in its middle years and it is well worth any protection it can be afforded.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The aphorism "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is especially applicable when it refers to trees and how we consider their needs.

Poor outcomes flowing from ill-advised choices that adversely influence trees can take years or even decades before presenting themselves to our detection because of the glacial pace of a tree's metabolism. For that very reason, when defending the well-being of important trees, it is necessary to behave proactively in order to prevent harm from being visited on them in the first place.

To that end, it will be essential to limit the scope of any construction related activity on 525 South Oak Knoll within the critical Root Protection Zone (RPZ) of this noteworthy tree.

The RPZ must be, at a bare minimum, comprised of that portion of the lot at 525 South Oak Knoll that is located within the Drip Zone of the canopy of the tree *in its current configuration* plus 4 additional feet.

Construction is a rough-and-tumble business, and it is of little practical value to inform a construction crew that they must respect the TPZ of a subject and to hope they all remember. Any arborist charged with defending trees during construction can tell you horror stories (I know a few myself) and once the harm is done it would be of little use to remonstrate with an indifferent labor pool.

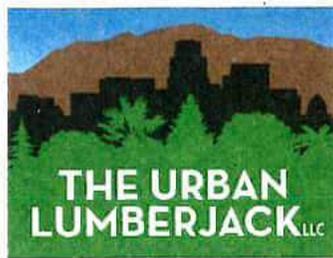


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Tree report  
 Eliooff residence  
 541 South Oak Knoll



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Therefore, before commencement of any phase of construction, a 6-foot high metal chain-link fence supported by 8-foot tall galvanized steel poles sunk 24" below grade into packed sand should be installed to surround the RPZ. There should be a gate installed bearing a padlock to which only the resident of 541 South Oak Knoll would have the key so that maintenance and irrigation may be performed on the tree within the enclosure. This fence should dive into the existing chain-link fence on both its east and west terminus to prevent someone sneaking around the edge of this enclosure to gain access to the RPZ contained within. This fence must be installed before ANY other construction activity is permitted and must remain in place throughout all stages of the property's development - first in and last out as the saying goes. And any alterations of the existing grade within the RPZ must be prohibited.

The City of Pasadena offers an excellent guide for Tree Protection Plans and compliance with the requirements cited therein would go a long way towards safeguarding this tree throughout any forthcoming development, **but these requirements need to be an understood component of the development process from the earliest design phases** in order to avoid complications arising *after* companies have committed themselves to design concepts that would conflict with the mitigations necessary to preserve this asset.

Additional concerns should be addressed from the earliest phases of the design process. For example, the existing chain-link fence currently running along the southern edge of this vacant lot would probably be slated for removal and replacement during the development of this property as it is something of an eyesore. But erection of a masonry fence with the need to trench below such a structure to pour a footing would lead to unacceptable root severing and compaction. Therefore a vinyl or wooden fence should be specified and the spacing of posts for either of those two types of fence must be made flexible to avoid severing important roots should such roots be uncovered.

Finally, the ultimate fate of the area contained within that portion of the RPZ resident on this vacant lot needs to be carefully considered. I urge the City to require that a competent Consulting Arborist be engaged by the (as yet unknown) development firm and attached to this project to safeguard this tree's interest and to advise such a firm from early on as to what steps to take from early on to defend the tree's interests as well as weighing in as to the eventual fate of the area comprising the RPZ. It will be of little use to protect this tree if the installation of a water-greedy turf lawn within the RPZ leads to a lethal outcome for the tree in question.

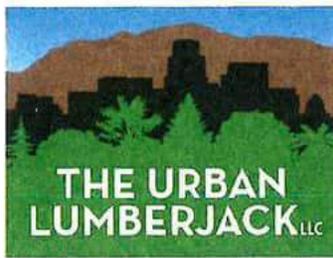


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Elioff residence  
541 South Oak Knoll



A.1

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Photo E

## CONCLUSIONS

In the City of Pasadena's Tree Ordinance, Municipal Code 8.52, we read that one of the primary purposes of the code is to:

"Create favorable conditions for the protection of designated landmark, native and specimen trees, for the benefit of current and future residents of Pasadena."

And here is a prime opportunity to do just that.

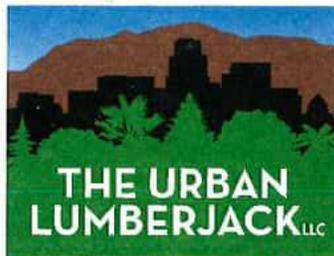


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Elioff residence  
541 South Oak Knoll



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**CONCLUSIONS (con't)**

It will be vitally important to the long-term well-being of this beautiful tree that promoting and protecting its needs and interests be made an inviolable condition of any future development of 525 South Oak Knoll.

With that goal in mind, I am attaching a Supplemental Application for Historical Designation and nominating this majestic specimen for Landmark Tree status.

As a proud recipient of the "Tree City USA" Growth Award, the City of Pasadena can do no less.

Failure to do so would do a real disservice to the neighborhood in which this tree has grown to its present majestic state and would constitute a violation of the spirit and letter of the law of the City of Pasadena – a city with a well-earned reputation for treasuring the trees of its urban forest that constitute such an important part of its historical legacy and future value.

Thanks for your time and attention to these matters and please feel free to get in touch if I may be of service.

Sincerely yours,

Steve Marshall  
ISA Certified Arborist  
Member, The American Society of Consulting Arborists  
The Urban Lumberjack LLC  
CA LIC 740167



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**Takeda, Michi**

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**From:** Amanda Elioff [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 3:45 AM  
**To:** commentsDC; Johnson, Kevin; Cisneros, Stephanie  
**Cc:** Lyon, Jason; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Comments on Development of 511 Oak Knoll

**[⚠] CAUTION:** This email was delivered from the Internet. Do not click links or open attachments unless you **know** the content is safe. Report phish using the Phish Alert Button. For more information about the Phish Alert Button view article "KB0010263" on the DoIT portal.

Dear Planning Department (Mr Johnson and Ms Cisneros)

We sent a prior letter and email (below and attached) commenting on the 505/511 S. Oak Knoll Ave. development, subject of your recent design review. We only recently were forwarded a copy of your report to be presented at City Hall on 24 September 2024. We appreciate your comments on potential design issues and would like to reinforce your findings and offer some additional thoughts as follows:

- The building as presently proposed, is objectionable given its context with the neighborhood in terms of general appearance, volume, height, vertical walls, and lack of trees.
- There is no apparent continuity with adjacent buildings, including historical context and harmony – Additional Buildings (homes) to be taken into consideration in addition to 541 S. Oak Knoll and 500 El Molino:
  - South Oak Knoll at California has two (1.5 story) craftsman houses that are now beautifully repurposed as engineering and architectural offices.
  - On California Blvd between Oak Knoll and El Molino there are three houses on the north side of California that have historical significance and are important to the neighborhood.
  - Oak Knoll, between California and Del Mar also includes two significant single-family residences, and the McKinley School (1911?)
- Protected Trees – drip lines and root bulbs:
  - Oak Tree on 541 Oak knoll that overhangs the applicant’s property (505 and 511 Oak Knoll). The drip line needs to be respected at the surface with the building setback. Tree canopy growth needs to be anticipated. We understand an additional 5 ft setback is required from existing conditions.
  - The tree root bulb (same diameter as tree canopy drip line dimension) also needs to be respected and maintained. Subterranean building footprint needs to respect the root bulb with proper setback and buffer zone for protection and future growth. At present the subterranean wall encroaches on the root bulb by about 10 ft.
  - The entire tree canopy needs to be fenced during construction, so it is protected from foundation drilling equipment, crane swings and so on.
  - Watering of the surface area needs to be avoided during construction and for the permanent gardens to protect the oak tree.
  - Other protected trees should also be respected and unharmed (Base, trunk and Canopy).

- The present design appears to have flat planes on all exterior sides (and interior) with few architectural relief features. This is highly objectionable in light of the neighborhood architecture.
- The vertical walls on the south side will reflect noise from the substation and impact all properties to the south of the development.
- Visual appearance is very inconsistent with the majority of the surrounding properties.
- 4th Floor and total building height
  - It appears the 4th floor has been considered if only to maximize the unit density on the property and to take advantage of the density bonus. The increase in height of the building is highly objectionable and completely inconsistent with the surrounding buildings. Buildings on the north and south are two stories. To the East – across the street is 3 stories, and to the west, the El Molino court is a single story. There is nothing immediately surrounding the property that is 4 stories. We are concerned that the 49 ft – 9-inch height will completely overwhelm the neighborhood. Also it is unclear what elevation the 49 ft-9-inch height is measured from.
  - The interior courtyard is very narrow. Given the building height, little sun will be allowed into the narrow courtyard, especially on the ground floor -a lightwell with moving shadows comes to mind. In addition mimical light will get to the outside walls on the first floor, rendering the first-floor units very undesirable to live in.
- Other Impacts
  - The exterior corridors as shown will be lit 24/7 for access to the units. This will certainly be detrimental to the surrounding properties to the North, South and West of the building. It would be like strip lighting, or bright stripes around the building, and again, unlike any building in the neighborhood.
  - There is a 5 ft-3 in. setback around the building – how is this to be maintained?
  - Other trees on the property, especially those near the property lines should be maintained as they help mitigate noise from the adjacent substation.

Further considerations we will likely address in subsequent correspondence:

- Design densification seizes on commercial opportunities to the detriment of the neighborhood. In addition to design objections, there will be increased traffic, and lack of street parking. We are concerned about traffic on Oak Knoll Ave, California Blvd and other neighboring streets, as well as availability of intermittent street parking with the increase of 46 additional units. We will comment on this in subsequent correspondence.
- Please consult with Pasadena Water and Power on this development, considering that they are a significant adjacent property owner.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email and of our prior letter of September 14, 2024

Amanda Elioff and Brian Fulcher



July 28, 2025

**From:** Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff      541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101  
David Fairris and Chris Saylor      534 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101  
Marwin and Nancy Goble      534 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101  
Art and Buff Gontier      534 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101  
Christine Cooper      534 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

**To:** Pasadena Planning and Community Development  
Department Design and Historic Preservation  
175 Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101

**Attention:** Kevin Johnson and Stephanie Cisneros

**Subject:** **511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA**  
*Proposed Multi-Family Development*  
*Comments on Design and Environmental Review Submittal for Project*

Dear Mr. Johnson and Ms. Cisneros,

This letter follows comments made by letter in September of 2024 (Attachment A) on both the **Concept Design Review** for the proposed multi-family development at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue submitted to the City's Planning and Community Development Department and the Design Commissioners' written comments on that design. We have been able to see the subsequent review documents via the Planning Department (on screen access only).<sup>1</sup> While we embrace many of the recommendations enumerated therein, we wish to provide further comments and recommendations as neighbors of the future residents at 511 S. Oak Knoll. Our comments relate to the building design as well as environmental and practical concerns such as historic tree protection, excessive traffic, noise and light, rainwater run-off, parking, and trash collection, among other considerations.

---

<sup>1</sup> We understand that PDF files will be available at the time of the Planning Commission hearing notice, but that is only two weeks before the meeting – not sufficient time to adequately study the revised building and property design proposal.

### General Comments on Building Design and Structure

Other than the exterior finishes, it appears that the recently submitted building design (Figure 1) has changed little since the **Concept Design Submittal** reviewed in September 2024. Most troubling is that comments from the Pasadena Planning Department have not been fully or adequately addressed in the revised building design and landscaping plans.



Figure 1: Big Box Building - Front Elevation

Among the recommendations from Pasadena Planning and Community Development were the following:

- Consider more height variations to minimize the apparent visual impact of the large-scale building.
- Front entrances to units facing Oak Knoll Avenue should appear as entrances to the street.
- Change the opening to the interior courtyard such that pedestrians (on Oak Knoll Avenue) can also see the garden.

It is disappointing to see that, at this second revised design submission stage, few substantial changes and improvements have been made to render this project more acceptable to the community (or, for that matter, to prospective condominium buyers). The suggested design improvements would minimize and/or eliminate many of the visual and neighborhood impacts of the original building design and improve the building for the future residents.

### Proposed Building Design Size, Shape, Height and Location

The proposed building is **about 25% larger** than the **City of Pasadena Zoning and Design Standards** allow for this lot. While this scale may be allowed due to the affordable housing aspect, a far more creative and thoughtful design is needed to reduce the very objectionable visual and neighborhood impacts. For example, allowing more green space and light between the adjacent properties on all sides and height variation(s) would greatly reduce the building's objectionable "Big Box" appearance (Figure 2). This will benefit both the future building residents and the existing neighbors, be more consistent with City of Pasadena Design Guidelines, and be more in-line (context) with the existing buildings and single family residences on South Oak Knoll Avenue that date back to 1905, 1907, and 1917. In other words, the proposed building design should be far more harmonized and visually integrated to blend

with the existing neighborhood rather than an awkward “Big Box” structure completely stretched to the property line limits and significantly greater in height than all adjacent structures.



Figure 2: Box Shape from all Sides towers over and overwhelms all adjacent single and multi-family residences.

There are several good examples of large developments in the neighborhood that exhibit such desirable design aspects. For example, we would point to Granite Park, a multi-family development on San Pasqual Street, where additional parking requirements imposed by a prior mitigation contributed to a denser and elegant development. In the Granite Park example, the 3 to 5-story building steps up gradually to blend with the neighboring structures (Figure 3). One of the neighboring buildings is a two-story historic condominium. Surrounding landscaping also helps Granite Park graciously blend with the neighboring buildings.



**Figure 3: Good Example:** Granite Park multi-family development on San Pasqual Street just east of Lake Street. Steps-up from 3 to 5 stories to not overwhelm the adjacent historic two-story property and three-story condo next to it. Reduces the objectionable “Big Box” visual impact and with more surrounding open areas, allows more greenspace, plantings, trees and natural light for neighbors AND space for the occupants of the units.

### The Current Proposed Design Needs Significant Revisions

- The proposed building as presently configured clearly towers above the adjacent two-story buildings on all three residential sides. Designers should add more variation to the height – similar to the Granite Park example described and illustrated above.
- The proposed building extends almost to the existing lot lines with only 3 feet between the proposed building structure and property lines on the north and west sides. On portions of the north and south sides, there is no space for plants or comfortable exiting. The minimal three-foot clearance (shown on drawings) should also be checked for emergency exiting requirements (e.g., fire/life safety considerations), and if there is sufficient clearance for construction operations.
- The building design “turns its back” on the neighboring residents – with all windows on the top three of four floors only facing inwards toward the private courtyard while towering over all adjacent buildings and pressing its exterior outward to virtually to the surrounding property lines (Figure 4). As discussed further below, some windows may face exterior perimeter hallways, but this also presents a design issue.

All of these issues could be greatly improved through better design.



**Figure 4: Interior Courtyard – Building 4.** All green space is used for a private interior courtyard. Sharing (or exposing) the green space with the adjacent neighboring properties and residents would reduce the visual impact of the super-sized, Big Box building. Please note the surrounding building heights are as follows: Building 3 – 2 stories, Building 5 – 2 stories, Buildings 6 and 6a – 1.5 stories, Building 7 – 2 stories, Building 8 – 3 stories, building 9 - 2 stories. The electrical substation is a flat (at grade) slab with transformers placed.

### Allow Natural Light into the Units and Neighborhood Views of the Green Space

- Our understanding is that the present building design attempts to follow the Pasadena “City of Gardens” guidelines that suggest a defined square footage for courtyard green areas. These guidelines were based on the City of Pasadena’s zoning ordinance **that did not allow more than three stories or more than 48 units per acre**. The proposed addition of the **fourth floor** and a long narrow courtyard (Figure 4) means that direct sunlight will be rare or non-existent for many of the units. Seems to be a glaring design omission to restrict natural light. Refer to Attachment B for a courtyard sun study.
- An alternative solution would be to have the green space on the outside of the building, allowing more light into the units and shared green space with the neighborhood and adjacent properties. Trees and planting in this space would also help reduce the size impacts of the building (and noise – further discussed below). In addition, the north side upper two floor units would have valuable views of the mountains, lower units would get more direct sunlight.
- From the Oak Knoll Avenue sidewalk, pedestrians passing the building will only see the courtyard green space when standing directly in front of the small opening. **This was a concept design review comment.** However, the dimension of the opening to the interior courtyard has not changed – only the upper-level walkways across the opening have been eliminated. So, at

sidewalk level – there is no improvement, and little opportunity for others to enjoy the interior courtyard.

### Noise

- Much of the building design has been developed to reduce noise impacts to the future residents from the Pasadena Water and Power (PWP) substation which abuts to a portion of the south side of the property. Rather than the elaborate concept of exterior perimeter hallways, why not consider double-pane glass and sound attenuating construction materials? Those of us who live next to the substation find that noise is minimal with single-pane windows closed. For occupants of the proposed multi-family building, double-pane windows would substantially eliminate the constant substation “hum”. Additional sound attenuation could likely be achieved with the use of specialized construction materials, ***but not in a manner that would reflect noise*** to adjacent properties and residences.
- We are also concerned that the proposed four stories of vertical walls will reflect and amplify noise for the adjacent properties surrounding the existing substation. The City must require credible acoustic analysis by a noise and vibration specialist to study this impact and what mitigations are needed to minimize and/or eliminate noise impacts. This analysis should also include cumulative noise impacts of 47 new HVAC units-that would be needed for the current design.

### Excess Light will Impact the Neighbors

- The exterior/perimeter enclosed hallways designed for noise mitigation for residents will have an impact on all neighbors. These hallways provide the only access to the building units as well as emergency egress. As such, they must be lit 24/7 to meet Building Code requirements. Lights will, therefore, shine 24/7 from the perimeter hallway windows onto the adjacent properties. This arrangement will be very objectionable to the residents on all sides. The City’s design and environmental reviews should consider this “***beacon impact***” on the neighbors. The 24/7 lights will also use more power, therefore, considered wasteful.

### Historic Oak Tree Encroachment, Care and Protection

The historic oak tree located on the north side of the historic (1917) Fire Engine House building (now a single-family residence) is a blessing to the community. It must be kept healthy and thriving.

- The distance from the proposed subterranean parking garage walls (including all temporary excavation ground support) to the existing historic oak tree has been the subject of much discussion between the City, Property Developer and experienced arborists. This matter continues as an on-going discussion (and current field investigations) within the City’s mandatory tree care and preservation requirements. We applaud this focus and look forward to a satisfactory resolution – which could include changes to the foundation wall footprint and overlying building designs. During all phases of building construction, surface-level tree protections such as chain-link fencing and establishment of a strictly enforced “exclusion zone” will be required.
- Recognition, care and protection of this historic oak tree is critically important to us. It is a very distinctive feature of the neighborhood. It is, therefore, essential (with no exceptions) that the proposed building design (as well as all subterranean construction) fully address the tree location, shape, size and health as well as all care and protection measures needed for:

- Sustained health and stability
- Roots and branches including extended drip line allowances.
- Planned and future irrigation and landscaping
- Detrimental impacts from all construction equipment and excavation shoring needs.

As can be seen in the Figures 5 and 6 below, as currently designed, the building foundation wall would intrude as ***much as 10 feet into the Tree Root Protection Zone***:

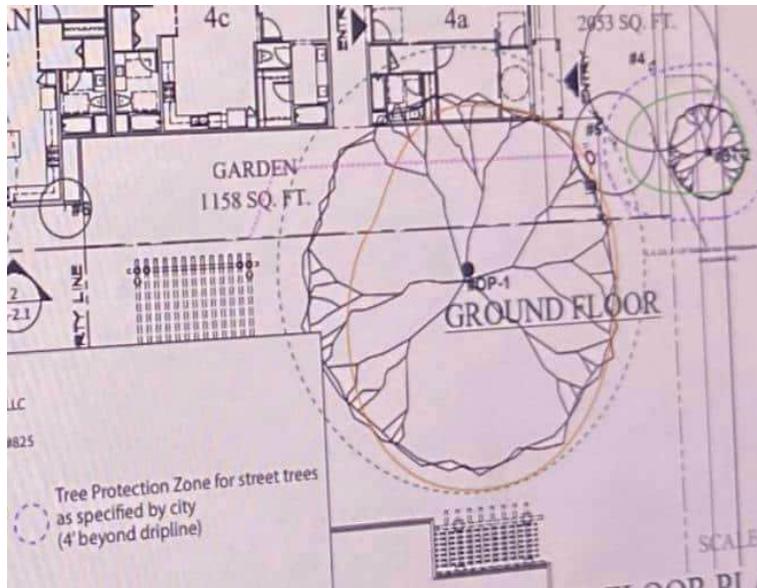


Figure 5: Tree shown with **Root Protection Zone** as shown on design submittal. Dotted line is on ground floor- that is **different** from the foundation level wall that extends outwards and further encroaches into the designated **Tree Root Protection Zone** (see next Figure).

Thus, based on the present building design drawings, the basement walls encroach on the clearly identified **Tree Root Protection Zone**. Additionally, temporary building excavation shoring design and excavation methods for any subterranean structure have not been provided but shoring materials will of necessity be placed on the outside of the building foundation walls – such that shoring (e.g., piles and lagging) **will further encroach** on the tree roots and overhanging canopy. These conditions are unacceptable and must be corrected with a revised foundation wall design to avoid damage to the tree. We note that this design comment was also made in September 2024.

In addition to the permanent and shoring wall locations, there must also be an acceptable arborist study for methods to protect and monitor the tree branches and roots during construction, with agreed mitigations and monitoring frequencies. We would expect that the City would have an active role in this process and enforce all mitigations that would consider:

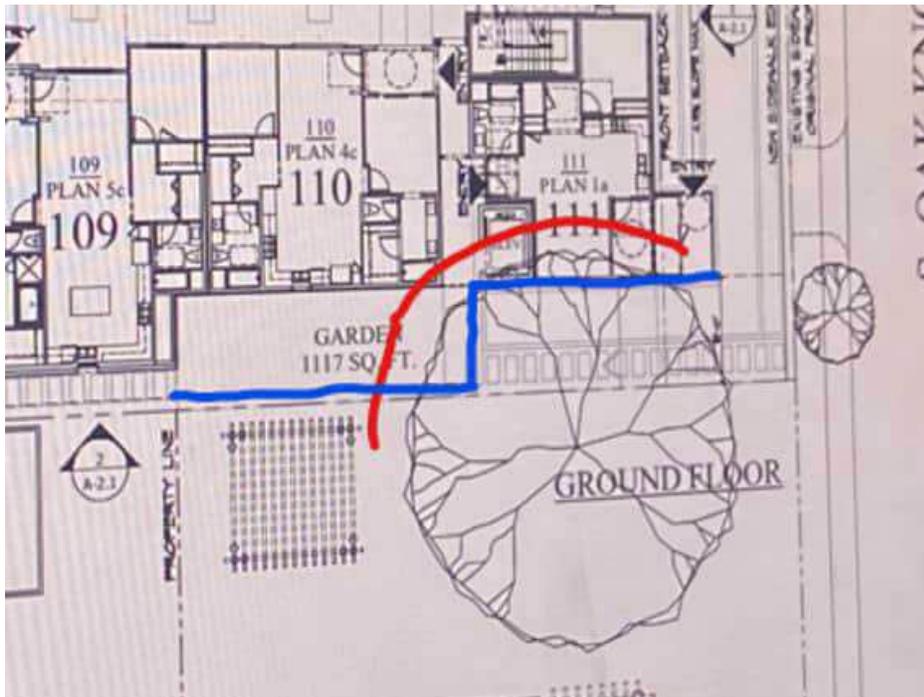


Figure 6: Tree Root Protection Zone (Red line) shown against Foundation Wall below grade (blue Line)

- Installation of excavation shoring walls (and the construction of the building above grade) will require tall, heavy equipment placed close to (and possibly under) the tree branches (canopy). The use of drill rigs and other heavy equipment on the tree branches could cause serious damage to the tree.
- Compaction of soil above and around the roots is known to cause severe harm to oak trees. No limits to use of heavy equipment above the root protection zone must be established.
- As the City's arborist pointed out during an initial site visit, the final landscaping is also critical to the health and survival of the tree. The landscaping in the area of the historic oak tree and how it is maintained must be addressed and be considered as part of the formal recorded building and property design, review and approval process.
- One other note is about the historic oak tree. All of the East Elevation proposal drawings show the tree located over 25 feet from the south property line. The tree is actually about two feet south of the south property line; shared with the historic Engine House. This representation on the elevation (Figure 6) may mislead the reviewers and needs to be corrected.



Figure 7: Historic oak tree shown incorrectly on East Elevation of the proposal drawings. It is actually located only a few feet from the south property line (red dashed line) and therefore overhangs the proposed building development far more significantly than shown.

### Other Existing Trees on the Property

The building design plans show that ALL trees on the lot are to be removed, even though some have already been designated as “**protected.**” This intention would result in a barren, treeless property where trees could have been saved. We encourage the building developers to plan for, and request that designers incorporate, the existence of tall, mature trees, especially in front of the property along Oak Knoll Avenue. We understand from the plans that the large trees between the street and sidewalk must be protected in accordance with City regulations. In addition, there are two existing, tall slender palm trees near the south and west fence lines. It is suggested that these trees remain in place to maintain some continuity with the neighborhood and similar trees on nearby lots, and most significantly along El Molino Avenue.

### Municipal Utility Systems and Services

#### Storm Drainage System and Capacity

- The property is approximately 0.63 acres (per drawings 28,350 SF) and currently absorbs most of the rainwater that falls on the ground. With the placement of the proposed building and concrete slabs over +/-90% on the lot, rainwater will be prevented from being absorbed into the ground to recharge groundwater and reduce local area run-off. The City should require suitable cisterns to collect, store, then re-cycle rainwater.
- Regarding storm drain capacity, do engineering calculations show that the significant additional run-off due to the hardscaping can be accommodated by the existing storm drains? Note that during heavy rains, our observations are that the South Oak Knoll Avenue roadway curbs significantly overflow on the west side. At times, rainwater leads to a trough width of over 8 feet – that is, water as much as 8 inches deep reaches about halfway between the curb and crown of the street. Unless stormwater is properly addressed, the additional runoff will flow

down Oak Knoll to the inlet near California Avenue. Please ensure stormwater capacity is addressed.

### Trash Collection

It seems like trash day is every day on S. Oak Knoll, as we are inundated daily with dumpsters – including those from neighboring streets – being placed at the curb pending pick-up by one of multiple service providers. The photo (Figure 8) is an example of a dumpster brought in from Hudson or California Avenue to be picked up in front of the 511 property. With this development requiring additional parking on the street (subterranean parking is considered insufficient to accommodate residents' needs), an alternative solution must be found for where these “foreign dumpsters” from condominiums on other streets are placed on “trash pick-up” days. This is not a frivolous concern – rather the additional dumpsters along with parking restrictions such as street cleaning, and additional dumpsters from the 511 property will have real impacts.



*Figure 8: Trash Dumpster on 28 May 25, from 685 Hudson (or California) Avenue*

### Parking Impacts – During Construction and After Building Occupancy

- The 511 S. Oak Knoll lot is rectangular with the narrower dimension adjacent to S. Oak Knoll. With 47 residential units planned, both residents and guests will most likely require more parking spaces than the 65 underground spaces presently illustrated on the proposed building design drawings. Traffic overflows into the street (even if only on a temporary parking basis), will exceed existing curbside capacity. This will severely impact current parking on S. Oak Knoll Avenue where many residents currently park.
- The current use of street parking on S. Oak Knoll Avenue includes the following:
  - Local residents with permits (day) and guests
  - Employees and shoppers at local businesses
  - Contractors, delivery and service vehicles
  - Pasadena Water and Power vehicles
- The building developer needs to fully consider additional underground parking to ensure that there are sufficient parking spaces available on a permanent basis for all of the above current

uses plus the new building's residents and guests, their service personnel and contractors working on the property.

- During the construction period, there should be a limitation on the use of street parking for construction vehicles. As an example, we would point to a nearby building construction site on East California Boulevard, where all construction vehicles park on the property under development or elsewhere in a manner so as not to impact and further congest on-street parking and traffic flows.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

In summary, we are requesting:

- Reved design to change the apparent scale of building (reduce Big Box shape and uniform height) to create more continuity and harmony with the neighboring buildings. Including more green space on the exterior and height variations would help achieve this.
- Review perimeter hallway design concept as it uses additional space and impacts neighbors.
- Move building – AND Underground walls away from the significant Oak Tree
- Check noise and runoff impacts.
- Add parking and find trash solutions.

We believe we have a situation with “conflicting and competing” requirements between Pasadena Zoning and the State of California’s “Override” for housing density. We must find a way to balance these competing requirements and not to summarily set aside current Pasadena Planning requirements to the detriment of the existing residents.

Please find a way to make this an example of a “good project,” one that allows an equitable, sensible and harmonized building and property use development, and not a visual and neighborhood disaster ending with “let’s not let that happen again” conclusion. This proposed building could be such that a positive example of a “good project” on South Oak Knoll Avenue is achieved.

Sincerely,



Residents and Owners of properties on S. Oak Knoll Avenue

Cc: D Ewing

### **Attachments:**

A – Prior letter to City of Pasadena (September 2024)

B – Sun Study

Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff  
541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue  
Pasadena CA 91101  
213.422.4987

A.3

September 15, 2024

Pasadena Planning & Community Development Department  
Design and Historic Preservation  
175 Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101

Attention: Kevin Johnson

**Subject: 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA  
Proposed Multi-Family Development  
Comments on Design Review Submittal for Project**

---

Dear Mr. Johnson and the Pasadena Planning Department,

We are writing to provide comments on the subject proposed development submitted for the property located at 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue. This location borders on the north side of our property. We live at 541 South Oak Knoll in the only single-family home adjacent to the proposed development. Our house is an *historic home* that was formerly Engine House 34 for the City of Pasadena Fire Department and has been restored for use as a family residence. The building is listed on the Pasadena City Historic Register and was designed in a Mediterranean Revival style by well-known Pasadena architect, Joseph J. Blick. The building was completed in 1917 and includes inlaid tilework by Ernest A. Batchelder. Please see Attachment A for more information on the building and its historic significance. We have also included two photos of the restored Engine House. Please note also that several other houses, from the 1905 and 1907 era, are located immediately south of our home.

In addition to the important historic context, there is a large and very mature oak tree on our property on the north side. While this tree is located on our property, its roots and canopy overlay a portion of the 511 South Oak Knoll property and proposed development. A formal Arborist Report has already been submitted to Pasadena Planning, but also attached for convenience (Attachment B). The site plan for the proposed development at 511 South Oak Knoll submitted to Pasadena Planning for review shows that the wall of its subterranean parking garage will significantly encroach on the tree roots by about 10 feet. Similarly, it appears the above grade walls will also encroach on the tree's drip line. City of Pasadena requires a set-back from the drip line (and corresponding roots) of at least five (5) feet. Clearly this is a violation of the tree restrictions and would harm the tree that must be carefully maintained. (please see Figure 1 below). Furthermore, the site plan of the proposed development shows a garden area under the existing oak tree. Watering of this area will harm the tree.

Solutions to the differential height and architectural style of the proposed development at 511 South Oak Knoll to both our and other immediately adjacent two-story houses and condos and as well as the distance to the existing mature oak tree would be to revise the layout of the proposed building(s) for additional distance (mandatory clearance) from the tree – both the subterranean and the above grade walls. Additionally, stepping back the upper floors of the proposed building development would also help with the visual transition between our single-family two-story home and the massive proposed new building.

The proposed four-story building – having a footprint generally fully extending (maxed-out) to the property line, with all stories extending vertically, will substantially overwhelm this neighborhood in several ways: Please consider the following.

- No other buildings on South Oak Knoll (and nearby El Molino) are four stories high. They are typically, one, two and three stories only. The proposed building plan submitted is “maxed-out” to the lot line at all levels. For context with the neighborhood, the height should be reduced to not more than three stories. Four stories might be acceptable if the upper two levels are sufficiently set back to reduce the appearance of the massive structure next to our single-family two-story home as well as the smaller two-story apartments and condos located on the west and north sides of the property at 511 South Oak Knoll.
- Four stories constructed vertically will prevent natural light from entering the surrounding buildings. The two-story buildings on the north and west sides of the property will have no sunlight! The upper two floors of the new building should, at a minimum be stepped back to allow natural light into these residences.
- The four-story vertical walls of the proposed development will also reflect noise emanating from the Pasadena Power and Water electrical sub-station located to south of the 511 South Oak Knoll property. At present, this noise is somewhat dissipated due to the existing open space. Consider the following.
  - Those of us who live next to the substation already tolerate the constant noise it produces.
  - The proposed high vertical four-story wall located opposite the north side of the substation will amplify the sound for the people who live adjacent to the substation – while protecting those in the new building.
  - Again, we believe stepping back the upper two floors (those higher than the existing substation walls) would reduce the noise reflection, but a noise and vibration expert must be consulted.

As for the architectural intent, it seems like the 511 South Oak Knoll building designer is not attempting to respect design elements from any buildings located immediately adjacent to the proposed development or on the block. As we were not able to fully read the design presentation on a computer screen at Pasadena Planning Department, we could not determine if any of the existing local architectural features were carried through in the proposed building development plan.

In addition to comments on the size, height and shape of the proposed massive building, this 46-unit development will have many impacts on the South Oak Knoll Avenue community including, the following:

- **Traffic and Public Safety**
  - There are already speeding cars on Oak Knoll Avenue and the intersection at Oak Knoll and California suffers from accidents frequently.
  - Additional traffic studies will be needed to see if traffic lights will now be required at that intersection.

**Pasadena Planning Department**

Re Proposed 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue Development

Page 3 of 7

- **Parking**
  - Street parking, especially during the daytime is currently congested.
  - Visitors and workers at the new building will only add to the current parking shortage, and local residents living on Oak Knoll will be forced to search to parking elsewhere.
- **Surface Drainage Issues**
  - As an adjacent property owner, we are also concerned about drainage from the new development. Currently the 511 South Oak Knoll lot is “undeveloped” and as such, absorbs much of the rainwater. When there are heavy rains, surface water from the property frequently spills over onto the sidewalk and into the street.
  - The property developer will need to address heavy rain conditions and where the run-off discharges. This should be part of the mandatory permanent SWPPP and other environmentally sensitive plans and facilities incorporated into the proposed development.

In summary, it is our view that this project will **significantly impact and overwhelm** our neighborhood in many ways. The scale of the building plan dimensions, and height needs to be reduced to be consistent with our neighborhood for the many reasons cited above.

Please feel free to contact us at any time for more information and informal discussions.

Regards,

Amanda Elioff, PE and Brian Fulcher, P.Eng.



Sent by email to [commentsdc@cityofPasadena.net](mailto:commentsdc@cityofPasadena.net)

cc: Jason Lyon, District 7

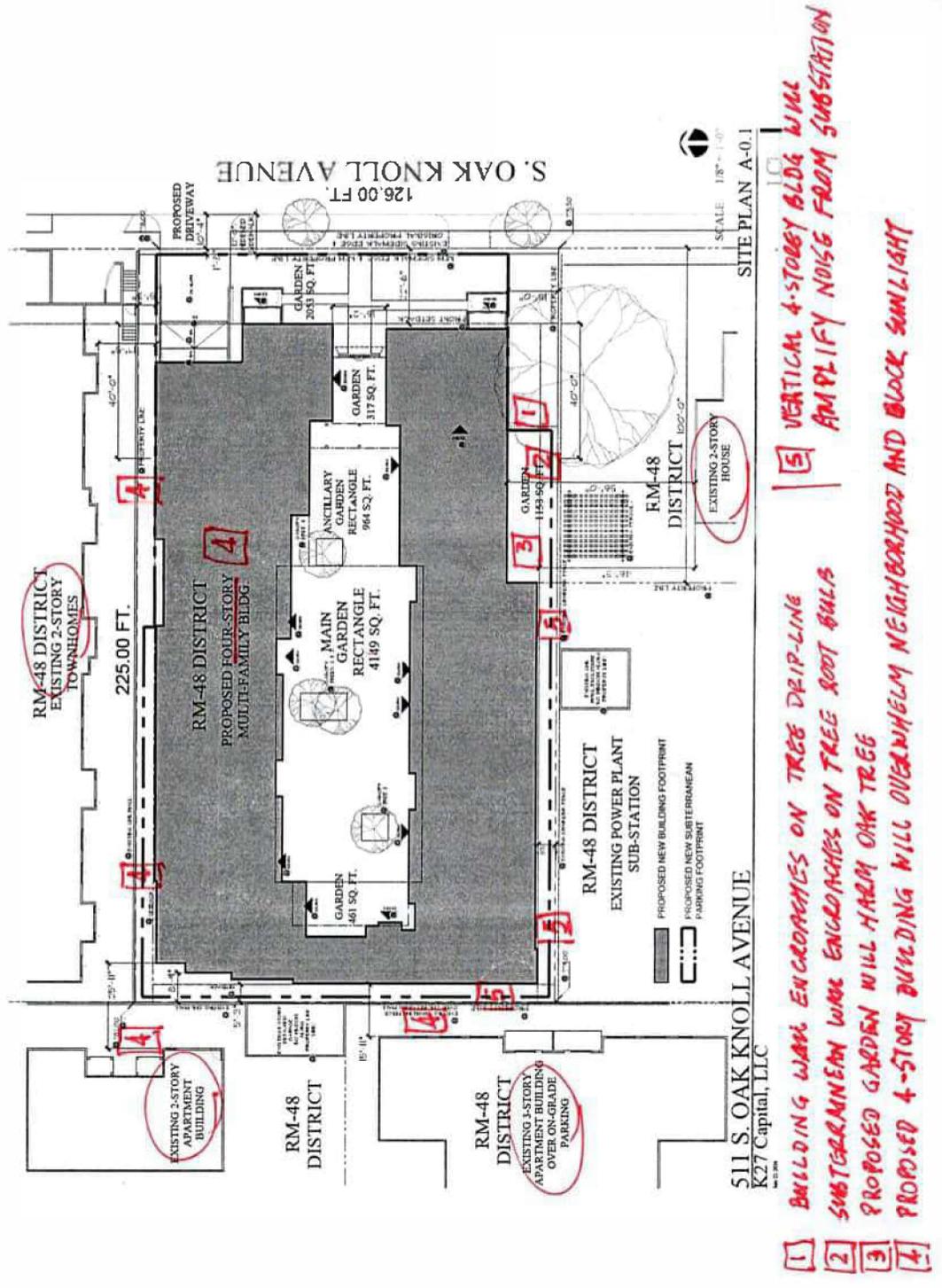
Attachment A – Historic Memo on Pasadena Fire Department Engine House 34

Attachment B – Arborist Report on the Existing Mature Oak Tree Located at 541 South Oak Knoll Avenue

**Photos of Historic 541 South Oak Knoll (views from Northeast and from East)**



Figure 1 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA  
 Proposed Development Site Plan with Comments



**Pasadena Planning Department**

Re Proposed 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue Development

Page 6 of 7

ATTACHMENT A HISTORIC MEMO

INCLUDED IN LETTER A.1

# 511 S. OAK KNOLL SUN STUDY

Attachment B



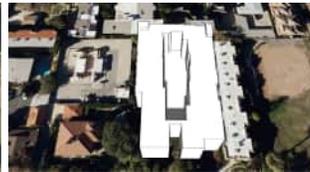
SUMMER SOLSTICE 6 AM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 7 AM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 8 AM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 9 AM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 10 AM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 11 AM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 12 PM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 1 PM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 2 PM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 3 PM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 4 PM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 5 PM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 6 PM



SUMMER SOLSTICE 7 PM



WINTER SOLSTICE 7 AM



WINTER SOLSTICE 8 AM



WINTER SOLSTICE 9 AM



WINTER SOLSTICE 10 AM



WINTER SOLSTICE 11 AM



WINTER SOLSTICE 12 PM



WINTER SOLSTICE 1 PM



WINTER SOLSTICE 2 PM



WINTER SOLSTICE 3 PM



WINTER SOLSTICE 4 PM



WINTER SOLSTICE 5 PM

 Outlook

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**511 Development Comments on Noise report**

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**From** Amanda Elioff <ae01@msn.com>

**Date** Mon 10/6/2025 10:47 AM

**To** Cisneros, Stephanie <scisneros@cityofpasadena.net>; Kevin Johnson <kevinjohnson@cityofpasadena.net>

**Cc** Pam Thryet <pthyret@ci.pasadena.ca.us>; brian.fulcher21@hotmail.com <brian.fulcher21@hotmail.com>

 1 attachment (4 MB)

September Letter to Planning - Noise Assessments - 06 Oct 25.pdf;

Good morning, Stephanie and Kevin. Thank you for forwarding to us the noise report addressing the subject building height and substation noise. Upon reading and a bit more research, we have additional comments on the memo and noise impacts from the proposed development.

Please take a look and forward staff and the design commissioners for consideration with their reviews.

Thanks in advance  
Amanda and Brian

Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff  
541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue  
Pasadena CA 91101  
213.422.4987

A. 4

06 Oct 25

Pasadena Planning and Community Development  
Department Design and Historic Preservation  
175 Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101

**Attention:** Kevin Johnson and Stephanie Cisneros

**Subject:** **511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA**  
*Proposed Multi-Family Development*  
*Comments on Noise and Vibration Evaluation Studies by the Property Developer*

---

Dear Mr. Johnson and Ms. Cisneros,

This letter follows our comments made by letter in July 2025 on the most recent Design Review submitted to the City in March 2025. Since that time, Amanda met with you 09 Sep 25 when many issues and concerns were openly addressed and our letter dated 28 Jul 25 was discussed. We greatly appreciate your time reviewing the comments with Amanda.

This correspondence is focused on **noise and vibration studies** for the proposed subject development. We are concerned that the proposed four stories of vertical walls will reflect and amplify noise to the adjacent properties around the existing substation. After reading the latest report (MD Acoustics, LLC - listed below) and some further discussions with others experienced in this field, we request the City require an additional and more comprehensive acoustical analyses by a noise and vibration specialist to study the impact of the building height next to the substation as well as the significant additional impacts of the building generated noise(s) when the building is occupied. Specifically, the impact of 46 HVAC units operating on the roof along with the substation noise. The report should study the impacts on existing residents for daytime and nighttime, and weekends considering current ambient conditions (day and night), and what mitigations are needed to minimize and/or eliminate these impacts. While the MD Acoustics report appears to provide a noise and vibration study related to reflection of substation noise, it falls short on many other critical requirements and measurements to assess contributing noise impacts on neighboring properties and residents directly resulting from the proposed building development.

The noise and vibration report we have received to date is also attached for reference.

**MD Acoustics, LLC, 01 July 2025**

510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue – Noise Evaluation/Survey, Review Memo and Substation Noise,  
City of Pasadena

This report is very relevant to the current building design and construction as well as all adjacent properties. The study parameters (as stated) and criteria used includes:

- 4-story building (height = undisclosed)
- 46 living units
- 6-foot-tall perimeter block wall at grade
  - Assumed to be located on the property line between the proposed building development and the existing Pasadena Water and Power transformer yard.

Letter to K. Johnson and S Cisneros

Date – 30 Oct 25 Typo – 6 October 2025

Page 2 of 3

The following further summaries our observations, comments and recommendations based on the above-referenced report and additional needs to achieve a full and comprehensive noise and vibration evaluation of the proposed building development.

1. As the report is considered a formal engineering work product, it needs to be stamped by a California registered Professional Engineer with experience and credentials for the work described. This is customary to assert authentication and reliance.
2. Noise measured at two monitoring stations was determined to be at the same dB level **with and without** the presence of the proposed 4-story building.
  - a. Ambient noise emanating from the Pasadena Water and Power transformer yard was **physically measured** in the field
  - b. Ambient noise emanating from the Pasadena Water and Power transformer yard was **computer modeled** with the presence of the proposed building in place and found to be the same in the absence of the proposed building.
3. The report makes no reference to the following noise and vibration related materials (or systems) potentially incorporated into the proposed building development.
  - a. Noise attenuating materials
  - b. Noise suppression / absorption materials
4. Conclusions of the report state that presence of the proposed 4-story building located basically on the property line between the proposed building development and the Pasadena Water and Power transformer yard will have no net effect on the noise level. This is very surprising - especially in light of the detailed graphic elements (noise and vibration distribution levels) included in the report that illustrate denser and redistributed noise levels (generally southward) from the proposed 4-story building development.

Apparent **omissions and shortfalls** in the MD Acoustics report include:

1. No evaluation of the noise and vibration levels (field measured or computer modelled) considered for other areas of the site such as the northwest corner of the Pasadena Water and Power transformer yard or along the west perimeter (where 2 and 3-story apartment buildings are located)
2. No discussion on “reflected noise and vibration” levels occurring as a result of the proposed 4-story building development as well as resulting from other noise enhancing conditions.
3. No discussion or admission(s) of additional generated noise and vibrations from the proposed building development, say from the following.
  - a. Roof-top air conditioning units (possibly as many as 46 separate units operating at the same time day or night)
  - b. Other building mechanical systems
  - c. Traffic generated noise

Proposed building design size, shape, height and location:

It appears that the proposed building is about 25% larger than the City of Pasadena Zoning and Design Standards allowances for this lot and **extends to within only three feet of the property line** on most of the north and south sides (the sides adjacent to other residential properties). Therefore, far more creative and thoughtful design is needed to reduce the building impacts and, in this case, noise and vibrations; both reflected and self-generated. In other words, the proposed building

Letter to K. Johnson and S Cisneros  
Date – 30 Oct 25 6 October 2025  
Page 3 of 3

design should be far more harmonized from a noise and vibration perspective to decisively mitigate highly probable noise and vibration impacts on the neighboring buildings and residents.

### Conclusions

We believe the current noise and vibration study (MD Acoustics) should be reworked (or a separate report prepared) to address the observations as well as apparent shortfalls described above. The building designer must make every effort to mitigate noise and vibration impacts to the neighboring buildings and residents with appropriate and creative building configuration and construction materials.

As described above, we are still very concerned about the very high likelihood of increased noise and vibration impacts from both reflected noise in addition to pervasive building generated noise, without assertive mitigation measures from the outset of the building design and not adopt a reactive “wait-see” approach.

We hope that the City will insist on the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive noise and vibration report resulting in a well-engineered building that minimizes (and eliminates) noise and vibrations impacts.

Sincerely,



Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff  
541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

### Attachments:

**Report dated 01 Jul 25:** MD Acoustics, LLC, 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue – Noise Evaluation Survey, Review Memo and Substation Noise, City of Pasadena

July 1, 2025

Mr. Brian Taylor  
Taylor & Clark  
1968 S Coast Hwy #3043  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

**Subject: 510 S. Oak Knoll Ave – Noise Evaluation/Survey, Review and Memo for Substation Noise – City of Pasadena, CA**

Dear Mr. Taylor:

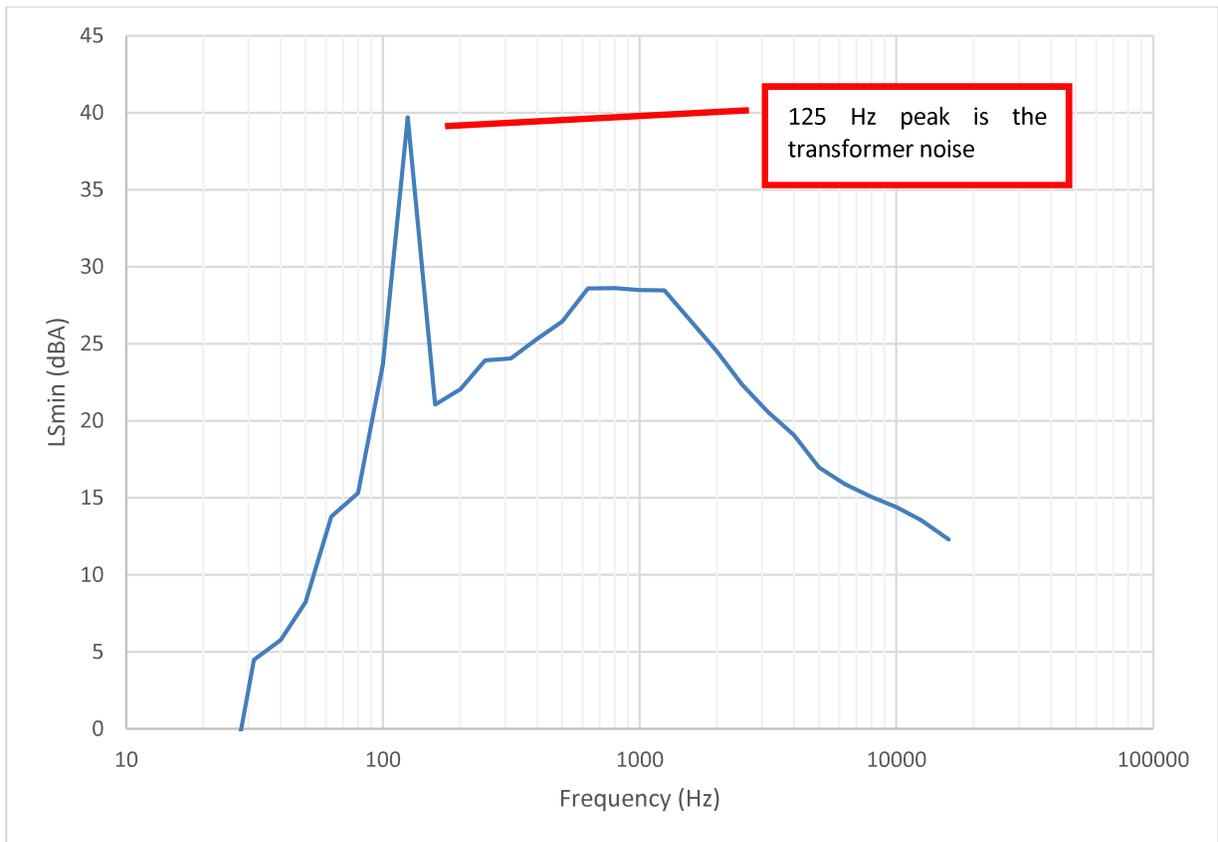
MD Acoustics, LLC (MD) has completed an assessment of future ambient noise due to the nearby power substation for the residence located at 541 S. Oak Knoll Ave.

The purpose of this memo is to assess any change in the power substation noise level at 541 S. Oak Knoll Ave. due to the proposed construction of a four-story multifamily building and a six-foot-tall perimeter wall to be located at 510 S. Oak Knoll Ave.

Sound propagation from the power substation can be predicted using physical and computational models. MD utilized SoundPLAN computational software to create existing condition and future proposed condition models, which were used to calculate and illustrate the change in noise level due to the construction of a four-story building and a wall. Detailed outputs from the model are included in Appendix A.

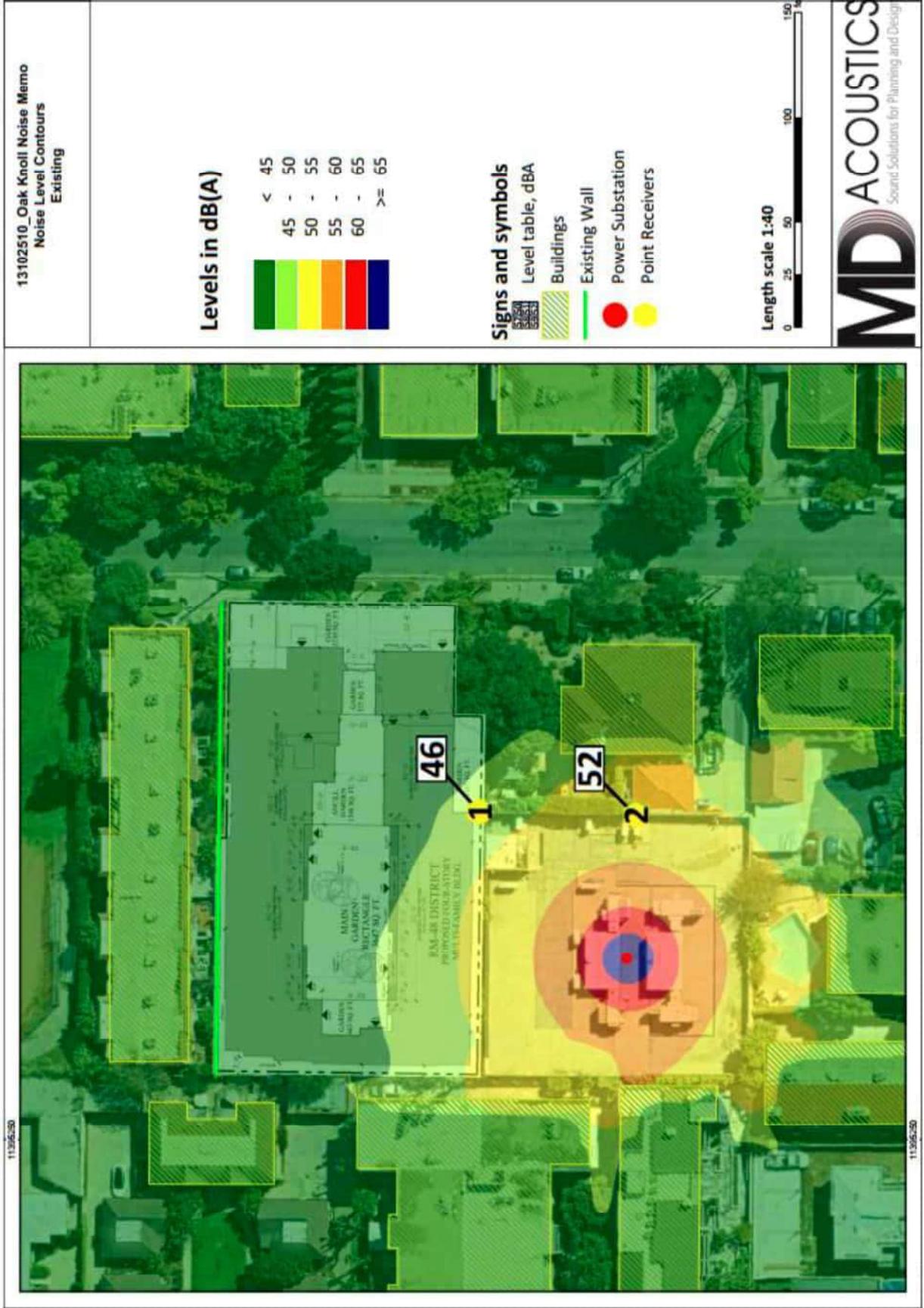
On June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025, MD traveled to the project site and measured the existing ambient noise conditions to determine the noise contribution from the power substation. The existing condition noise measurements were used to build a noise model of the site. The noise from power substations typically results from the operation of transformers, which are known to produce a strong tonal component in the 125 Hz frequency band at 120 Hz, a mains hum. The field measurements taken at the project site show this tonal component in the 125 Hz frequency band. To isolate the transformer noise from the other ambient noise, MD analyzed and isolated the 125 Hz frequency band. To ensure other ambient noise was excluded from the transformer noise (such as traffic on S. Oak Knoll), MD used the slow-averaged minimum level (LSmin) for the 125 Hz frequency band. The LSmin for the 125 Hz band will include the constant transformer noise, but exclude other transient noise sources (people talking, traffic etc...). Figure 1 shows a visualization of the noise spectrum as measured from S. Oak Knoll. The peak at 125 Hz is the transformer noise.

Figure 1: Visualization of Transformer Noise



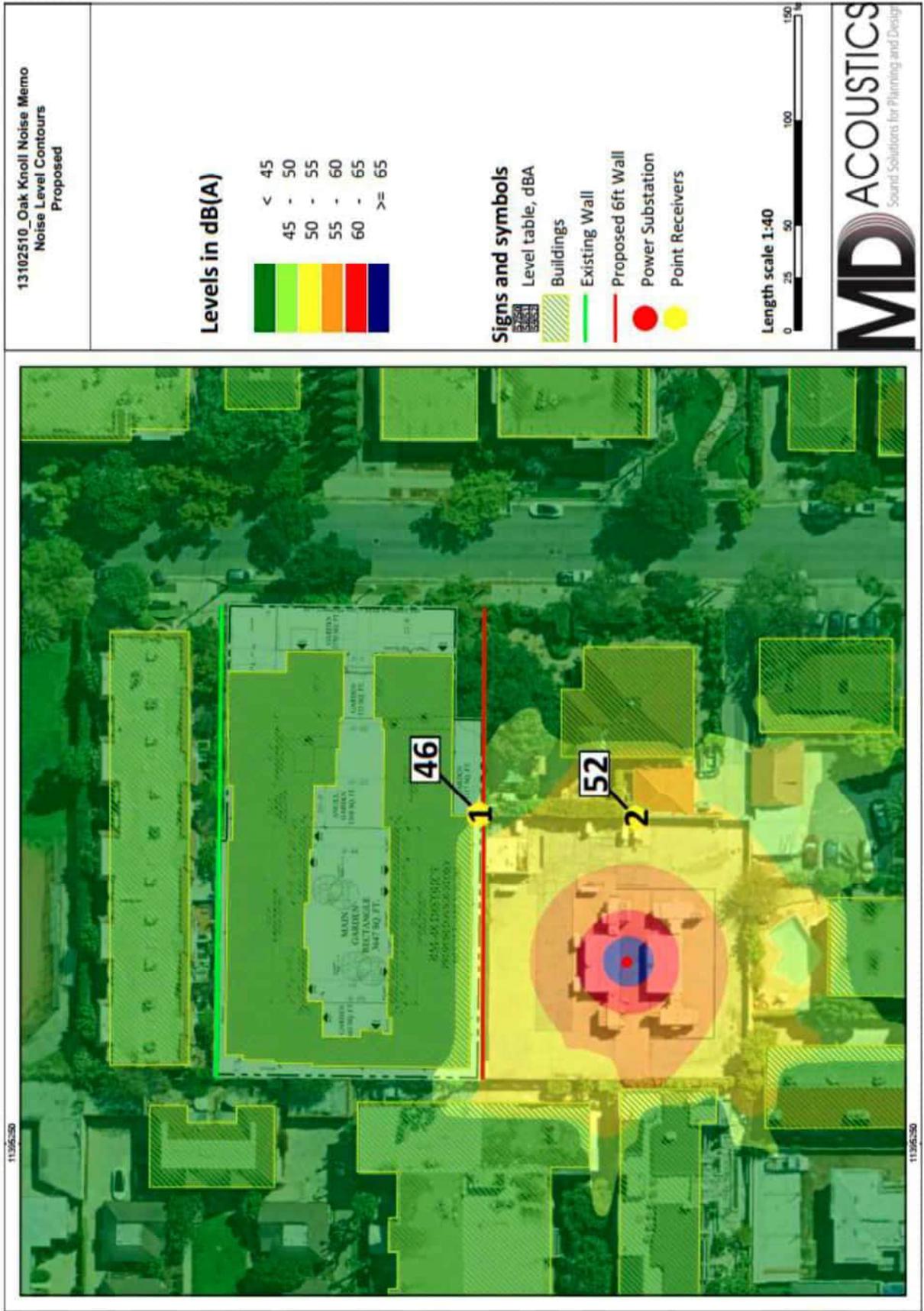
MD then created a model of the power substation noise propagation at the project site using the measured 125 Hz frequency band noise level as the noise source. MD modeled the existing conditions at the project site and calibrated the model using the field measurements. Two receiver locations were placed on the property line of 541 S. Oak Knoll Ave. Exhibit A shows the existing condition model. As shown in Exhibit A, the noise levels due to the power substation were determined to be 46 dBA at receiver 1 and 52 dBA at receiver 2. The future condition model includes the addition of the proposed four-story building and a six-foot-tall concrete wall that runs along the southern property line. Exhibit B shows the future proposed condition model. As shown in Exhibit B, the future condition noise levels due to the power substation were determined to be 46 dBA at receiver 1 and 52 dBA at receiver 2.

Exhibit A  
 SoundPLAN Model Output: Existing Condition



A.4

Exhibit B  
 SoundPLAN Model Output: Future Proposed Condition



To assess the change in noise level, MD compared the existing condition model with the future proposed condition model. The change in noise level at the single-family residential property line was found to be less than 1 dB. As shown in Table 1 below, a less than 1 dB change in noise level is not perceptible to the human ear.

**Table 1: Change in Noise Level Characteristics<sup>1</sup>**

| Changes in Intensity Level, dBA | Changes in Apparent Loudness |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1                               | Not perceptible              |
| 3                               | Just perceptible             |
| 5                               | Clearly noticeable           |
| 10                              | Twice (or half) as loud      |

1. [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/Environment/noise/regulations\\_and\\_guidance/polguide/polguide02.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/Environment/noise/regulations_and_guidance/polguide/polguide02.cfm)

Therefore, the proposed construction of a four-story multifamily building and six-foot-tall perimeter wall at 510 S. Oak Knoll Ave will not cause a perceptible change in the power substation noise level on the property boundary of the residence located at 541 S. Oak Knoll Ave.

MD is pleased to provide this noise evaluation memo. If you have any questions regarding this analysis, please call us at (602) 774-1950.

Sincerely,  
 MD Acoustics, LLC



Joel Demir, INCE-USA  
 Acoustical Consultant



Claire Pincock, INCE-USA  
 Acoustical Consultant

**Appendix A**  
SoundPLAN Modeling Results

## Oak Knoll Noise Memo

### Contribution spectra - 001 - Oak Knoll - Existing: Outdoor SP

| Time slice  | Sum<br>dB(A) | 125Hz<br>dB(A) |                  |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|
| Receiver R1 | FI G         | Lr,lim dB(A)   | Leq,d 46.3 dB(A) |
| Leq,d       | 46.3         | 46.3           |                  |
| Receiver R2 | FI G         | Lr,lim dB(A)   | Leq,d 51.8 dB(A) |
| Leq,d       | 51.8         | 51.8           |                  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Oak Knoll Noise Memo</b><br><b>Contribution level - 001 - Oak Knoll - Existing: Outdoor SP</b> | 9 |
|---|---|

| Source group                                   | Source ty | Tr. lane | Leq,d<br>dB(A) | A<br>dB |  |
|--|-----------|----------|----------------|---------|--|
| Receiver R1 FI G Lr,lim dB(A) Leq,d 46.3 dB(A) |           |          |                |         |  |
| Default industrial noise                       | Point     |          | 46.3           | 0.0     |  |
| Receiver R2 FI G Lr,lim dB(A) Leq,d 51.8 dB(A) |           |          |                |         |  |
| Default industrial noise                       | Point     |          | 51.8           | 0.0     |  |

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|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | MD Acoustics LLC 4960 S Gilbert Rd Chandler AZ 85249 USA | 1 |
|--|--|---|

3

Oak Knoll Noise Memo  
 Octave spectra of the sources in dB(A) - 001 - Oak Knoll - Existing: Outdoor SP

| Name | Source type | I or A           | Li    | R'w | L'w   | Lw    | KI  | KT  | LwMax | DO-Wall | Time histogram | Emission spectrum | 125Hz |
|------|-------------|------------------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-----|-------|---------|----------------|-------------------|-------|
|      |             | m,m <sup>2</sup> | dB(A) | dB  | dB(A) | dB(A) | dB  | dB  | dB(A) | dB      | 100%/24h       | dB(A)             | dB(A) |
|      | Point       |                  |       |     | 86.0  | 86.0  | 0.0 | 0.0 |       | 0       |                |                   | 86.0  |

MD Acoustics LLC 4960 S Gilbert Rd Chandler AZ 85249 USA

## Oak Knoll Noise Memo

### Contribution spectra - 002 - Oak Knoll - Proposed: Outdoor SP

| Time slice  | Sum<br>dB(A) | 125Hz<br>dB(A) |                  |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|
| Receiver R1 | FI G         | Lr,lim dB(A)   | Leq,d 45.5 dB(A) |
| Leq,d       | 45.5         | 45.5           |                  |
| Receiver R2 | FI G         | Lr,lim dB(A)   | Leq,d 52.0 dB(A) |
| Leq,d       | 52.0         | 52.0           |                  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Oak Knoll Noise Memo</b><br><b>Contribution level - 002 - Oak Knoll - Proposed: Outdoor SP</b> | 9 |
|---|---|

| Source group                                   | Source ty | Tr. lane | Leq,d<br>dB(A) | A<br>dB |  |
|--|-----------|----------|----------------|---------|--|
| Receiver R1 FI G Lr,lim dB(A) Leq,d 45.5 dB(A) |           |          |                |         |  |
| Default industrial noise                       | Point     |          | 45.5           | 0.0     |  |
| Receiver R2 FI G Lr,lim dB(A) Leq,d 52.0 dB(A) |           |          |                |         |  |
| Default industrial noise                       | Point     |          | 52.0           | 0.0     |  |

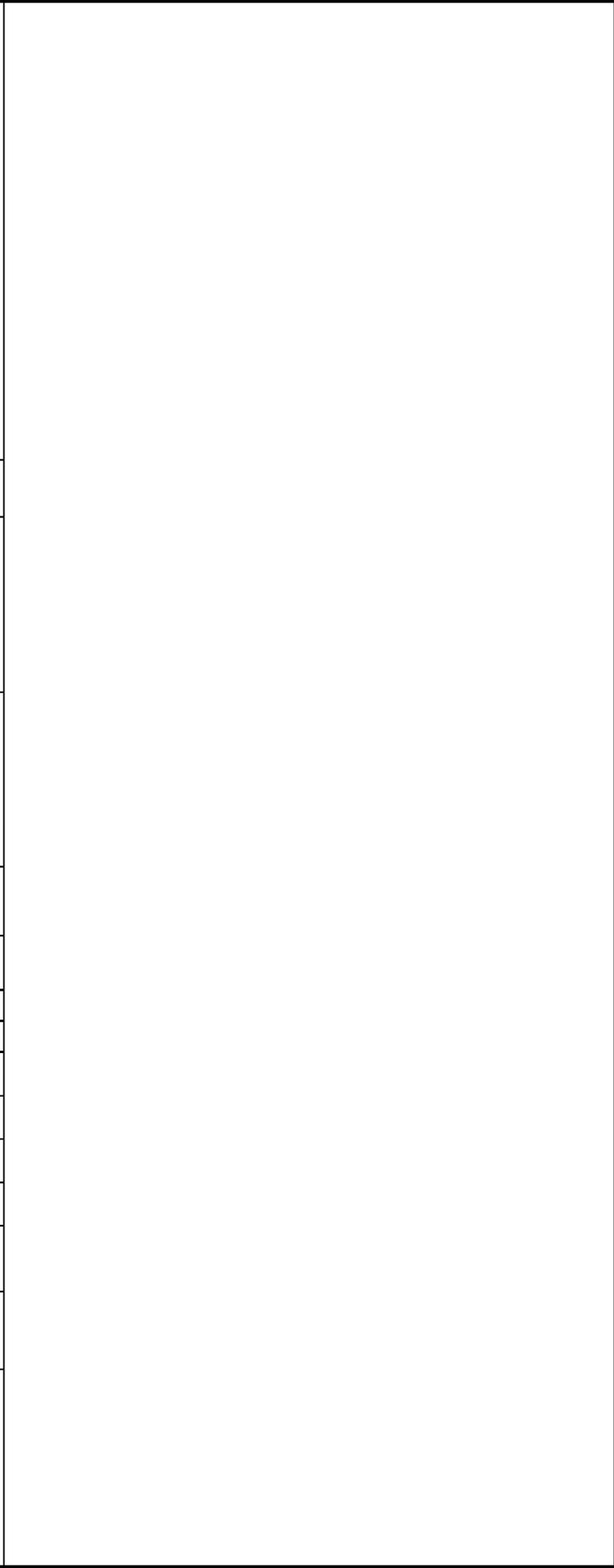
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|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | MD Acoustics LLC 4960 S Gilbert Rd Chandler AZ 85249 USA | 1 |
|--|--|---|

**3**

**Oak Knoll Noise Memo**  
**Octave spectra of the sources in dB(A) - 002 - Oak Knoll - Proposed: Outdoor SP**

| Name | Source type | I or A           | Li    | R'w | L'w   | Lw    | KI  | KT  | LwMax | DO-Wall | Time histogram | Emission spectrum | 125Hz |
|------|-------------|------------------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-----|-------|---------|----------------|-------------------|-------|
|      |             | m,m <sup>2</sup> | dB(A) | dB  | dB(A) | dB(A) | dB  | dB  | dB(A) | dB      | 100%/24h       | dB(A)             | dB(A) |
|      | Point       |                  |       |     | 86.0  | 86.0  | 0.0 | 0.0 |       | 0       |                |                   | 86.0  |



MD Acoustics LLC 4960 S Gilbert Rd Chandler AZ 85249 USA

**Appendix B**  
Field Measurements

5-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Datasheet - NM1

**Project Name:** Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo

**Site Observations:**

**Project: #/Name:** 1310-2025-010

76F mostly sunny, winds 0-3MPH. The primary noise source is traffic, with a generator humming as a 2ndary noise source

**Site Address/Location:** 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue

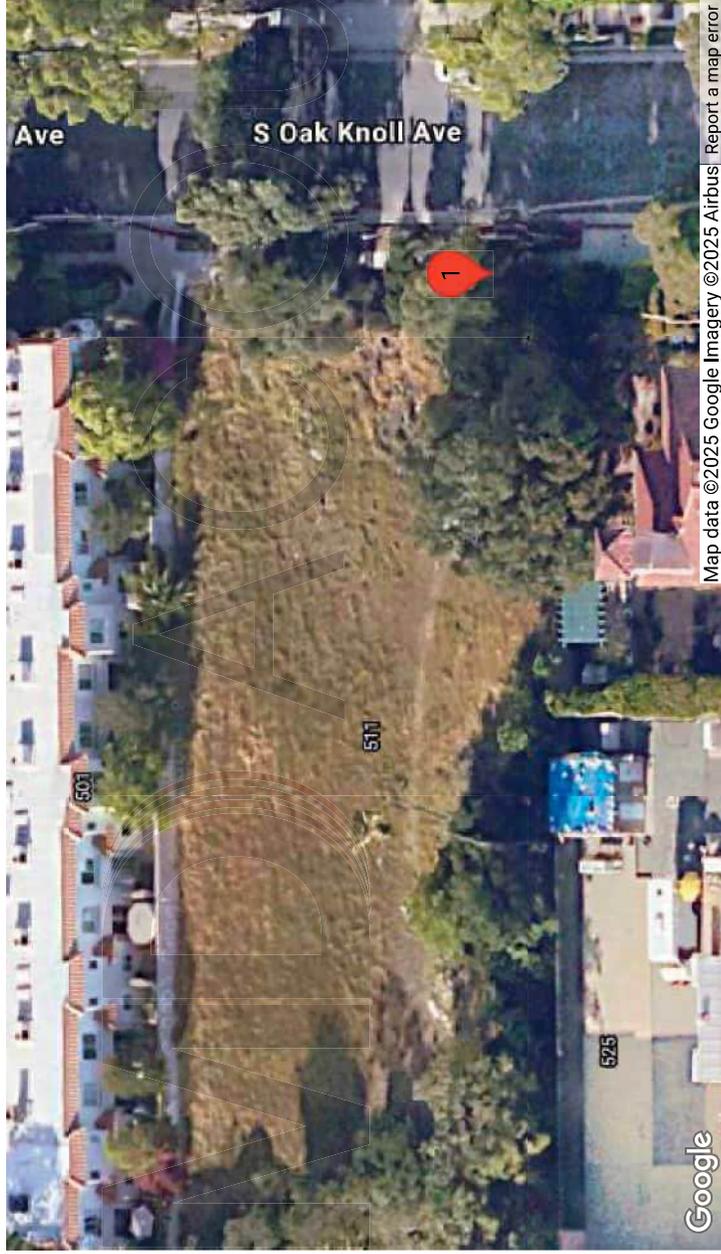
**Date:** 06/17/2025

**Field Tech/Engineer:** Jason Schuyler / Joel Demir

**Sound Meter:** XL2, NTI      SN: A2A-07095-E0

**Settings:** A-weighted, slow, 1-sec, 5-minute interval

**Site Id:** NM1



5-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Datasheet - Cont. - NM1

**Project Name:** Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo  
**Site Address/Location:** 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue  
**Site Id:** NM1

**Calibrator:** Larson Davis Cal 200  
**Cal Check: Pre-test:** 0  
**Post Test:** 0

Figure 1: NM1



Figure 2: NM1

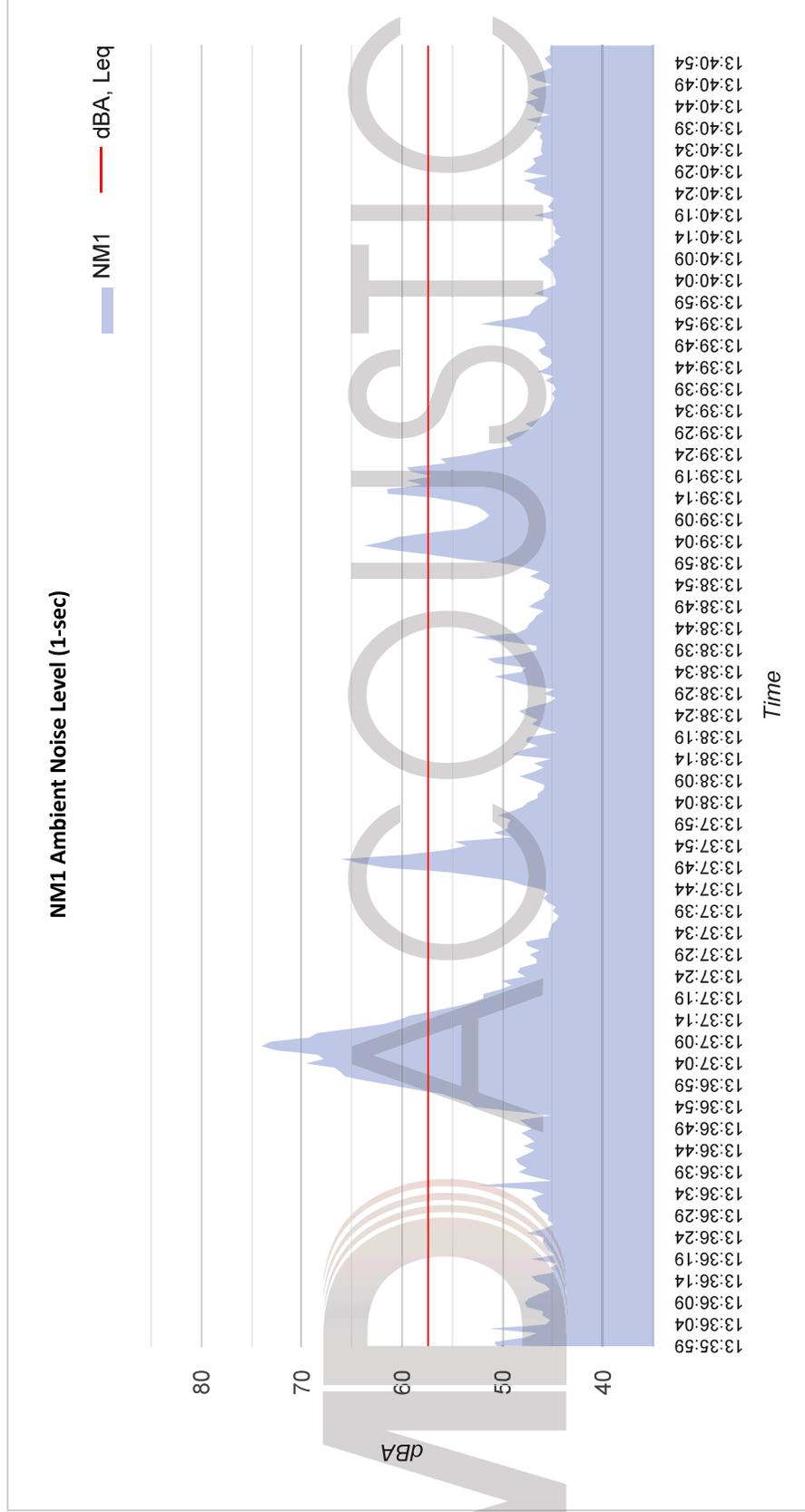


Table 1: Baseline Noise Measurement Summary

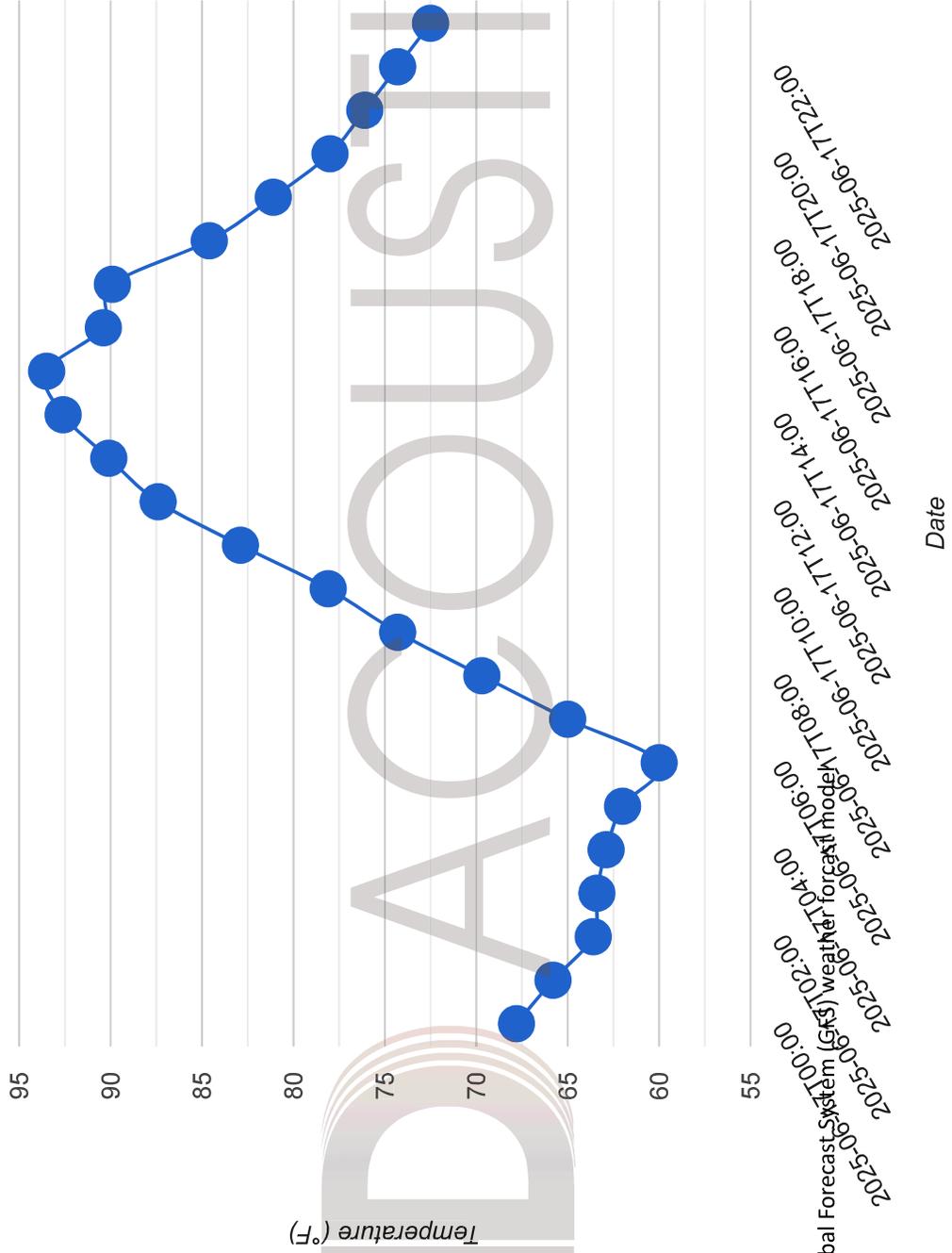
| Location | Start   | Stop    | Leq  | Lmax | Lmin | L2   | L8   | L25 | L50  | L90  |
|----------|---------|---------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|------|
| NM1      | 1:35 PM | 1:40 PM | 57.4 | 73.5 | 44.4 | 68.4 | 60.3 | 50  | 47.1 | 45.1 |

5-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Dataset - Cont. - NM1

**Project Name:** Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo    **Site Topo:** Open parking lot with 1-2 story    **Noise Source(s) w/ Distance:** road noise, Generator noise, and residential noise  
**Site Address/Location:** 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue    **Meteorological Cond.:** 76F Mostly sunny, winds 1-3MPH  
**Site Id:** NM1    **Ground Type:** Sandy soil and clay



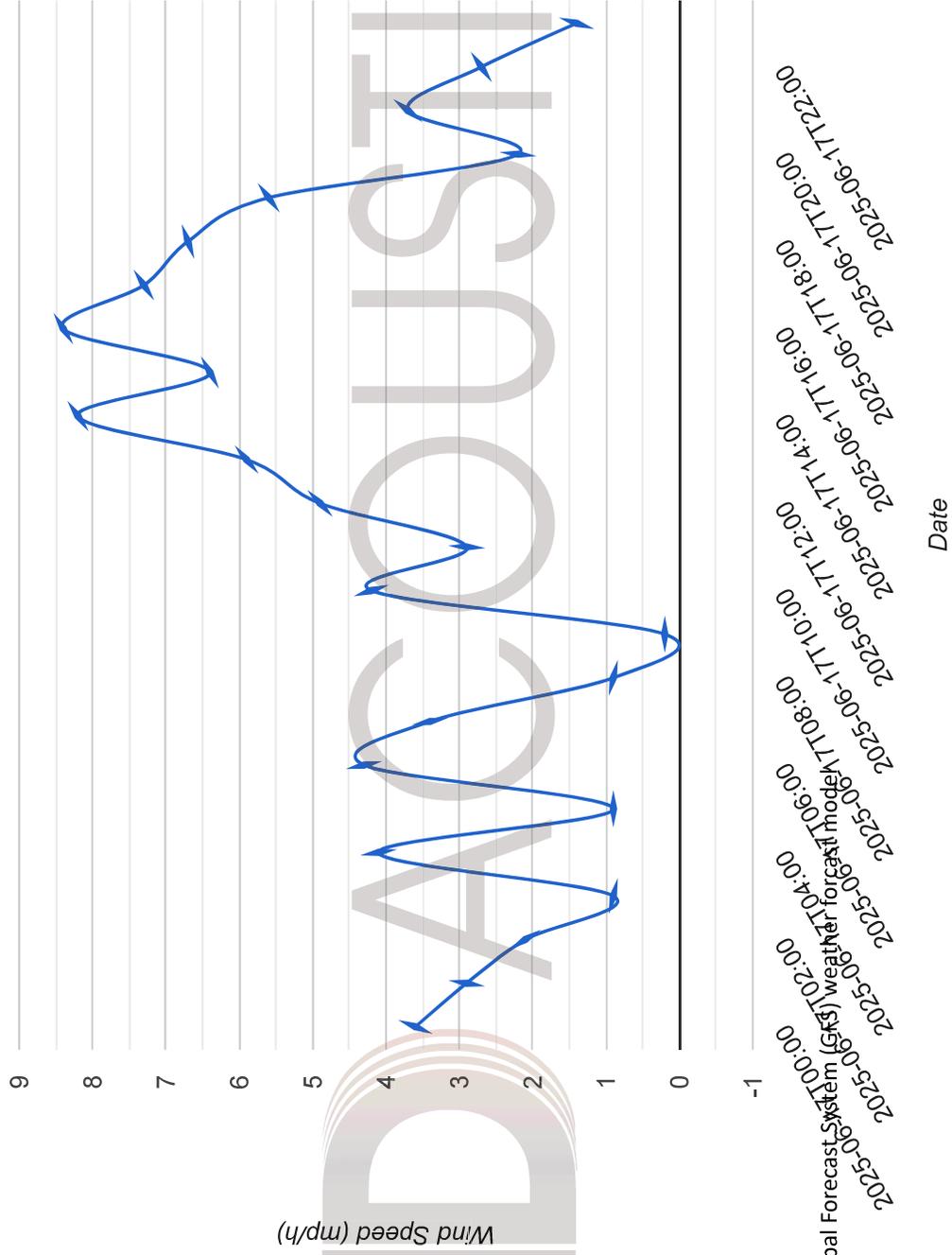
Weather forecast for 2025-06-17



Source: Global Forecasting Solutions

MD ACOUSTICS

Wind speed and directions for 2025-06-17



Source: Global Forecasting Solutions

**3-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Datasheet - NM2, NM3-ON FENCE, NM4, NM5, NM6**

**Project Name:** Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo  
**Project: #/Name:** 1310-2025-010  
**Site Address/Location:** 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue  
**Date:** 06/17/2025  
**Field Tech/Engineer:** Jason Schuyler / Joel Demir

**Site Observations:**  
76F mostly sunny, winds 0- 3MPH. The primary noise source is traffic, with a generator humming as a 2ndary noise source

**Sound Meter:** XL2, NTI      **SN:** A2A-07095-E0  
**Settings:** A-weighted, slow, 1-sec, 3-minute interval  
**Site Id:** NM2, NM3-ON FENCE, NM4, NM5, NM6



3-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Datasheet - Cont. - NM2, NM3-ON FENCE, NM4, NM5, NM6

|                               |                                  |                             |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Project Name:</b>          | Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo       | <b>Calibrator:</b>          | Larson Davis Cal 200 |
| <b>Site Address/Location:</b> | 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue          | <b>Cal Check: Pre-test:</b> | 0 Post Test: 0       |
| <b>Site Id:</b>               | NM2, NM3-ON FENCE, NM4, NM5, NM6 |                             |                      |

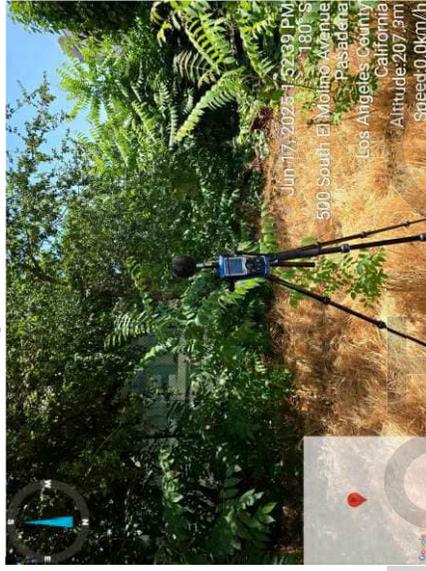
Figure 1: NM2



Figure 2: NM3 On fence- generator adj.



Figure 3: NM4



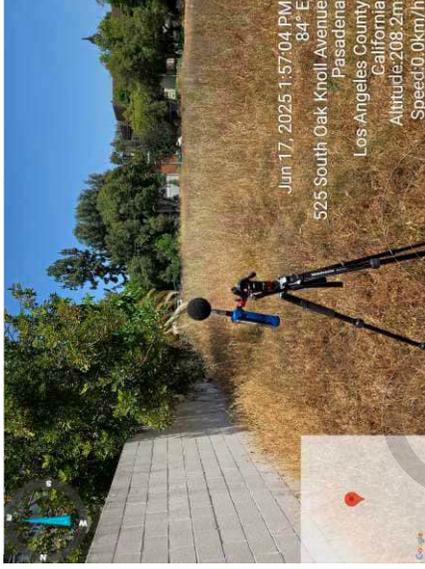
3-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Datasheet - Cont. - NM2, NM3-ON FENCE, NM4, NM5, NM6

**Project Name:** Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo  
**Site Address/Location:** 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue  
**Site Id:** NM2, NM3-ON FENCE, NM4, NM5, NM6

Figure 4: NM5



Figure 5: NM6



**3-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Datasheet - Cont. - NM2, NM3-ON FENCE, NM4, NM5, NM6**

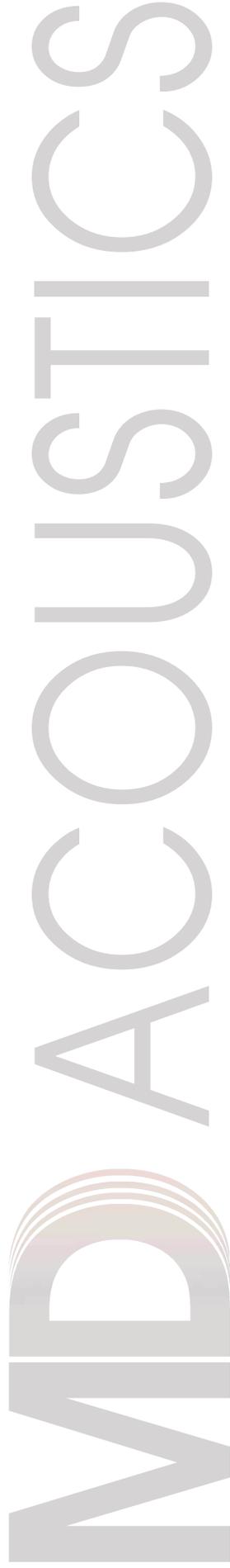
**Project Name:** Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo

**Site Address/Location:** 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue

**Site Id:** NM2, NM3-ON FENCE, NM4, NM5, NM6

Table 1: Baseline Noise Measurement Summary

| Location     | Start   | Stop    | Leq  | Lmax | Lmin | L2   | L8   | L25  | L50  | L90  |
|--------------|---------|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| NM2          | 1:43 PM | 1:48 PM | 56.5 | 59.5 | 55.7 | 58.5 | 57.3 | 56.6 | 56.3 | 55.9 |
| NM3-ON FENCE | 1:50 PM | 1:51 PM | 55   | 55.9 | 54.2 | 55.8 | 55.5 | 55.3 | 54.9 | 54.4 |
| NM4          | 1:53 PM | 1:54 PM | 53.3 | 55.8 | 52.4 | 55.5 | 54.6 | 53.6 | 52.9 | 52.4 |
| NM5          | 1:55 PM | 1:56 PM | 51.7 | 53.4 | 50.7 | 53.2 | 52.9 | 52   | 51.6 | 50.8 |
| NM6          | 1:57 PM | 1:58 PM | 50.7 | 56.6 | 46.4 | 55.9 | 54.1 | 51.8 | 49.7 | 46.7 |



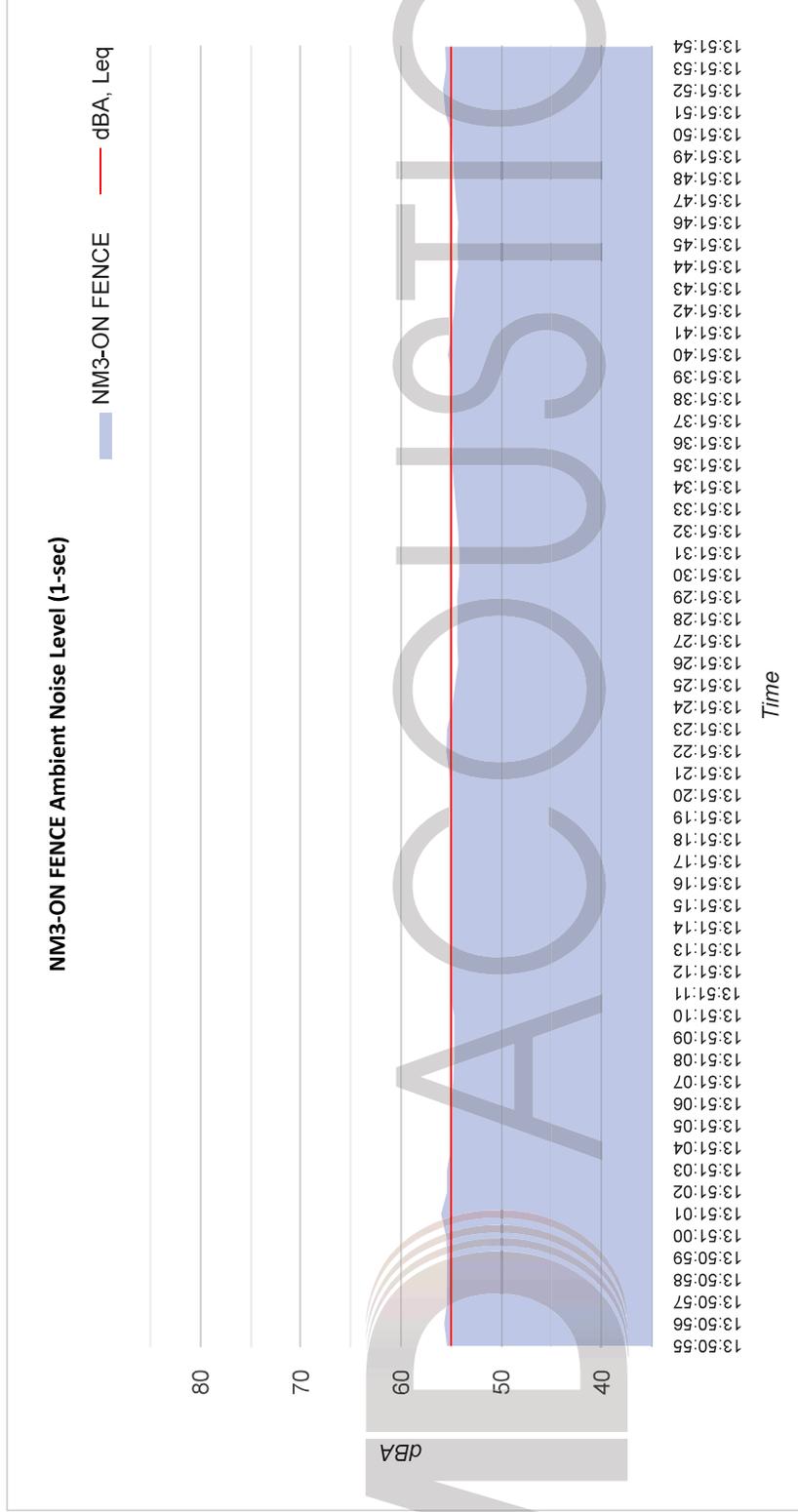
3-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Datasheet - Cont. - NM2

**Project Name:** Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo      **Site Topo:** Open parking lot with 1-2 story      **Noise Source(s) w/ Distance:** road noise, Generator noise, and residential noise  
**Site Address/Location:** 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue      **Meteorological Cond.:** 76F Mostly sunny, winds 1-3MPH  
**Site Id:** NM2      **Ground Type:** Sandy soil and clay



3-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Datasheet - Cont. - NM3-ON FENCE

**Project Name:** Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo    **Site Topo:** Open parking lot with 1-2 story    **Noise Source(s) w/ Distance:** road noise, Generator noise, and residential noise  
**Site Address/Location:** 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue    **Meteorological Cond.:** 76F Mostly sunny, winds 1-3MPH  
**Site Id:** NM3-ON FENCE    **Ground Type:** Sandy soil and clay



3-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Datasheet - Cont. - NM4

**Project Name:** Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo      **Site Topo:** Open parking lot with 1-2 story      **Noise Source(s) w/ Distance:** road noise, Generator noise, and residential noise  
**Site Address/Location:** 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue      **Meteorological Cond.:** 76F Mostly sunny, winds 1-3MPH  
**Site Id:** NM4      **Ground Type:** Sandy soil and clay



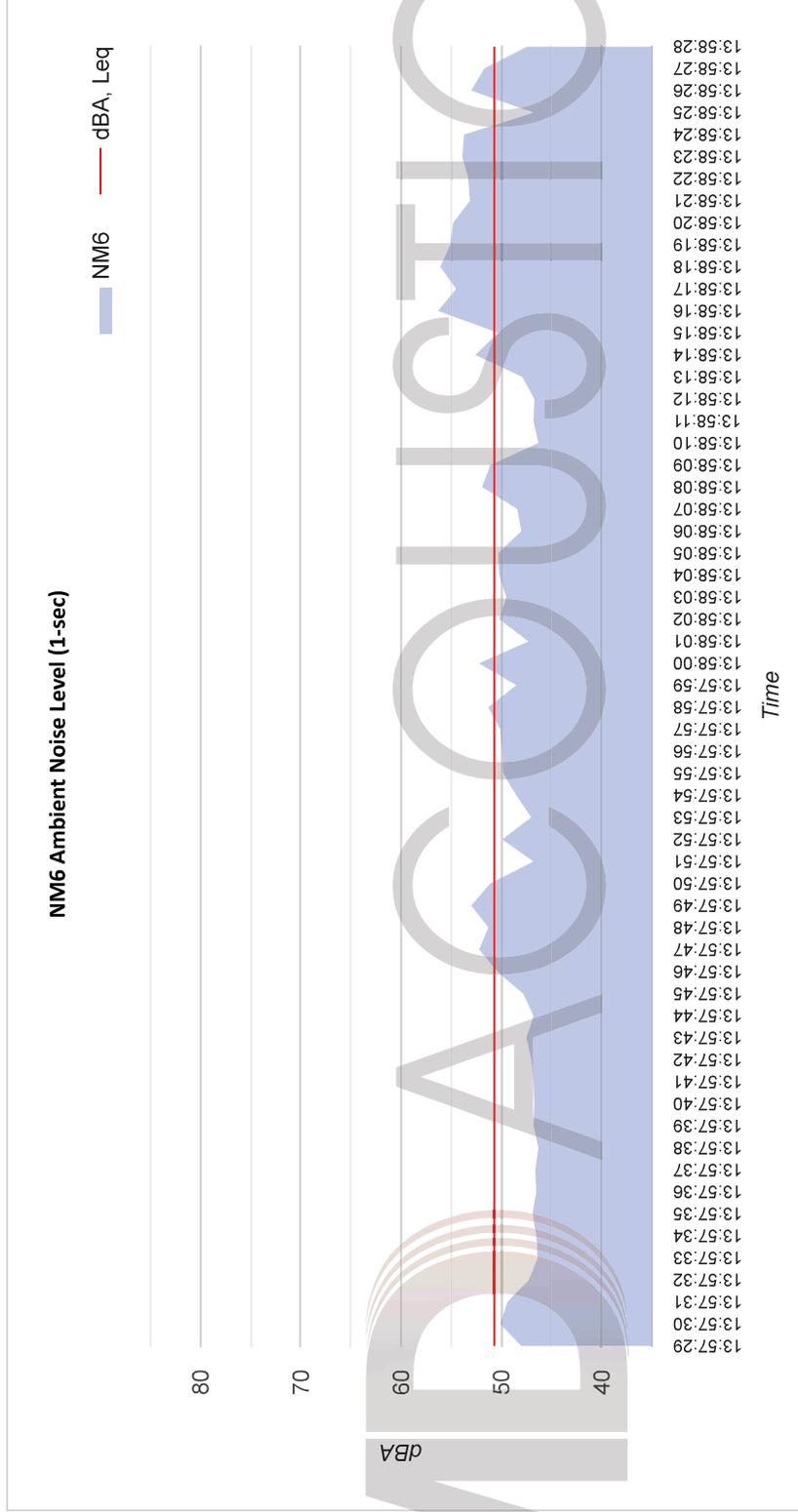
3-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Datasheet - Cont. - NM5

**Project Name:** Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo      **Site Topo:** Open Golf Course with homes over      **Noise Source(s) w/ Distance:** road noise, Generator noise, and residential noise  
**Site Address/Location:** 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue      **Meteorological Cond.:** 76F Mostly sunny, winds 1-3MPH  
**Site Id:** NM5      **Ground Type:** Sandy soil and clay

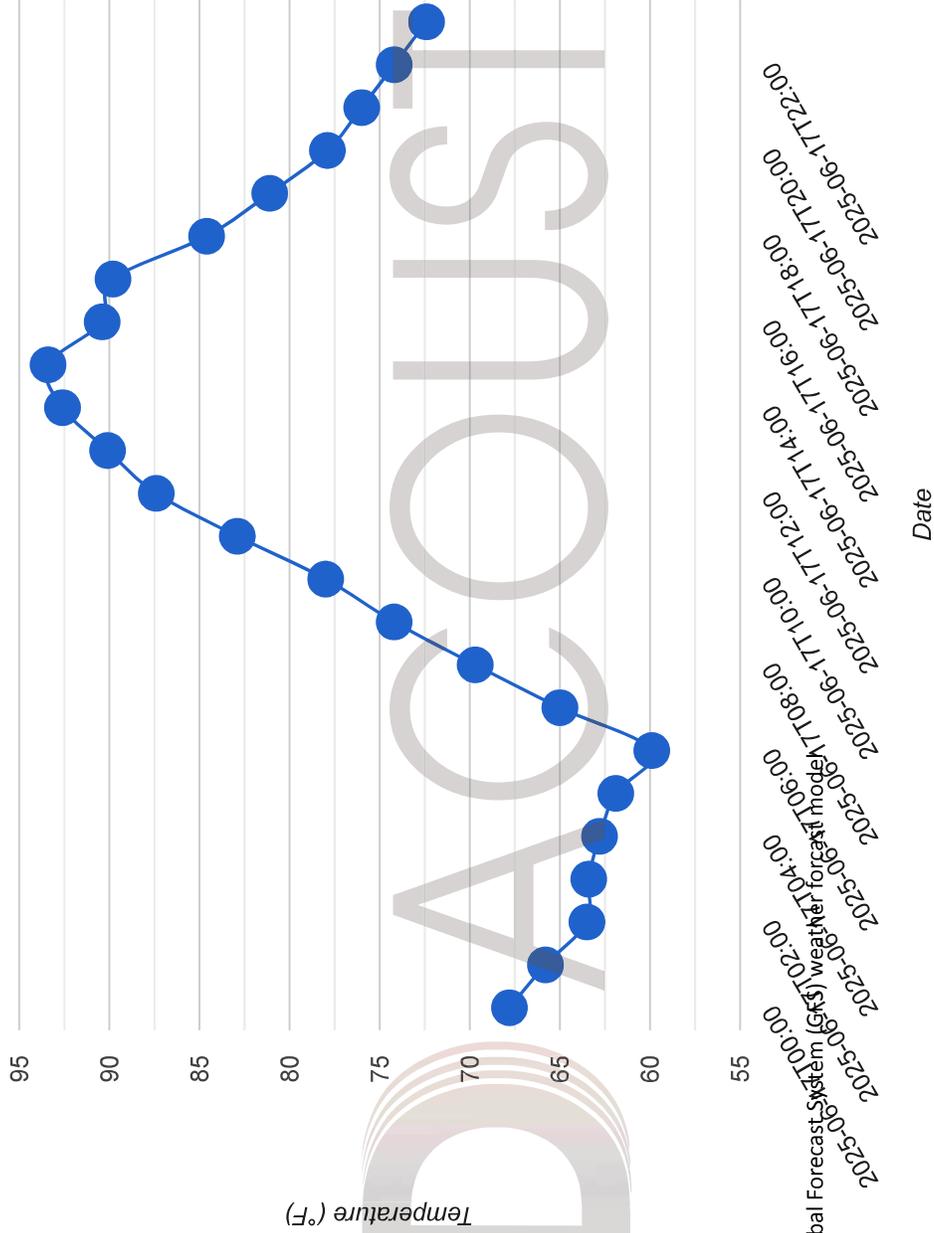


3-Minute Continuous Noise Measurement Datasheet - Cont. - NM6

**Project Name:** Oak Knoll Multifamily Memo      **Site Topo:** Open parking lot with 1-2 story      **Noise Source(s) w/ Distance:**  
**Site Address/Location:** 510 S. Oak Knoll Avenue      **Meteorological Cond.:** 76F Mostly sunny, winds 1-3MPH      road noise, Generator noise, and residential noise  
**Site Id:** NM6      **Ground Type:** Sandy soil and clay



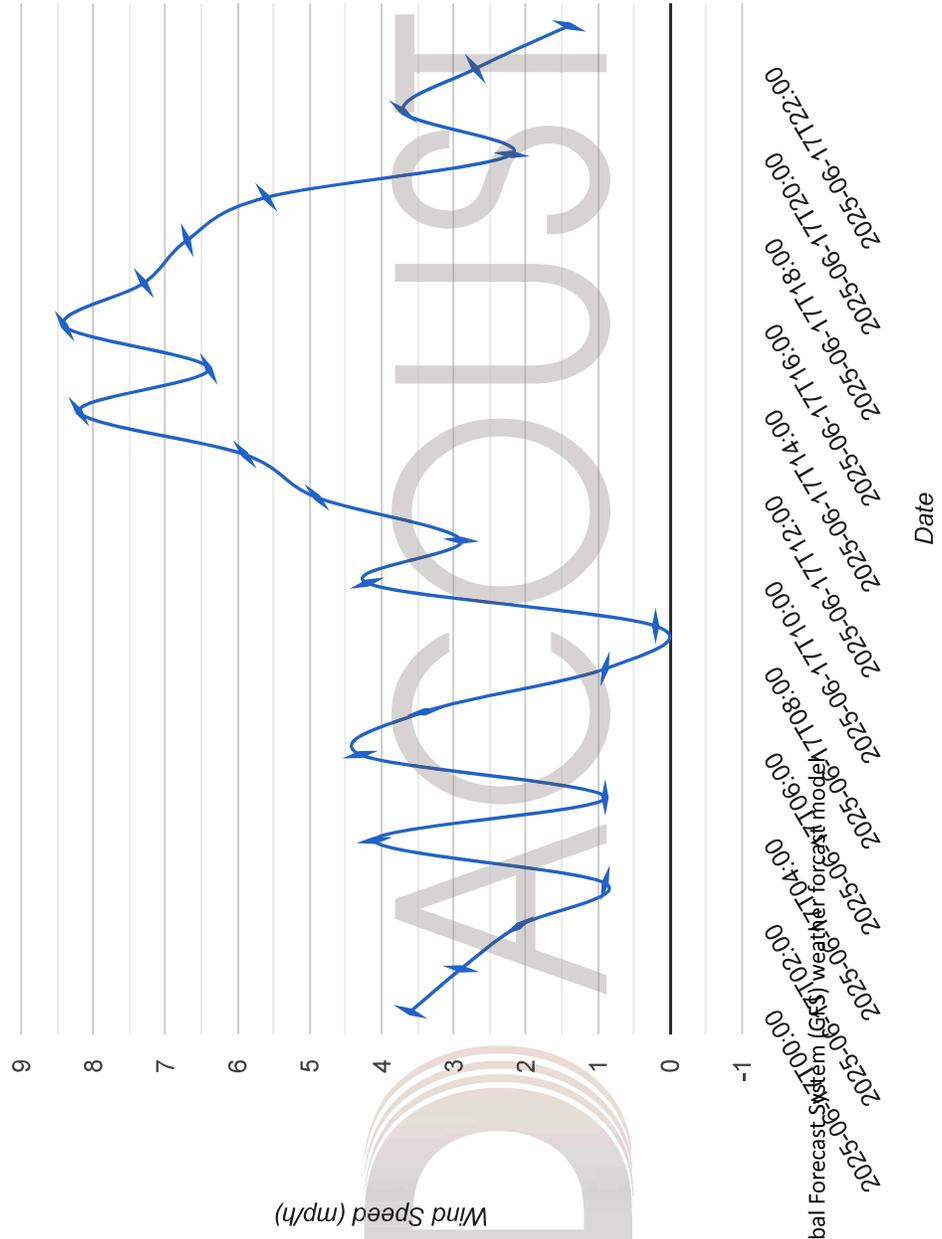
Weather forecast for 2025-06-17



Source: Global Forecast System



Wind speed and directions for 2025-06-17



Source: Global Forecast System

October 27, 2025

To: Stephanie Cisneros, cc commentsdc@cityofpasadena.net

From: Amanda Elioff

Subject – Additional comments to Design Commission on 511 Development, Prior to the Hearing on October 27, 2025

Amanda Elioff - Live at [REDACTED], one of the 6 most sensitive receptors according to the environmental reports.

In My 3 minutes I'd like to comment on Protection of the Oak Tree, Noise and Light issues, and the buildings design with respect to the neighborhood. Please also refer to our letter of July 28, 2025 for a more of our comments. WE also sent a letter (October 4) on noise concerns that was not included in this package to the commissioners.

1. We have been commenting on the building's design that encroaches on our Protected Oak Tree roots since September 2024. I'd like to thank the City Planning department for further investigation and recommending a change to the foundation wall to reduce the impacts to this magnificent tree. We don't believe impacts to the tree canopy have been sufficiently addressed.

Survival of this significant tree is important to us, the neighbors who view it, and it will enhance the value of the proposed development – as long as it is protected from damage.

2. Noise: We are concerned about noise generated from the 46 AC units on the building roof. The noise study appears incomplete – in particular with respect to the operational noise analysis. (Side bar - This report says there is a construction duration of “not more than 6 months” – that seems more than ambitious – if all of the Environmental analyses are based on this, calculations need to be revised.

The field measurements for ambient noise were taken for only 15 minutes on a Tuesday at noon (the daytime). It concluded that with average 60 dB ambient measurement at that time, noise from a single air conditioning unit on the roof of the building would not have an impact at a distance of 20 ft. Being one of the sensitive receptors, (and living next to the sub station), I often take my own readings. At nighttime across the street and at my front door, the ambient noise averages 40 db. The difference between 40 and 60 DB is 100 times quieter on the decibel scale.

In addition the study does not account for 46 HVAC units – much louder than one unit. We request more study of the HVAC unit noise – in particular at nighttime - and appropriate mitigation thru the type of units, enclosures or what ever is needed.

3. Light: The building design is unique and untested. The exterior hallways will need to be lit 24/7 to comply with exiting codes. This light will shine thru the hallway windows into the adjacent properties all night. The system will require additional energy use to light, heat and cool the corridors. At a minimum this needs study and mitigation. There was no mention of light impacts in the environmental documents. Another side note – the building living units themselves will actually be deprived of light – as there are no building exterior windows!! Think that the north side could have mountain views.
4. Building design. This building extends to within 5 ft of the property lines on three sides. With 4 stories, it presents a massive box in an otherwise Pasadena zoning compliant neighborhood. (See renderings in attachment 48 of appendix A-C)

We realize that the State of California now allows for a density bonus – BUT we cannot accept competing codes at the detriment of the neighborhood. Here we have City of Gardens and density bonus. The impact is that the building turns it back on the surroundings to protect itself from substation noise (only impacting about a 6<sup>th</sup> of the perimeter). The 4-story height means that virtually no light reaches much of the courtyard. Lower level units will be dark (see sun study attached to our letter of July 28).

An obvious alternative (other than a Pasadena zoning complaint building) would be to allow more space on the exterior of the building that would allow light to BOTH the new units AND the neighbors. This area could be landscaped to reduce the big box size impact of the project. This was discussed at an informal meeting with developers and community last December.

We understand the State's need for density, however the project as is could be vastly improved to allow more space for all . Please don't allow this experiment with Density and noise mitigation for the new occupants only (interior halls) to proceed without really understanding what the lasting impacts to all.

This building – with the moat inspired design protects itself to the detriment of the neighbors. There are solutions and it is not too late to set a good/creative example



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**Re: Comments 511 Oak Knoll Development**

---

**From** Brian Fulcher <brian.fulcher21@hotmail.com>

**Date** Tue 10/28/2025 5:24 PM

**To** Cisneros, Stephanie <scisneros@cityofpasadena.net>; Amanda Elioff <ae01@msn.com>; Johnson, Kevin <kevinjohnson@cityofpasadena.net>; Thyret, Pam <pthyret@cityofpasadena.net>; Lyon, Jason <jlyon@cityofpasadena.net>

 1 attachment (33 KB)      **A.7 IS THE ATTACHMENT**

October 2025 Pasadena Planning - Public Hearing Notes and Comments.docx;

Stephanie,

In preparing for the Public Hearing for the proposed 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue multi-family development and after reviews and significant number of the reports posted with the Hearing announcement, we have a few several notes and comments that in our view, need to be recorded since they will not likely fit into the three-minute speaker time allowance at the Hearing. Therefore, please consider and record the attached letter,

Thanks,

Brian Fulcher

541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena

201-290-6050

---

**From:** Cisneros, Stephanie <scisneros@cityofpasadena.net>

**Sent:** October 28, 2025 11:05 AM

**To:** Amanda Elioff <ae01@msn.com>; Johnson, Kevin <kevinjohnson@cityofpasadena.net>; Thyret, Pam <pthyret@cityofpasadena.net>; Lyon, Jason <jlyon@cityofpasadena.net>

**Cc:** brian.fulcher21@hotmail.com <brian.fulcher21@hotmail.com>

**Subject:** RE: Comments 511 Development

Hi Amanda,

Quick follow up. It looks like your attachment may be missing a page? Page two last paragraph ends/appears incomplete.

Best,

Stephanie

Stephanie Cisneros



175 N Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101  
P | (626) 744-7219  
E | [scisneros@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:scisneros@cityofpasadena.net)

*I will be out of the office October 6<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>*

**From:** Amanda Elioff <ae01@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 27, 2025 9:27 PM  
**To:** Cisneros, Stephanie <scisneros@cityofpasadena.net>; Johnson, Kevin <kevinjohnson@cityofpasadena.net>; Thyret, Pam <pthyret@ci.pasadena.ca.us>; Lyon, Jason <jlyon@cityofpasadena.net>  
**Cc:** brian.fulcher21@hotmail.com  
**Subject:** Comments 511 Development

[⚠] **CAUTION:** This email was delivered from the Internet. Do not click links or open attachments unless you **know** the content is safe. Report phish using the Phish Alert Button. For more information about the Phish Alert Button view article "KB0011474" on the DoIT portal.

Hello Stephanie and Kevin.

We are planning to attend and speak at the Planning Commission Hearing tomorrow night. We have much more to say than can be said in 3 minutes, so want to add the following to our comments to you, as well as the attached notes I plan to read at the hearing (but may run out of time).

1. The 2-3 business day period between receipt of the agenda items and the Hearing is not sufficient. There were about 450 pages of information in the various attachments. Not possible to read in depth, I could not expect the design commissioners to do so and have a full understanding of the issues and the concerns of the community.
2. The Environmental reports (Air and Noise) state a 6 month construction period. If all the analysis is based on that, calculations need to be checked and revised for a more realistic duration.

### 3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project consists of the construction and operation of a four-story 46,295 SF multi-family residential building with 46 dwelling units and one level, 67-space, subterranean parking garage. The total garden space is 9,072 SF and the Site is 0.65 acres (28,350 SF). **Figure 2, Site Plan**, illustrates the Site. The Project includes the installation of solar panels per Title 24 Building Code requirements.

The project is anticipated to start construction no sooner than October 2025 and take approximately 6 months to complete. The Project is anticipated to be operational in 2026. The Project would include approximately 12,000 cubic yards (CY) of export.

3. Environmental reports did not state who the reports were prepared for and were not signed.

4. Environmental Report on Noise: measurements to assess operational noise were taken mid day – and only for a 15 minute duration. There are no measurements of ambient noise at night time (when it is more important) and no analysis based on 46 HVAC Units. There is a statement that noise can only be 5 DB above ambient, but the ambient measurements are not at nighttime. This must be addressed and conclusions revised accordingly. We already have a substation making some noise 24/7 – and this building will add to it.
5. Light – no studies of light impacts – concern is with the exterior hallways lit 24/7. This was in our letter of July 28, 2025. Still an open issue.
6. I hope there is an error/oversight in the staff report (Page 6 under programming and circulation) about the setback for the oak tree. The new drawing (Dated September 2025) for P-1 level shows a 64 ft setback from the property line. The staff report says this setback is for the entire height of the building. The other drawings show a longer setback (100 ft) for the above ground structure. This is essential for the tree canopy. Also the related drawings to the foundation/P-1 level need to be updated for the change in the P-1 wall.

Please also see the attachment, and assume we will see you tomorrow night

Sincerely,

Amanda Eliooff/Brian Fulcher

541 S. Oak Knoll Ave

213.422.4987

Brian Fulcher and Amanda Eloff  
541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue  
Pasadena CA 91101  
213.422.4987

28 Oct 25

Pasadena Planning and Community Development  
Department Design and Historic Preservation  
175 Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101

**Attention:** Kevin Johnson and Stephanie Cisneros

**Subject:** **511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA**  
*Proposed Multi-Family Development*  
*Notes and Comments to be Provided at the Public Hearing – 28 Oct 25 on*  
*Protected Tree Preservation Construction Related Issues, Fire and Public Safety Concerns,*  
*Building Height*

---

Dear Mr. Johnson and Ms. Cisnaros,

In preparing for the Public Hearing for the proposed 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue multi-family development and after reviews and significant number of the reports posted with the Hearing announcement, we have a few several notes and comments that in our view, need to be recorded since they will not likely fit into the three-minute speaker time allowance at the Hearing. Therefore, please consider and record the following.

### 1. Landmark Tree Conservation and Preservation Concerns

The following are condensed bulleted remarks related to the landmark Canyon Live Oak tree located on the property at 541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue and whose roots and canopy extend in all directions and into the vacant property at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue.

#### General Comments

- This is a protected “landmark” status mature tree
- Care and protection provisions fall under the formal Pasadena “**Tree Protection Guidelines**”
- Several qualified and experienced arborists have made assessments of the tree’s current size, health and general condition.
  - All agree this is a magnificent tree and one this is very characteristic of the immediate neighborhood.
  - It, therefore, needs to be afforded all care and protection measures outlined in the Pasadena Tree Protection Guidelines and cannot be impacted by the proposed multi-family development or any construction related operations.
- This tree, including roots, trunk, canopy and the essential **Tree Protection Zone**, need to be correctly shown on many drawings and renderings.
  - Incorrect of some
  - Missing on others
  - Foundation and canopy have significant conflicts (clashes)

### **Protective Fencing Defining the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)**

- The mandatory **Tree Protection Zone** is not currently shown on any documents reviewed to date. What is illustrated includes the following only on various, but not all drawings and sketches;
  - Tree canopy perimeter
  - Tree canopy drip line (canopy + 4 feet radially from the tree trunk)
- The zone needs careful definition, location coordinates and barrier fencing installation per the Pasadena Guidelines.
- At this time, it is likely the designated **Tree Protection Zone** will interfere with the proposed building foundations and particular the Support-of-Excavation system needed for the subterranean portion of the development.
  - The Support-of-Excavation system design and more particularly, a dimensional layout plan, have not to date been disclosed.

### **Building Foundation Construction – Tree Root Conflicts**

- The proposed multi-family building development will require a subterranean parking level, say about 14' below grade.
- To accomplish, this construction a Support-of-Excavation (SOE) wall will be placed “outside” of the design lines of the building foundation wall yet remain inside the property lines.
- It is uncertain whether the numerous tree assessment reports and root exposure inspections were performed in locations for the following;
  - Building foundation walls, or
  - Expanded Support-of-Excavation location that in this case, further encroaches on the subject Canyon Live Oak tree location and roots
- This matter is crucial for the mandatory successful care and protection of the landmark tree.
- Additionally, and owing to the adjacent surface (heavy oak tree) loading and proposed SOE configuration, very careful attention needs to be paid to;
  - Deflections
  - Surface settlement
  - Ground loss

### **Building Superstructure Construction – Tree Canopy Conflicts**

- The East Side rendering (drawing AG-1.0) incorrectly shows the location the landmark Canyon Live Oak tree. It is actually located approximately 3 feet from the property line and considerably encroaches on the building superstructure (as drawn).
- Based on several drawings and renderings posted to the Pasadena Planning website, a portion of the canopy (as drawn) conflict with the building’s superstructure (by several feet) and perhaps on several floors.
  - Conflicts (clashes) would emerge during construction operations
  - Exterior scaffolding would be in conflict with the space
  - Material handling needs would be highly compromised.
- Several referenced documents mention that the landmark Canyon Live Oak tree could be “pruned” (under a professional arborist supervision) to suit the multi-story building configuration. This approach appears to be in conflict with the following goals and guidelines and may result in a “one side shaved tree canopy” if only to suit the building superstructure
  - Development landscaping plan (preliminary)

Letter to K. Johnson and S Cisneros

Date – 28 Oct 25

Page 3 of 5

- Pasadena “City of Gardens” goals
- Attachment G: Tree Protection Guidelines
- In the writer’s view, no selective pruning should be permitted on the canopy of the landmark Canyon Live Oak tree.
  - Creates unbalance loads and may quickly look “unnatural” if only to accommodate the exterior building wall location.
  - Fails to embrace several of the primary objectives of the Pasadena landscaping critical guidelines.

***Reference Documents sourced on-line at City of Pasadena Planning Department website***

- Planning & Community Development Department – Staff Reports, dated 28 Oct 25
  - Attachment B: Tree Inventory and Exhibit, Private Tree Removal Application
  - Attachment F: Dudek Tree Report, dated 27 Aug 25
  - Attachment G: Tree Protection Guidelines

## 2. Fire Safety Concerns

- We have seen one mention in the Staff Report that the Concept Design Review documents had been sent to the Pasadena Fire Department. No apparent feedback provided to the extent we are aware of to date.
- In light of the recent extensive and tragic fires in Altadena, we request that a comprehensive ***fire risk assessment*** be made on the building design and configuration. What comes to mind are the following;
  - Damage to adjacent properties
  - Fire issues originating at adjacent properties
  - Firefighting; personnel and equipment access from the street
- The proposed development stretches to all four corners of the property with nominally 5’-4” lot line clearance to perimeter walls, but is also the tallest, dwarfing all adjacent properties and buildings. A fire risk assessment needs to take into account the difficulty an accessing a fire in a rear or elevated unit.

***Reference Documents sourced on-line at City of Pasadena Planning Department website***

- Planning & Community Development Department – Staff Reports, dated 28 Oct 25

## 3. Pasadena Department of Water and Power

- We did not see a mention in the Staff Report that the Concept Design Review documents had been sent to the Pasadena Department of Water and Power. They are the owner and operator of the high voltage electrical substation located on the south side of the proposed multi-family development.
- No apparent feedback provided to the extent we are aware of to date.
- In light of the recent extensive and tragic fires in Altadena, we request that a comprehensive ***risk and hazard material assessment*** be made on the building design and configuration. What comes to mind are the following
  - Public Safety provisions
  - Fire issues originating in the substation
  - Collateral damage issues

Letter to K. Johnson and S Cisneros

Date – 28 Oct 25

Page 4 of 5

- The proposed development stretches to within 5'-4" of the property line of the electrical substation. At present, there is a only chain link fence separating the properties.

***Reference Documents sourced on-line at City of Pasadena Planning Department website***

- Planning & Community Development Department – Staff Reports, dated 28 Oct 25

#### **4. Building Height – Overall and Excesses**

- As we understand it, the Pasadena building height guideline for this proposed multi-family development is 40' "***measured from the lowest point of the existing grade***" (i.e. the lowest existing point on the property).
- In this case this elevation datum is 775.50' located at the extreme southeastern point of the property. We would expect that this is the starting point for all building height measurements.
- It is also expected that the building height, including all appurtenances such as, but not limited to the following; antennae, headhouses, air conditioning units and parapet walls, etc. will not exceed this height limitation.
- There is an apparent "density bonus concession" on this height limitation, therefore allowing the maximum building height to extend to 47'-10", ***measured from the lowest point of the existing grade***.
- We need to be clear that the proposed 4-story building extending to not more than 47'-10" is considerably taller than all surrounding buildings that are from 1.5 to 2 stories tall. Only one building on an adjacent property (west side) is 3 stories.
- The proposed development is already gargantuan in its overall footprint (stretched virtually to all four corners of the property) but is also the tallest. This height is highly objectionable and needs to be reconsidered or at least the visual monstrosity significantly mitigated.

***Reference Documents sourced on-line at City of Pasadena Planning Department website***

- Planning & Community Development Department – Staff Reports, dated 28 Oct 25

#### **Conclusions**

We believe the current building design and physical layout need more attention to mitigating objectionable and correctable issues, concerns and measurable impacts to the landmark Canyon Live Oak tree located on an adjacent property.

Fire and Public Safety issues need careful attention as the design is further refined and expressed more assertively in the building's final design, appurtenances and systems.

The proposed building height, while being the subject of numerous letters and other communications, remains considerably taller than all surrounding buildings, cutting-off natural light and unreasonably dominating the area if only to take advantage of the State "density bonus concession" by providing "on-site affordable units". The enormous building footprint adds to this pervasive impact. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that a modified building design address the height and visual impacts and be more harmonious in the immediate neighborhood.

**Letter to K. Johnson and S Cisneros**

A.7

**Date – 28 Oct 25**

**Page 5 of 5**

We hope that the City will take into account our concerns as the building design is more fully developed and refined resulting in a well-engineered building that minimizes (and eliminates) correctable impacts and nestles into the mature neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff  
541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

October 28, 2025

Chairperson and Members, Pasadena Design Commission  
City of Pasadena  
100 N. Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101

RE: 511 So. Oak Knoll

Dear Design Commission Chair and Members,

I regret that I am unable to attend your meeting this evening but am writing as a concerned nearby resident, longtime neighborhood advocate, and preservation professional to express the following comments for your consideration.

I largely support staff's commentary and recommendations as presented in the staff report and hope that the Design Commission will look carefully at the project design and its relationship to adjacent properties. Please note that this project is located in the midst of an older neighborhood with significant historic resources nearby, especially immediately to the south (the old fire station, now a single-family residence) and Cornish Court, a fine example of a bungalow court just to the west. Furthermore, the adjacent school and its playing field north of the project have an immediate, open view of the north side of the project.

In my opinion, this project needs further refinement and design development, particularly on the south, west and north elevations. This will be the tallest building and one of the largest on the street and in the immediate area. It will call attention to itself and should be a fine, elegant, quality addition to Pasadena's architectural legacy.

The front (east) elevation seems most improved and demonstrates some personality. The interior courtyard is more detailed and exhibits more variation and interest. I think the addition of brick will help and the mansard roof details are a positive addition, however, it feels like the mansard roof elements need be to better incorporated into the overall design, as noted in the staff report.

The south, west and north facades definitely need more articulation or definition. They feel like the "back of the building" and lack real architectural expression. Would a strong horizontal element that runs along these facades help break up the verticality and lessen the feeling that the building looms over its neighbors? Please consider improvement of these elevations carefully in your review. Not being an architect, I can't suggest a design solution but hope that you can.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and all your good work.

Susan N. Mossman  
50-year Madison Heights resident  
Former Executive Director of Pasadena Heritage (retired)

## Takeda, Michi

---

**From:** Buff Gontier [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 21, 2024 2:52 PM  
**To:** commentsDC  
**Subject:** 505 S Oak Knoll

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Regarding development at 505 S Oak Knoll, I'm told the plan includes a four story, 46 unit building. While S Oak Knoll does have other condominiums, it also has bungalows. Such a huge building would overwhelm the neighborhood, restricting light into neighboring homes, and creating additional parking and traffic and noise issues for the residents and for the school on the street.. A three story building would be compatible with existing structures.

Buff Gontier  
[REDACTED]

## Takeda, Michi

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**From:** Cybelle Sato [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 2:59 PM  
**To:** commentsDC; Johnson, Kevin  
**Subject:** 501 South Oak Knoll building proposal

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Hello Mr. Johnson-

I have become aware of a 4 story building that is being proposed on my block at 501 South Oak Knoll Boulevard. From what I understand of the plans, this is going to put unnecessary strain on our already crowded and dangerous conditions.

The proposed 4 story building, maxed out to the property line, will be detrimental to the community. No other buildings on our block are 4 stories, much less "maxed out" to the lot line on all levels. If there were to be a design with the community and constituents in mind, this would need to be amended to allow light and less sound pollution into the neighboring buildings. Four stories is way too high for our community. The noise from the electrical substation to the south is already challenging for those in the neighboring buildings to tolerate. Adding a vertical 4 story wall will amplify the sound for those living in the adjacent buildings, while protecting those in the newly proposed building. That does not build a sense of cohesiveness to the community.

However, my biggest disagreement with this proposal is the amount of traffic and parking difficulties this large of a site will bring. We already have a hard time parking on this street with the school sharing a majority of the block, and to add 46!!! additional units is insane. I have requested that we get speed bumps on this block, since people are constantly speeding down our street at dangerous rates, and this was never done. There are frequent accidents on the corners of Oak Knoll and both Del Mar and California due to the amount of traffic barreling down our block at unsafe rates of speed. It is incredible that the city would even consider adding this much more congestion and danger to our street.

Pasadena has always been a charming city that appeals to those of us who want to live a little further away from congestion. Lately, I feel like the representatives of the city are far more interested in revenue than of the safety and quality of life of the citizens who live and pay taxes here. That is a complete shame and needs to be rectified. We all want to live in a place where we don't have to worry about getting mowed down by a speeding car as we cross the street or having nowhere to park when we get home from a long day at work. And when we get home, we want to see some sunlight when we can.

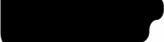
Thank you.

Best regards-  
Cybelle

--

**Cybelle Sato**

Specialist - Series | Production Technology and Operations



"We can find a better version of us around every corner if we are authentic, empathetic and trustworthy"



My working day may not be your working day. Please do not feel obligated to respond outside of your normal working hours.

**Takeda, Michi**

---

**From:** Benjamin Bock [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 10:19 AM  
**To:** commentsDC  
**Subject:** Objection to development at 505 South Oak Knoll

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Dear Design Commission of Pasadena,

I am writing as a resident of [REDACTED] Oak Knoll, the small craftsman house across the street from the 505 lot. I would like to express my firm and complete objection to the proposed development at 505.

I've been a resident of California all my life, but in the last four years it has been a privilege to call Pasadena my home. The 1903 craftsman home and the quiet residential block of Oak Knoll where I live plays a huge part in that. While I understand other recent apartment complexes going up on busier streets like Del Mar, the proposed development would thoroughly overwhelm the quiet block of Oak Knoll.

Traffic is already snarled on school days from McKinley, this huge complex would only add to it. The noise and light pollution from construction would be intolerable. What makes this block special, and the house that I live in, would radically change.

As you know, Pasadena was designed following the "City Beautiful" movement. The historic street where we live is testament to that, with its oak trees and winding, flower-lined sections. The proposed 4-story 46-unit building at 505 South Oak Knoll would be antithetical to the ideals and design philosophy upon which this city was founded.

I ask you as a resident of Pasadena and Oak Knoll avenue to turn down this proposed development at 505 Oak Knoll.

Sincerely,  
Benjamin Bock

**From:** David Fairris <dfairris@ucr.edu>

**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 1:37 PM

**To** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

all:

below is the email chris and i just sent to the design commission regarding the 505/511 proposed development.

September 23, 2024

TO: Pasadena Design Commission and Planning Department

FR: David Fairris and Christina Sayler, Residents at 534 S. Oak Knoll (first floor facing west)

RE: Proposed Development at 505/511 S. Oak Knoll

We herein offer comments on the proposed development at 505/511 S. Oak Knoll. For starters, we should report that all of the neighbors we have spoken with embrace the notion of affordable housing, and welcome this aspect of the proposed development. We feel the four-story structure and 46-unit density will be “way over the top” for our neighborhood, with its many historic homes and two- and three-story apartments and condominiums, all providing copious amounts of greenery and light. While we understand that some concessions may be inevitable given the California Density Bonus Law, we request that the city provide a transparent accounting of the manner by which this development meets the requirements that warrant increased density and height (e.g., by our calculations, the proposed 6 low-income units is too few given the 46-unit plan, and this is under the assumption that the 6 units are for the lowest of income individuals and families). Below we focus on a few other concerns we have that may warrant further study and which might conceivably be mitigated by the City.

The site plan reports 22 feet, 6 inches of setback, but when one takes into consideration the two entry ways, the setbacks in those areas amount to roughly half the 22 feet. Given the height of the building, we feel the setback should be as large as it can possibly be so as not to feel entirely overwhelming to neighbors who will see the building on a regular basis. Might it be possible, for example, to increase the garden space in the front of the building, currently estimated at roughly 2,000 sq. ft., by reducing some of the very large garden space, roughly 6,000 sq. ft., in the interior? An additional possibility would be to plant more mature trees out front, where the site plan currently plans for trees to be located.

The electric substation behind the house across the street (Amanda Elioﬀ and Brian Fulcher’s home, which is a historic fire station, an important part of Pasadena’s history, and a source of great fondness to the neighborhood and local firefighters) emits a hum that we fear may be far more pronounced given the height of the proposed development. We would welcome a study of this issue, and well in advance of any sort of groundbreaking activity.

Given that this development will be more than the currently-existing 42 units south of the school playground, we are deeply concerned about the impact this will have on street parking. At present, we often have parking issues during the day with workers and visitors, and overnight, with unlimited public parking. We request an impact study of parking on our block as a result of the new development, with the possibility of implementing permit-only parking, and a consideration of other ways to mitigate parking congestion. We feel that 2 parking spaces per unit in the development should be required given the reality of Southern CA car ownership.

Traffic, too, will be an issue. For example, at present, when school starts and ends, traffic congestion on our street can be intense, and especially at the intersections with both California and Del Mar. School safety also needs to be addressed given the proposed massive increase of residents with the proposed development. Please note that we do not favor a traffic light at California and S. Oak Knoll. A traffic light, to our way of thinking, would simply bring more traffic to the street, as people divert from the already congested traffic streets of El Molino and other blocks to the west.

Neither of us will be able to attend the Design Commission meeting on September 24. We hope the above comments will be taken into consideration despite our absence. We hope to attend future meetings of the Design Commission and Planning Department, at which we will make these important matters known in person.

Thanks for your consideration. Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Dave

David Fairris

Professor Emeritus of Economics

Department of Economics

University of California

Riverside, CA 92521

<https://profiles.ucr.edu/app/home/profile/dfairris>

## Takeda, Michi

**From:** Nancy Goble [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 23, 2024 7:43 AM  
**To:** commentsDC  
**Subject:** Proposed Development at 505 S. Oak Knoll Ave

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Development Commission,

We are residents of the 500 block of S Oak Knoll Avenue. We have obtained some information regarding the proposed development at 505 S. Oak Knoll Ave. and wanted to bring some concerns to the attention of the Commission regarding this proposed development.

As residents of the neighborhood, we fully anticipated the day would come when the vacant lot at this address would be developed. We are also supportive of efforts to address the local housing shortage as well as the affordability of housing. While compromise will likely be involved in meeting these goals, it is our opinion that the proposed development will overwhelm this section of S. Oak Knoll Avenue, negatively impact the overall community, including new residents, and result in an unduly harsh burden on current residents. Specifically:

1. Portions of the City's Design-Related Policies in the Land Use Element of the General Plan discuss designing within the architectural detailing of their contextual setting (Section 7.3); use of building materials, colors and architectural details complementing the neighborhood (Section 23.1); and respecting the architectural character and scale of adjacent buildings (Section 25.4). This project does not meet these goals, based on the four-story size of the building and the architectural rendering that has been made available. This proposed structure would physically overwhelm the neighborhood. Also, while there is a variety of architecture in the neighborhood - some stucco, some craftsman, etc. - there is nothing discernable in the rendering that aligns with any existing structure in the neighborhood. In short, this structure would stick out like a sore thumb.
2. The addition of 46 units is a significant increase in density for the neighborhood, specifically as it relates to traffic and parking.
  - a. There is an elementary school at the northeast corner of Del Mar and S. Oak Knoll Avenue. This is just north of the proposed development. Adding 46 units to the neighborhood will increase traffic on a street that already sees a fair amount of traffic, especially at the beginning and ending of the school day, as well as some speeding incidents. We don't want the increase in traffic to increase the risk to students. What additional measures, such as speed bumps, are proposed to keep students safe?
  - b. There is no traffic light at the intersection of California and S. Oak Knoll Avenue. Besides the recent stop sign indicating no left turn on to California during certain hours of the day (which is often ignored), how will these traffic concerns be addressed?
  - c. With respect to parking, how many parking spaces will be provided within the subterranean garage? Will there be guest parking spots? If so, how many? More cars added to the neighborhood that want access to street parking will present additional challenges and congestion, especially during the school year.

It is our understanding that additional concerns have been raised about the Canyon Live Oak tree on the property adjacent to the south. We support measures and changes to the proposed development to assure that this tree is unaffected by any development of this vacant lot. Finally, the proposed four-story structure combined with reduced

setbacks from the lot lines will have a significant negative impact on the neighborhood in general, but especially the existing buildings adjacent to the south, west and north boundaries of the proposed structure. Any changes that can be incorporated to reduce or minimize these negative impacts should be incorporated before this project is approved.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Nancy and Marwin Goble



**Takeda, Michi**

---

**From:** Lisa Jacobs [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 19, 2025 10:15 AM  
**To:** commentsDC  
**Cc:** Amanda Elioff  
**Subject:** 511 S. Oak Knoll Ave. too big for neighborhood

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Dear City Councilmembers,

I live at 500 S. Oak Knoll Ave. in a lovely 48-unit condo complex. We have a beautiful, spacious inner courtyard filled with mature trees and foliage.

It is a peaceful, wonderful place to live.

I welcome more housing in our town. We need it. And, more people deserve to have the walkability and the quality of life I and my neighbors have.

However, as designed, 511 S. Oak Knoll Ave. does not fill that need.

People who rent/own these new units will not be happy with their living situation once they realize:

- Their inner courtyard is tiny and won't provide sunlight and the tranquility of nature. The building is far too large for the small lot. Our lot at 500 S. Oak Knoll Ave. has a similar number of units but is twice as big.
- Traffic and parking along Oak Knoll will be impossible as McKinley School field is used for youth soccer practice in the evenings and games on weekends.
- Their proximity to a busy California Avenue — with only a stop sign — will mean backups during commuting hours. It's possible they won't be able to get out from their underground parking as cars will backup onto Oak Knoll trying to get to California.
- The interior walkway design for this building will prove to be wonky, with no way for residents to easily reach an elevator. We walk home with our groceries in this neighborhood, so elevator access is key.

- Our new neighbors will find their units noisy with so many HVAC units on the roof.

Please consider sending this project back to the drawing board.

We're a friendly bunch here on Oak Knoll Avenue and we want our neighbors to be happy and to stay for a long time. I fear with this design, the building will become a revolving door of dissatisfied tenants.

**Takeda, Michi**

---

**From:** Jeff Nicole [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 28, 2025 3:51 PM  
**To:** Cisneros, Stephanie; commentsDC  
**Cc:** Jeff Nicole  
**Subject:** Public Hearing 511 S. Oak Knoll - Comment

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi, I'm Nicole Roberts, a condo owner from the property next door to 511, [REDACTED]. Oak Knoll. As many of us who moved here as young couples hoping to start a family in our first starter home, I will share that for the past 5 years since we moved in, there has been constant anxiety over what would become of this lot.

We had hoped it would become a dog park or a community space, since we have the McKinley school directly next to us and so many children occupy our streets every single day, not to mention junior soccer leagues that play all weekend long during the school year, filling the street with screams of play and large SUVs.

But now we have a maximum-level density apartment building which serves no purpose other than to house loads more people and generate money. We, the residents, are not rosy-eyed optimists, but regular people who work incredibly hard to pay our high HOA and rising property tax fees every year in Pasadena. Some of us on this block also have very young children that are learning what sidewalks are all about; others are retired or disabled and are committed to daily walks for much-needed exercise or physical therapy. Our numerous dogs are all friendly and know each other- we are good neighbors and keep our street clean. In short- we are already GOOD and AT CAPACITY as a functioning block and our streets are FULL.

This development will undoubtedly be disruptive. And Mr. Cao is a developer so he will develop at our expense.

My personal property investment has already fallen 100k since last year- so I ask you: how much more will you have those of us at 501 S. Oak Knoll lose, when you are proposing to have up to 209 more cars added with 46 units? Where will the many extra dumpsters go that already block an unsafe and crowded driveway that we have every Tuesday and Wednesday on trash day? What kind of privacy can we hope to expect when Mr. Cao is proposing to build merely 5 ft from our property line with 4 stories of open balconies that will not only block a large portion of light to all of our south-facing windows, but will allow tenants walking to their apartment to easily peer into our patios and kitchen windows?

I can tell you what: I don't feel safe starting a family here any more if our block is just going to be turned into a money-making condo enterprise with loads more trash, noise and debris.

We've already faced a blow from the city by being denied a speed bump on our block to reduce speeding cars-what kind of safety and quality of life measures is the council planning to take to protect those of us who live here and are already dealing with overcrowding?

I urge you to reconsider what kind of apartment "hotel" you are welcoming to this historic street for the happiness and well-being of a diverse group of longtime-residents who are working to preserve the integrity of our block. Thank you.

Nicole Roberts  
 [REDACTED]  
 Pasadena, CA 91101  
 [REDACTED]

**Takeda, Michi**

---

**From:** andy yan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 28, 2025 12:35 PM  
**To:** Cisneros, Stephanie; commentsDC; Amanda Elioff  
**Subject:** Fw: Andy from [REDACTED] Oak Knoll

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

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Good afternoon Mrs. Cisneros,

My name is **Andy Yan**, and I reside at [REDACTED] **Oak Knoll Ave.**, [REDACTED] **Pasadena**.

I would like to take a moment to **express my concerns regarding the proposed development at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue** in advance of the upcoming public hearing.

Thank you very much for your time and thoughtful consideration of our neighborhood's concerns.

Warm regards,  
**Andy Yan**

[REDACTED]  
Pasadena, CA

Jun (Andy) Yan

----- Forwarded Message -----

[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 28, 2025 at 12:17:52 PM PDT  
**Subject:** Re: Andy from 501 S Oak Knoll

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your efforts and continued support in speaking up on behalf of our neighborhood regarding the potential disturbances associated with the proposed 60-unit, four-story apartment project at **511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue**.

Frankly, I understand that at this stage, it may well be difficult to make significant changes to the project's planning. Nevertheless, I wish to share a few concerns that are likely shared by many existing residents, particularly those at [REDACTED] **Oak Knoll Avenue**, which will be most directly affected.

---

## 1. Traffic and Street Parking

The proposed 60-unit multifamily development will likely introduce approximately **120 additional vehicles** (assuming two per household), not including those of visitors and guests. Street parking on this block is already limited. During peak

periods — such as **school pick-up and drop-off times** or **weekend soccer matches** — traffic congestion and parking shortages will almost certainly worsen, creating significant inconvenience for both residents and parents in the area.

---

## 2. Perception of Safety

At present, the block of 501 S. Oak Knoll Ave is a **safe and family-oriented** community, especially in the evenings and on weekends. The addition of a large apartment complex will inevitably increase both **traffic volume** and **foot traffic from non-residents**, which could alter the sense of security and tranquility that current residents enjoy. If committee members were in our position, I believe they would share these same reservations about such changes to our neighborhood character.

---

## 3. Noise

We are also concerned about the **inevitable rise in ambient noise** once the new 60-unit building is completed and fully occupied. I would appreciate it if the committee could share whether there are any **plans or mitigation measures** in place to help preserve the current level of quietness and residential comfort for existing neighbors.

---

## 4. Potential Impact on 501 Property Value

Several specific factors could negatively affect the property value and quality of life for residents at 501 S. Oak Knoll:

### a. Privacy:

The planned four-story structure will **tower over surrounding buildings**. Residents on the upper floors of 511 will have **direct lines of sight** into our back porch, living rooms, bedrooms, and bathrooms — severely compromising privacy.

### b. Noise, Traffic, and Parking:

As mentioned above, the combined effect of increased population density and vehicles will exacerbate existing challenges.

### c. Sunlight and Airflow:

A four-story building constructed **just five feet** from our property line will undoubtedly **block natural sunlight** and airflow to our rear units.

### d. Safety and Emergency Access:

From a safety perspective, a **five-foot separation** seems inadequate in the event of a **fire or earthquake**. Our building already has limited egress — a passage of about ten feet between our front stairway and the wall bordering the soccer field. In an emergency, residents must be able to evacuate from both sides. We therefore **strongly urge** that the setback between 501 and 511 be **increased to at least ten feet** to ensure safe access for residents and emergency vehicles. It is difficult to imagine how fire trucks could reach Units 7–10 once the new construction and the soccer field enclosure are complete.

---

## 5. Respecting Mutual Rights and Neighborhood Character

While we recognize the **developer's right** to build on the 511 property, the **existing residents** surrounding the site also have legitimate rights — to preserve their **property value, privacy, peaceful living environment, and safety**.

We would welcome a **smaller-scale development**, such as **single-family homes or townhouses**, which would integrate more harmoniously with the character and density of the existing neighborhood.

---

I would be grateful for the committee's time, attention, and dedication to maintaining the balance between responsible development and neighborhood livability. I sincerely hope that our concerns will be taken into thoughtful consideration before the project's final approval.

[Jun \(Andy\) Yan](#)

[REDACTED]

On Monday, October 27, 2025 at 06:46:16 PM PDT, [REDACTED]

Anything I can do to encourage you? An email to the city would show interest.

Amanda

---

[REDACTED]

Not really.  
Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 26, 2025, at 4:48 PM, [REDACTED]:

Andy Are you thinking of commenting on the 511 development?  
Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 14, 2025, at 1:18 PM, andy yan [REDACTED] wrote:

NP.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

[On Sunday, September 14, 2025, 1:17 PM, Amanda \[REDACTED\] wrote:](#)

Thanks I think I read the j as an l I will try again later this afternoon  
Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 14, 2025, at 1:07 PM, andy yan

[REDACTED]:  
Hi Amanda.

Jun (Andy) Yan

September 23, 2024

TO: Pasadena Design Commission and Planning Department

FR: David Fairris and Christina Sayler, Residents at [REDACTED] Oak Knoll [REDACTED]

RE: Proposed Development at 505/511 S. Oak Knoll

We herein offer comments on the proposed development at 505/511 S. Oak Knoll. For starters, we should report that all of the neighbors we have spoken with embrace the notion of affordable housing, and welcome this aspect of the proposed development. We feel the four-story structure and 46-unit density will be “way over the top” for our neighborhood, with its many historic homes and two- and three-story apartments and condominiums, all providing copious amounts of greenery and light. While we understand that some concessions may be inevitable given the California Density Bonus Law, we request that the city provide a transparent accounting of the manner by which this development meets the requirements that warrant increased density and height (e.g., by our calculations, the proposed 6 low-income units is too few given the 46-unit plan, and this is under the assumption that the 6 units are for the lowest of income individuals and families). Below we focus on a few other concerns we have that may warrant further study and which might conceivably be mitigated by the City.

The site plan reports 22 feet, 6 inches of setback, but when one takes into consideration the two entry ways, the setbacks in those areas amount to roughly half the 22 feet. Given the height of the building, we feel the setback should be as large as it can possibly be so as not to feel entirely overwhelming to neighbors who will see the building on a regular basis. Might it be possible, for example, to increase the garden space in the front of the building, currently estimated at roughly 2,000 sq. ft., by reducing some of the very large garden space, roughly 6,000 sq. ft., in the interior? An additional possibility would be to plant more mature trees out front, where the site plan currently plans for trees to be located.

The electric substation behind the house across the street (Amanda Elioff and Brian Fulcher’s home, which is a historic fire station, an important part of Pasadena’s history, and a source of great fondness to the neighborhood and local firefighters) emits a hum that we fear may be far more pronounced given the height of the proposed development. We would welcome a study of this issue, and well in advance of any sort of groundbreaking activity.

Given that this development will be more than the currently-existing 42 units south of the school playground, we are deeply concerned about the impact this will have on street parking. At present, we often have parking issues during the day with workers and visitors, and overnight, with unlimited public parking. We request an impact study of parking on our block as a result of the new development, with the possibility of implementing permit-only parking, and a consideration of other ways to mitigate parking congestion. We feel that 2 parking spaces per unit in the development should be required given the reality of Southern CA car ownership.

Traffic, too, will be an issue. For example, at present, when school starts and ends, traffic congestion on our street can be intense, and especially at the intersections with both California and Del Mar. School safety also needs to be addressed given the proposed massive increase of residents with the proposed development. Please note that we do not favor a traffic light at California and S. Oak Knoll. A traffic light, to our way of thinking, would simply bring more traffic to the street, as people divert from the already congested traffic streets of El Molino and other blocks to the west.

Neither of us will be able to attend the Design Commission meeting on September 24. We hope the above comments will be taken into consideration despite our absence. We hope to attend future meetings of the Design Commission and Planning Department, at which we will make these important matters known in person.

Thanks for your consideration. Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

**From:** Benjamin Bock <bennyrayb@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 6, 2025 3:33 PM  
**To:** Amanda Elioff <ae01@msn.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Note from Amanda on 511

Hi Amanda,

Hope you're doing well! Very sorry I wasn't able to make the Oct. 28 hearing, I was in the bay area for a show. Here's a letter of protest:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed development at 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue. As a long-time resident of 510 South Oak Knoll, directly across the street, I am deeply concerned about the impact this project would have on our neighborhood.

The construction process would generate significant and prolonged noise, severely affecting my livelihood as a musician and producer who works from home.

In addition, the development would exacerbate the traffic congestion and parking shortages that already burden our area—particularly since McKinley's absorption of Eliot Arts Magnet Academy.

The proposed scale of this project would worsen gridlock along Oak Knoll and spill over into surrounding streets including Houston, El Molino, California, and Del Mar.

Most importantly, this development appears to be in direct conflict with Pasadena's founding principles and its proud legacy under the "City Beautiful" movement. The size and design of the proposal risk undermining the architectural integrity and historic charm that define our city and this block in particular.

Oak Knoll is a uniquely beautiful and peaceful street that embodies Pasadena's character. I urge the City to reconsider this proposal and work toward a solution that respects the aesthetic, historical, and residential integrity of our neighborhood. If the project moves forward as proposed, my roommate and I would unfortunately have no choice but to relocate due to the resulting noise and light pollution.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Bock

(510) 684-5850

510 S. Oak Knoll Ave.

Pasadena, CA

Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff  
541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue  
Pasadena CA 91101  
213.422.4987

06 Mar 26

Pasadena Planning and Community Development  
Department Design and Historic Preservation  
175 Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101

**Attention:** Kevin Johnson and Stephanie Cisneros

**Subject:** **511 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA**  
*Case DHP2024-00261; Proposed Multi-Family Development*  
*Composite Protected Tree Requirements for the Building and Property Design*  
*Protected Tree Preservation and Construction Related Issues*

---

Dear Mr. Johnson and Ms. Cisneros,

As Appellants, we would like to summarize our understandings of the Pasadena Department of Public Works Protected Tree requirements for the design and construction of the proposed multi-family, multi-story development at 511 S. Oak Knoll. This correspondence as well as all tables, attachments, drawings, sketches and images are expected to be incorporated in the City's Staff Reports and be readily available to the Pasadena City Council for the Public Hearing scheduled for 23 Mar 26 at the Pasadena City Hall.

While much of the following has been used in part in various communications and meetings since September 2024, as Appellants would like to state the following as the goals for this letter related to a Pasadena Protected Canyon Live Oak tree located at 541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue (541 protected tree) and located six feet (to tree trunk centerline) from the property line with the proposed "511" development.

- That the Pasadena **Tree Protection Ordinances (TPO)** (and related informational and guidance documents) are fully understood by the Applicant and other parties engaged in the development.
- The references and requirements to the TPO are visibly and reliability used within the Applicant's adjusted **Concept Design** for the proposed 511 S. Oak Knoll development related to Pasadena Protected (Native, Landmark and Specimen) Tree requirements. No exceptions and no compromises since at this point in time, it appears the building design significantly invades the designated **Tree Protection Zone** abundantly described in the TPO.
- Ensure protection of the 541 Native Tree is provided in the same manner as for City Trees.

## 1. Summary of Current Issues

We believe the current building design and physical layout need more attention and adjustment to eliminate apparent impacts to the Protected Native Canyon Live Oak tree located on the 541 property with its canopy overlying a portion of the 511 property. The issues that need immediate attention in a revised Concept Design include the following.

- Establishment of a definitive **Tree Protection Zone** and assign designated protection fence location. Adjust the relevant Concept Design drawings to suit. The current Concept Design is not compliant with the TPO.

- Adjust the current building design (foundation and superstructure) to properly accommodate the designated **Tree Protection Zone**.
- Fully address in an adjusted Concept Design, all related construction operations that may impact the designated **Tree Protection Zone**. Consider the following, for example.
- Consider an integrated 511 landscaping plan that respects and embraces the Protected Native Canyon Live Oak tree

## 2. Goals of the Appellants

In preparing for the City Council Public Hearing for the proposed 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue multi-family development, and after reviews of a significant number of reports posted with the Design Commission Concept Hearing announcement, we have several notes and comments that in our view, need to be formally recorded since they will not likely fit into the brief speaker time allowance at the next Public Hearing. Therefore, please consider and record the following related to the Protected Canyon Live Oak tree at 541 S. Oak Knoll.

- Protect the Pasadena designated “Native Trees” as defined in the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance and related Guidelines including;
  - Establish and securely fence a correct Tree Protection Zone, per PMC Chapter 6.52
  - Protect the root (bulb)
  - Protect the canopy
- Maintain **uncompromising stability & health** of the tree; during construction and afterwards.
- Recognize the risks to tree roots and canopy during construction operations and that these should be fully recognized in the design development phase starting with the Preliminary Design and continuing efficiently through the Concept Design to the Final Design stage. Key elements for tree protection include, but are not limited to the following.
  - Foundation footprint as well as excavation means and methods
  - Root moisture retention and tree stability
  - Support-of-Excavation (SOE) design location, rigidity and deflections
  - Canopy and drip line and Tree Protection Zone interferences

## 3. Concerns – Summary Based on the Concept Design Submitted to the City

- **Building and foundation design** to date has not correctly accommodated the presence of a mature Protected Canyon Live Oak Tree overlying a portion of the 511 property.
- **Fundamental design issues** relate to the actual location of the tree; its roots, trunk and canopy as well as provisions for the mandatory Tree Protection zone.
  - The East Elevation rendering shown in Figure 1 has the 541 Protected tree in the **wrong location** by approximately 10 to 11 feet. It is in fact more than 10 feet further north towards the 511 property, e.g. only 6 feet (to the tree centerline) from the property line with a portion the canopy overlying an additional 25 feet onto the 511 property)
  - The proposed multi-family building as shown in Figure 1 (as well as on all other design plan views) is placed too far south on the 511 property and, therefore, **significantly interferes with the Protected Tree**. Severe root and canopy interference issues are addressed in more detail below.



**Figure 1: East Profile (Concept Design Drawings AG-1.0, A-0.5 & A-2.6) of Proposed 511 S. Oak Knoll Development**  
*Canyon Live Oak Tree OS1 is shown about 12 to 15 feet south of its true position. It actually crowds into (clash) the south building façade by many feet since the trunk centerline is actually located approximately 6 feet from the property line.*

- **Preliminary and Concept Design drawings** are incorrect; some data, images, renderings have significant errors related to the location and protection provisions for the Protected Canyon Live Oak tree. These will be addressed below with tables and illustrations.
- **Building foundations and superstructure** substantially clash (interfere) with the location of the tree roots and canopy and the mandatory **Tree Protection Zone**. This issue will grow even more acute during building foundations and superstructure construction operations.
- **Mandatory tree protection safeguards** have not yet been sufficiently and reliably built into the Concept Design and in the Appellant's view, need to be addressed in accordance with the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinances (PMC Chapter 8.52) with a modified Concept Design.

#### **4. Building Design Changes Appellants are Seeking Related to the Protected Tree**

While abiding by the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance and Guidelines, the Appellants are seeking the following, consistent with good building (and foundation) design and surrounding landscape planning.

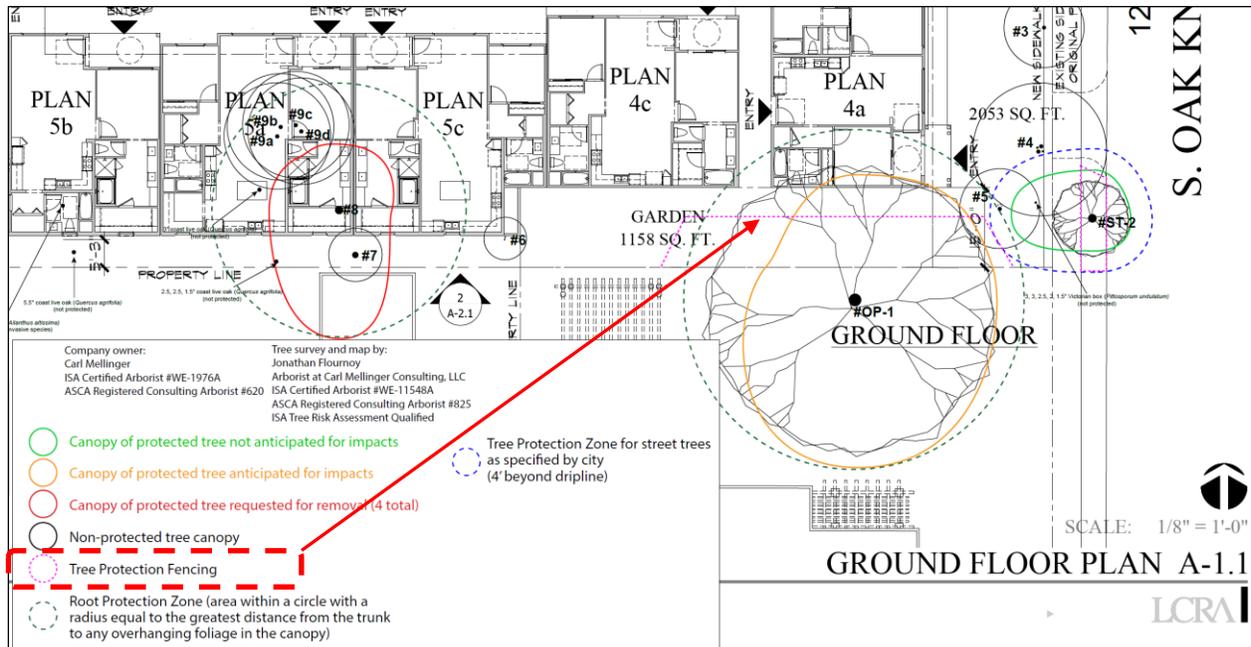
- Sufficient building cut-out (or set-back) to adequately **accommodate and protect** the Canyon Live Oak tree, including all roots and canopy in accordance with City Tree Protection Ordinances. No compromises.
- Landscape plan for 511 that recognizes and embraces the grandeur and prominence of the Canyon Live Oak tree while protecting its health and longevity.
- Seamless integration of the 511 landscape design with neighboring properties (per Pasadena Planning Guidelines).

The Appellants note that the desired changes would be beneficial to future residents at 511 and the neighborhood.

#### **5. Canyon Live Oak Tree Located at 541 S. Oak Knoll and Partially Overlying 511 S. Oak Knoll**

A general description and illustration of the Canyon Live Oak tree includes the following for reference and to connect this information with the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance and the Applicant's Concept Design. Please reference Figure 2.

- **Tree Location (541 and 511 S. Oak Knoll)**
  - Located on the north side of the Landmark property at 541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue
  - Trunk (centerline) is approximately six feet (72 inches to the centerline trunk) from the north property line with 511 S. Oak Knoll (please refer to images and sketches).
  - Canopy extends approximately 30 feet north and overlays the 511 property by approximately 25 feet.



**Figure 2: Ground Floor Plan (Concept Design Drawing A-1.1) of Proposed 511 S. Oak Knoll Development**  
 Canyon Live Oak Tree OP-1 is shown correctly at about 6 feet (tree centerline) from the property line. **Tree Protection (and Root Protection) Zone** illustrated [green dashed line] and the general outline of the overhanging canopy [orange line]. This view highlights the clash with the south building façade by several feet. An even greater clash exists with the foundation walls and Support-of-Excavation installation. The Tree Protection Fencing (magenta dashed) line is **incorrect**.

- **Tree Dimensions and Lean**
  - Diameter 36" DBH (drawing A-0.9 - Tree Plan and Inventory, of the Concept Design states 25").  
 [Note this is Native tree is well over the 8" diameter described in the Native and Protected Tree requirements]
  - Height overall 60 to 70 feet (estimated top of canopy) and is considerably taller than and adjacent Engine House 34 hose drying tower.
  - Width 60 feet (estimated canopy width) and variable
  - Lean Slightly to the south (sun side) towards 541 S. Oak Knoll single family Landmark residence and the Pasadena Water and Power Department electrical substation.
- **Tree Condition**
  - Excellent; green, leafy and robust. Please reference Figures 3a and 3b.
  - Very productive with acorns and popular with many squirrels
  - Inspected regularly by a licensed local Professional Arborist



**Figures 3a & 3b: 541 S. Oak Knoll – North Side Yard Adjacent to the 511 Property**

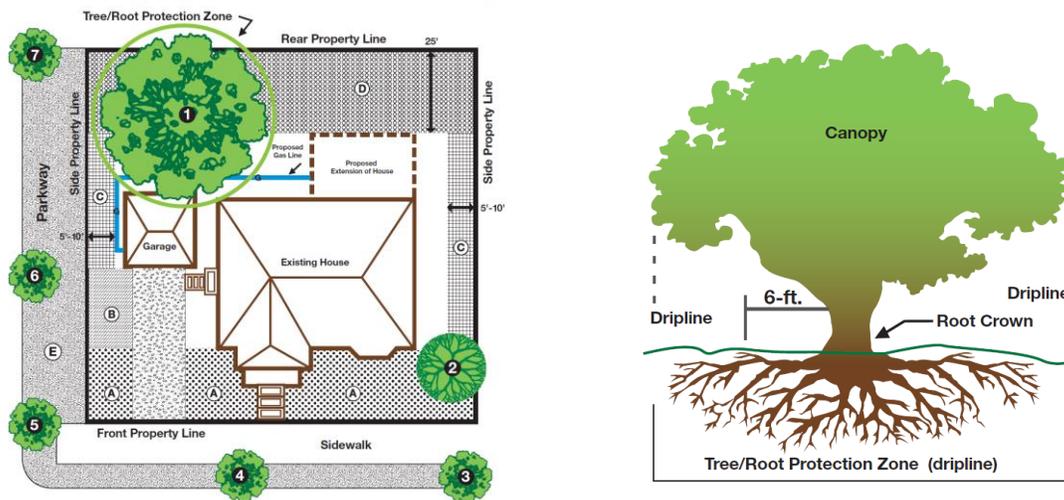
*Canyon Live Oak tree OS1 is shown about 6 feet south of the property line with 511 S. Oak Knoll. The lush and healthy canopy extends over the 511 property by approximately 25 feet.*

## 6. Tree Description and Protection Status

Pursuant the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinances, the 541 Protected tree may be described as follows with appropriate Ordinance and/or publications reference noted.

- Canyon Live Oak (*Quercus Chrysolepis*) and more than 8' DBH
  - TPO\_1 *13 Native Trees Protected by the City Trees and Tress Protection Ordinance – May 2002 Amendment*
- Designated **Native Tree** in Pasadena
  - TPO\_3 *Protected Species List – for the City of Pasadena [including Native – Protected Trees]*
- **Protected Tree** under Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance and Guidelines
  - S-642 *Standard Plan S-642, “Tree Protection Standard”*
  - TPO\_2 *Pasadena Tree Ordinance – Municipal Code Chapter 8.52 – City*
  - TPO\_5 *Sample tree Inventory and Tre Protection Plan*
  - TPO\_7 *Tree Protection Plans and Tree Protection Guidelines*
- **“Landmark Tree”** located on a Pasadena City **Landmark Property**, [formerly Pasadena Fire Department Engine House 34, built in 1917], i.e. historically significant or among the oldest/largest of their species, designated for historic significance, age, or size; protected in all zones. This Native tree is eligible to have **“Landmark Tree”** distinction.
- **“Specimen Tree”**. Inasmuch as the Native Canyon Live Oak tree located on the 541 S. Oak Knoll property is “Native” and “Protected” under the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance, it may well also qualify as a **“Specimen Tree”** which as we understand it, is legally defined by the City Council as “a tree of a specific size and species that possesses distinctive form, size, or age”. These trees are considered outstanding examples of their species and are also protected under the city's Tree Protection Ordinance.

In that this tree is considered “Native” to Pasadena and, therefore “**protected**” it requires Ordinance specified protection during all phases of construction. It is essential that mandatory tree protection measures and adjacent building designs are addressed and accommodated properly and early in the design development stage to avoid unnecessary conflicts. Please refer to Figures 4a and 4b that were obtained from the City of Pasadena, Department of Public Works.



**Figure 4a & 4b: Tree Inventory and Protection Plan, City of Pasadena, Department of Public Works**

Standard tree inventory and Tree Protection Plan showing the key tree protection requirements and in particular, those applied to “Native – Protected Trees” under the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance, Municipal Code Chapter 8.52.

## 7. Protected Tree Conservation and Preservation Requirements

The following are key considerations and requirements related to the 541 Protected Canyon Live Oak tree and whose roots and canopy extend in all directions and into the vacant property at 511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue.

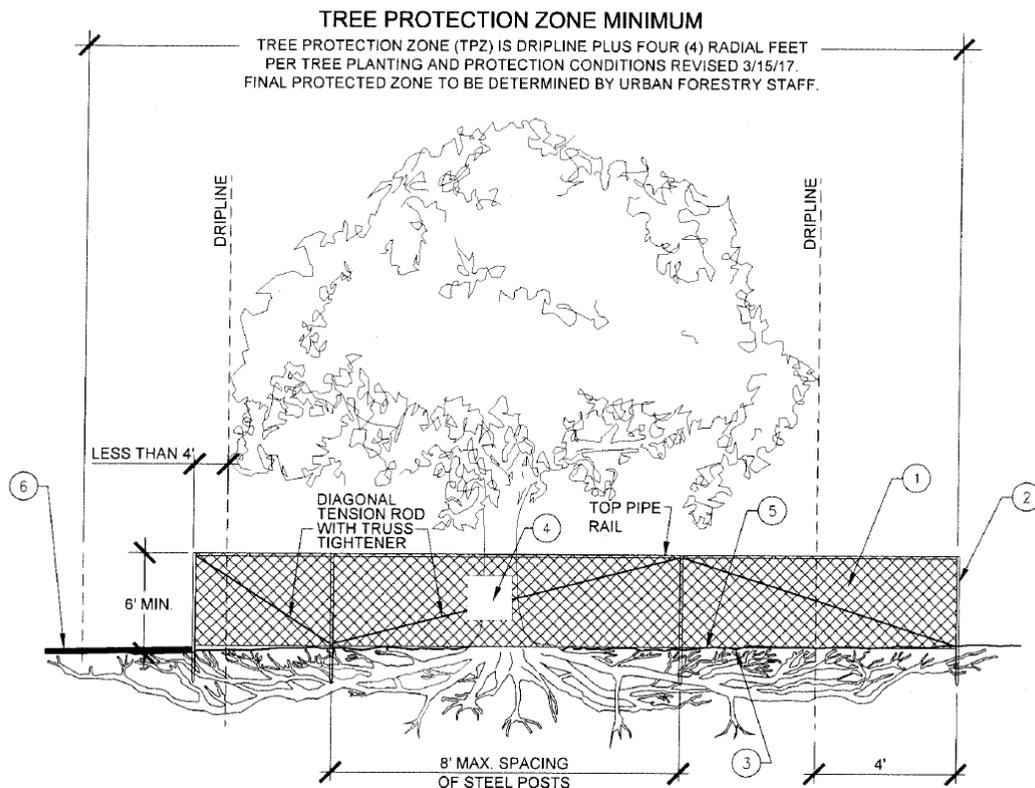
### 7.1 General Comments

- This is a native, protected and “landmark” eligible status mature tree
- Care and protection provisions fall under the formal Pasadena “**Tree Protection Guidelines**” enclosed in Appendix A
- Several qualified and experienced arborists have made assessments of the tree’s current size, health and general condition.
  - All agree this is a magnificent tree and one this is very characteristic of the immediate neighborhood.
  - It, therefore, needs to be afforded all care and protection measures outlined in the Pasadena Tree Protection Guidelines and cannot be impacted by the proposed multi-family development or any construction related operations.
- This tree, including roots, trunk, canopy and the essential *Tree Protection Zone*, need to be correctly shown on many of the Applicant’s Concept Drawings and renderings. They are currently;
  - Incorrect on some drawings.

- Missing on other drawings.
- Proposed building foundation and superstructure have significant conflicts (clashes and interferences) with tree roots and canopy.

## 7.2 Protective Fencing Defining the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)

- The mandatory **Tree Protection Zone Fencing** is not currently shown correctly on any documents reviewed to date. Please refer to Figure 5 that illustrates the TPO requirements. What is illustrated in Figure 5 is generally shown only on one drawing. Other drawings omit the **Tree Protection Zone** as well as the following critically important features.
  - Tree canopy perimeter
  - Tree canopy drip line (canopy + 4 feet radially from the tree trunk)
- The **Tree Protection Zone** (same as Root Protection Zone) needs careful definition, location coordinates and robust barrier fencing installation per the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance. Please see Figure 6a, 6b and 6c.
- At this time, it is very likely the proposed building foundations will substantially interfere with the designated **Tree Protection Zone** and particular, the Support-of-Excavation (SOE) system needed for the subterranean portion of the development.
  - The Support-of-Excavation system design and more particularly, a dimensional layout plan, have not been disclosed to date in the Concept Design submission.



**Figure 5: Tree Protection Standard, City of Pasadena, Department of Public Works**

Standard Plan S-642 dated 24 Aug 2018 showing the key tree protection requirements and in particular, those applied to "Native – Protected Trees" under the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance, PMC Chapter 8.52.

**Within the Tree Protection Zone per Pasadena Standard Drawing S-642**

1. No materials storage, trash or equipment operation shall occur inside the protected zone.
2. The established protected zone extends underground and “the sky”. Any encroachment is prohibited.
3. Tree protection is applicable during the construction, repair, alteration, relocation or removal on any building, structure or accessory structure in the City.
4. A Public Work permit is required for the installation of public tree protection chain link fencing. Please contact 626-744-4195 for permit requirements and fees.

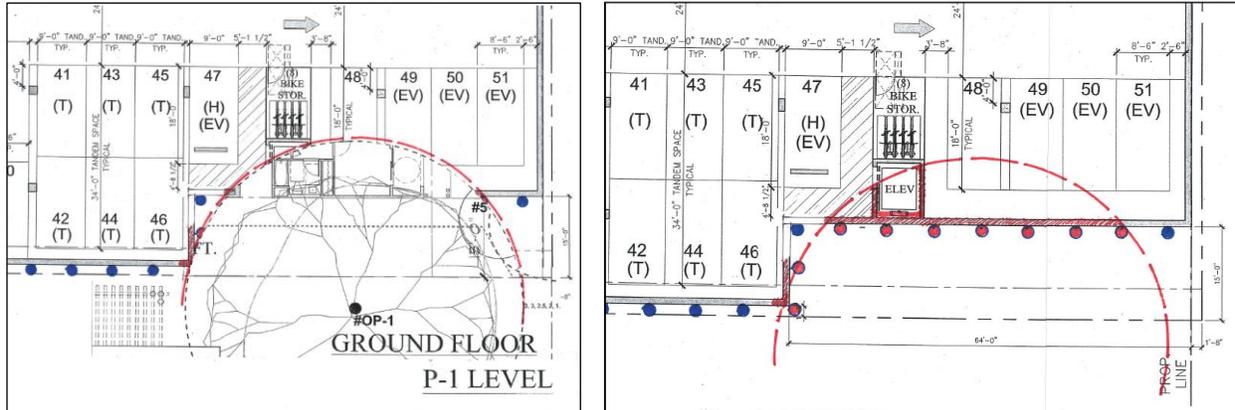


**Figure 6a, 6b & 6c: Mandatory Tree Protection Plan and Canopy Images**

*Tree Protection Zone per TPO criteria and dimensions (left image), stylized (architectural) tree canopy (center image) and probable actual tree canopy perimeter (right image) as illustrated in the Concept Design.*

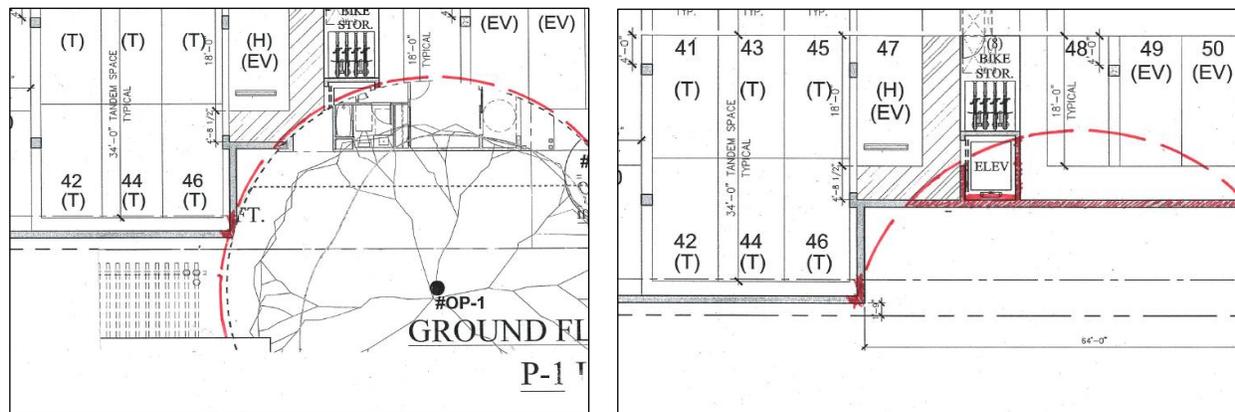
**7.3 Building Foundation Construction – Tree Root Conflicts**

- The proposed multi-family building development will require a subterranean parking level, say about 14’ below grade.
- To accomplish this construction, a Support-of-Excavation (SOE) wall will be placed “outside” of the design lines of the building foundation wall yet remain inside the property lines. Please refer to Figures 7a and 7b as well as 8a and 8b for the foundation walls.
- It is uncertain whether the numerous tree assessment reports and root exposure inspections were performed in locations for the following;
  - Building foundation walls, or
  - Expanded Support-of-Excavation location that in this case, further encroaches on the subject 541 Protected Oak tree location and roots
- This matter is crucial for mandatory successful care and protection of the Protected tree.
- Additionally, and owing to the adjacent surface (very heavy oak tree) loading and proposed SOE configuration, very careful attention needs to be paid to;
  - Deflections
  - Surface settlement
  - Ground loss



**Figure 7a & 7b: Mandatory Tree Protection Plan and Support of Excavation Interferences**

*Tree Protection Zone per TPO showing considerable interference from Support-of-Excavation for building foundation (left image) and placement on SOE element (right image) due to the over-size of the planned subterranean level. Assume pipe and lagging for SOE (typical). No additional space reservation(s) shown for SOE equipment and materials.*



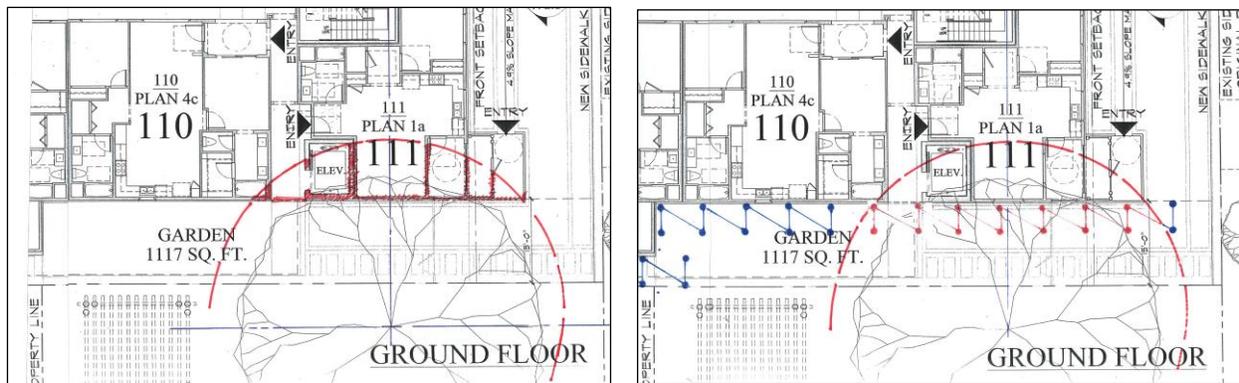
**Figure 8a & 8b: Mandatory Tree Protection Plan and Foundation Wall Interferences**

*Tree Protection Zone per TPO showing considerable interference from subterranean foundation walls (left image) And actual wall location (right image) due to the over-size of the planned subterranean level. Assume cast-in-place concrete foundation walls. No additional space reservation(s) shown for SOE equipment and materials.*

#### 7.4 Building Superstructure Construction – Tree Canopy Conflicts

- The East Side rendering (drawing AG-1.0) **incorrectly shows** the location the landmark Canyon Live Oak tree. See Figure 1. It is actually located approximately 6 feet (tree trunk centerline) from the property line and considerably encroaches on the proposed building superstructure (as drawn).
- Based on several drawings and renderings provided with both the Preliminary and Concept Design submittals, a portion of the canopy (as drawn) conflicts with the building’s superstructure (by several feet) and perhaps on several floors.
  - Conflicts (clashes) would emerge during construction operations
  - Exterior access scaffolding would be in further conflict with the space
  - Material handling needs would be highly compromised.

- Several referenced documents mention that the 541 Protected tree could be “pruned” (under a professional arborist supervision) to suit the multi-story building configuration. This approach appears to be in conflict with the following goals and guidelines and may result in a “one-sided shaved tree canopy” if only to suit the building superstructure and construction shoring and scaffolding. Please refer to Figures 9a and 9b.
  - Development landscaping plan (preliminary)
  - Pasadena “City of Gardens” goals
  - Attachment G: Tree Protection Guidelines
- In the Appellant’s view, no selective pruning should be permitted on the canopy of the 541 Protected Oak tree.
  - Creates unbalanced loads and may quickly look “unnatural” if only to accommodate the exterior building wall location.
  - Future owners of the proposed development will undoubtedly want to further prune the branches that currently clash with proposed building.
  - Fails to embrace several of the primary objectives of the Pasadena landscaping guidelines.



**Figure 9a & 9b: Mandatory Tree Protection Plan and Building Superstructure Wall Interferences**  
*Tree Protection Zone per TPO showing considerable interference from building superstructure walls (left image) and access scaffolding (right image) needed for exterior finishing due to the over-size of the building*

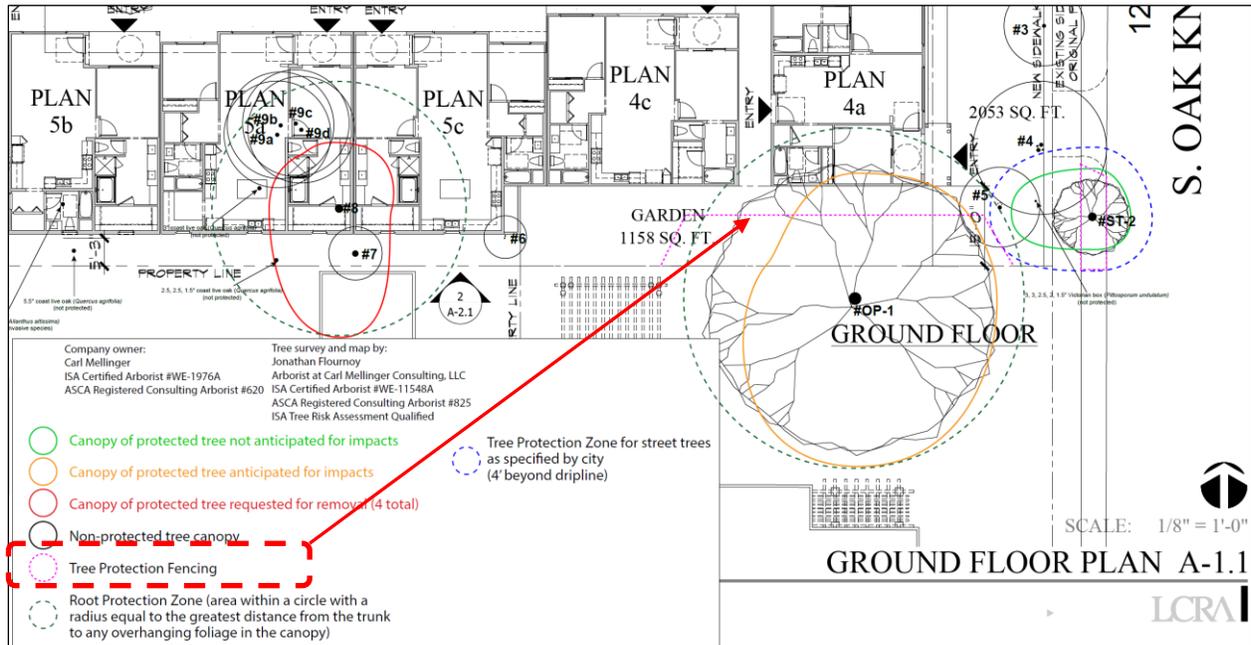
## 8. Concept Design – Drawing Review and Critique Related to the Protected Tree

### 8.1 Conceptual Design Drawings

The data and comments listed in Table 1 summarize attendance (e.g. illustrations and inclusions) to the location, dimensions and protection requirements under the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance for the 541 Protected Canyon Live Oak tree with a canopy overlaying a portion of the neighboring 511 S. Oak Knoll property. This process is sometimes referred to as a “design scrub” intended to check for occasional errors, omissions and inconsistencies, as well as to optimize the developing work product more efficiently. In the case of the 511 Concept design, many revisions are needed.



Many of the Concept Design drawings listed above illustrate practical issues related to the location and/or height and/or width of the protected tree canopy and need correction(s) along with building modification to comply with the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance. All issues are noted and color coordinated in the table. Please also consider the following comments in reference to Figure 10.



**Figure 10: Ground Floor Plan (Concept Design Drawing A- 1.1) of Proposed 511 S. Oak Knoll Development**  
 Canyon Live Oak Tree OP-1 is shown correctly at about 6 feet (tree centerline) from the property line. **Tree Protection (and Root Protection) Zone** illustrated [green dashed line]. The Tree Protective Fencing, however, [magenta dashed line] is not in accordance with the requirements of the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO).

- **Drawing A-1.1 – Ground Floor Plan (with Arborist Tree Inventory Overlay)**

Shows the locations of “Native” and “Protected” trees as well as other details related to tree inventory and condition survey. Issues with this drawing include:

- **Canopy of Protected Tree** (Canyon Live Oak - **OP-1**) clearly shows an impact with the Superstructure in the proposed building.
  - The extended Tree Protection Zone per PMC 8.52 (for roots and canopy) further exasperates the extent of the impact.
  - The drawing does not show construction related impacts to be experienced in foundation and superstructure construction that further invade the designated Tree Protection Zone.
- **Location of the “Tree Protective Fencing”** as drawn is incorrect and completely erroneous. See Figure 10.
  - Fence is NOT in compliance with the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance (PMC Chapter 8.52) and other related documents.
  - Leads to a flawed foundation layout and building superstructure design (dimensioning) resulting in severe intrusion into the designated Tree Protection Zone and tree damage.

- **Drawing A-0.9 – Tree Plan and Inventory**
  - Shows (Canyon Live Oak - **OS-1**) protected tree as having approximately 24” diameter. This tree is approximately 36” diameter (DBH).
- **Topographical Survey (Southand Civil Engineering and Survey, LLP)**
  - Shows (Canyon Live Oak - **OP-1**) protected tree as having approximately 24” diameter. This tree is approximately 36” diameter (DBH).

## 8.2 Conceptual Design – City Planning Department Staff Report – 28 Oct 25 Drawings

Immediately prior to the Pasadena Design Commission Public Hearing of the Applicant’s Conceptual Design, on 28 Oct 25 the Pasadena Planning & Community Development Department (Planning Division) issued a letter (with attachments).

Report date 28 Oct 25  
Regarding Application for Concept Design Review (DHP2024-00261)  
New Four-Story, 56,019 Square-Foot, 46-Unit Residential Project with One Level for Subterranean Parking

### Programming and Circulation

The project proposes one building in a U-shape to be generally sited at the north, south and west perimeters of the site and around a central main garden and ancillary gardens. The building will maintain five-foot, three-inch setbacks at the north, south and west sides of the lot and a 22-foot, six-inch setback at the east side (front). **At the southeast corner of the project site, the building is proposed to have a 15-foot wide by 64-foot-deep setback from the south and east property lines to provide relief to the adjacent protected Canyon Live Oak tree on the adjacent property. This carve-out spans the entire height of the project at this location and at the parking level as well.** A 21-foot-wide driveway is proposed at the north side of the site to provide access to the subterranean parking level.



**Figure 11: Historical Adequacy Encroachment Plane – Concept Design Drawing A-2.1**

One of the mandatory reasons for the superstructure set-back along the building south side and adjacent to the Landmark designated Engine House 34 (541 S. Oak Knoll) is the requirement for an **Historical Adequacy Encroachment Plane** as shown in red lines. This is not directly related to Native Tree Protection requirements.

**Appellant's Special Note:**

The Design Reports provided to the Pasadena Design Commission would lead one to believe that the 15-foot building set-back from the south 511 property line is to satisfy Native Tree protection requirements. We note that the 15-foot set-back (Figure 11) was more likely established to comply with the **Historic Adequacy Encroachment Plane** (per PMC 17.40.160) and not tree protection requirements in accordance with the TPO (PMC Chapter 8.52). This is also supported by the layout of the subterranean foundation walls further to the south.

**Protected Tree Removal**

The proposed landscape design is appropriate and complementary to the architectural style and will create visual interest throughout the year as demonstrated by the plant palette. The design, selection and placement of plant materials are cohesive and consistent throughout all landscape areas. It should also be noted that in addition to new trees to be planted, two existing public street trees, and a Canyon Live Oak at the adjacent property to the south, with root structure extending onto the subject property, will be retained. The tree and its relationship to the proposed project was evaluated by three consulting arborists – one hired by the applicant, one hired by the adjacent property owner, and one hired by the City. All three arborists visited the project site and the Canyon Live Oak and inspected the tree's root system to understand how the project may or may not impact it. Based on assessment and recommendations by the City's consulting arborist (see Attachment F), the applicant has modified the parking plan to relocate parking space no. 48 so that trenching can be extended another eight to nine feet to the west and occur approximately 17 feet from the trunk of the tree. This change has already been addressed and is reflected in the drawings in Attachment C. The standard tree protection requirements by the City are also required to be met to ensure preservation and protection of the tree and are included as recommended condition no. 4 along with additional condition nos. 5 through 7 as recommended by the City's consulting arborist.

**Appellants' Special Note:**

*The Appellants note that the mandatory **Tree Protection Zone** has not been adjusted correctly. Also, the current landscaping design drawings submitted with the Concept Design package do not address the 541 Protected Oak tree.*

**Dudek Tree Report – Dated 27 Aug 25 (Attachment F)**

Included with the Pasadena Planning & Community Development Department (Planning Division) Staff Report dated 28 Oct 25, several supplementary reports were attached for reference. One such report described an on-site tree and exposed root inspection by Ryan Allen from Dudek.

*Attachment A, Representative Site Photographs, depicts the trenching and grading impacts that are expected to occur for development of 511 South Oak Knoll Avenue. Photographs 5 and 6 depict trenching impacts that are expected to occur at the edge of the tree's dripline. This will impact approximately 10 roots that are 1 to 2 inches in diameter. Photographs 7 and 8*

depict trenching impacts that will occur within 7 to 8 feet from the tree trunk that will require pruning approximately four roots that are 2 to 3 inches in diameter.

Additionally, site development will require pruning the tree crown to allow construction equipment to operate without damaging the oak tree. This includes selectively pruning portions of the tree crown to create space for the equipment to operate. Finally, the site plans indicate that a decomposed granite walkway will be installed underneath the dripline of the protected oak tree.

**Root Impacts:** Trenching and grading impacts will occur at two distinct locations near the protected oak tree. First is the linear grading that will occur along the north side of the tree's dripline (Photographs 5 and 6). Root pruning will impact approximately 7% to 10% of the tree protection zone and will occur approximately 18 feet from the tree trunk, or 6 times the trunk diameter. This combination of factors would have a minimal impact on tree health. In addition, the roots that are identified for pruning are not larger structural roots. As such, pruning these roots will not impact tree stability.

Second is the root pruning that will occur on the north and west sides of the tree, approximately 7 feet from the tree trunk, or 2.5 times the trunk diameter. Four roots were identified that measure 2 to 3 inches and will impact approximately 5% to 7% of the tree protection zone. Pruning these roots will not have an impact on tree stability, but will present an impact to the tree's health based on the size and proximity to the tree trunk. The site plans indicate that trenching is needed to accommodate underground parking.

**Tree Pruning:** The north portion of the tree's crown will need to be selectively pruned to accommodate construction equipment during site development. It is anticipated that this could result in the removal of 10% to 20% of the tree's canopy. This is an acceptable level of crown reduction within a growing season. Pruning work should be approved under the following conditions:

**Tree Preservation:** Tree protection measures should be implemented prior to site development to improve soil conditions and promote the health of the tree. Such measures include the following: - -

- Install a protective chain-link fence at the edge of the proposed trenching impacts with a sign that clearly indicates that it is a tree protection zone and that no equipment, debris, liquids, or other materials shall be placed within the fenced area.
- Apply a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch over the soil within the fenced tree protection zone to reduce soil compaction and increase soil health.

4. **Disclaimer** 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 extended 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.

**Appellants’ Special Note:**

It is very important to note that when reading the Dudek report and enclosed graphics that;

- There was no close dimensional relationship confirmed between the Concept Design drawings and field conditions during the site visit.
- That construction equipment sizes and heights needed for the work, while generally discussed, were not confirmed and especially considering the extent for possible intrusion(s) into the mandatory **Tree Protection Zone** for building foundations, excavation and superstructure construction operations.
- The marked-up drawing enclosed in the Dudek report is a “stylized plan view” of the Canyon Live Oak tree which **does NOT** represent the actual tree (canopy) dimensions. This image originated from Concept Design drawing A-1.1 and is not the actual drip line or outline of the mandatory Tree Protection Zone for tree OP-1 (OS-1).
- **The Dudek Report does not represent or grant a formal waiver from the mandatory provisions in the Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinance, per PMC Chapter 8.52**



**Figures 12a & 12b: 511 S. Oak Knoll – Canyon Live Oak Tree**

*Canyon Live Oak tree OS-1 on the 511 S. Oak Knoll property looking (left image) and looking at the upper canopy (right image). [Source, Dudek Report 27Aug 25]*

### 8.3 Concept Design – City Planning Department Staff Recommendations – 29 Oct 25

Following the Pasadena Design Commission Public Hearing of the Applicant’s Conceptual Design on 28 Oct 25 the Pasadena Planning & Community Development Department (Planning Division) issued a letter (with attachments).

Letter date      29 Oct 25

Regarding      Notice of Decision

Concept Design Review – New 46 Unit Multi-Family Residential Development  
511 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Case No. DHP2024-00261

The following summarizes the portions of the City's letter that relate to protecting the Native Canyon Live Oak tree located in the adjacent 541 S Oak Knoll property with a canopy overlying a portion of the 511 property.

**Attachment A: Conditions of Approval**  
**522 South Oak Knoll Avenue – Concept Design Review**

**Design and Historical Preservation**

4. A tree protection plan prepared by a Certified Arborist shall be incorporated into the plans submitted for Final Design Review and shall include the City of Pasadena Tree Protection Guidelines dated 5/13/19 (see Attachment G). The tree, which shall be protected, is tree number OP1 as shown in the ground floor plan included in Attachment B.

**Department of Public Works**

26. A Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) shall be established for all existing City trees within the scope of a construction project. The TPZ extends from the base of the tree to four (4) radial feet beyond the dripline of a tree and applies to the entirety of the tree – from the roots to the canopy of the tree.
28. The applicant shall at minimum provide the following within a designated TPZ: mulching, irrigation, and protective fencing.
29. Prior to the issuance of any permit, the applicant shall submit a Preliminary Tree Protection Plan (PMC Ch. 8.52 – City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance), prepared by a Landscape Architect or certified Arborist, showing the TPZ and all structures, footings, and grading that may impact City trees shall be submitted to the Department of Public Works, for review and approval. Given that each construction project poses unique conditions, it is the responsibility of the applicant to develop a Tree Protection Plan based off the TPZ standards to the extent feasible. **The Plan shall conform to the Tree Protection Standards which specifically require showing the locations of all existing trees, their diameters, canopies, whether the tree is a public tree or private tree, as well as any trees to be planted with their canopy at mature size.** The final conditions of the Tree Protection Plan shall be approved by the Forestry Superintendent. A non-refundable flat fee, per the current General Fee Schedule, will be required for staff time to review the Tree Protection Ordinance compliance.
30. Prior to any construction, tree protections including the installation of fencing to protect public trees must be in place. The fencing material shall be chain-link attached to posts inserted into the ground at the edge of the dripline and shall be a minimum of 6' in height. See Standard Plan S-642 – Tree Protection Chain Link Fencing. Fencing shall maintain visual lines of sight in order to avoid vehicle and pedestrian hazards. Fencing shall include a minimum 8.5" x 11" warning sign with the following information: 'Tree Protection Zone'; name and contact information of project owner or authorized representative; 'Please contact the City of Pasadena Citizen Service Center to report any concerns (626) 744 7311'. All protective fencing must be permitted, inspected and approved by Public Works prior to the commencement of any construction.
31. Prior to issuance of any permit, the applicant shall submit a valuation assessment report of the existing public tree(s) along the boundary of their project. The report shall be prepared by a registered Arborist and submitted to PNR for review and approval. If it is determined that the applicant has failed to care for any City tree within their Tree Protection Plan, and

**9. Risk Analysis – Tree Protection, and Health Summary (preliminary)**

Table 2 summarizes a preliminary assessment of the risks and threats to the 541 Protected Oak tree located at 541 S. Oak Knoll.

| <b>Table 2: Preliminary Risk and Threat Analysis and Summary</b>   |                                    |                |   |   |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |             |                                   |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------|---|---|---|---|-----------------|---|---|---|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Preliminary assessment of the possible and probable risks and threats to the Protected Canyon Live Oak tree on the 541 property due to current design issues and anticipated construction operations on the 511 property. Total Score of 20 and higher highlighted.</i> |                                    |                |   |   |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |             |                                   |
| Item   | Subject and Description            | Severity Score |   |   |   |   | Frequency Score |   |   |   |   | Total Score | Comments / Mitigations            |
|  |                                    | 1              | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1               | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |                                   |
| <b>A</b>   | <b>Tree Stability</b>              |                |   |   |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |             |                                   |
| 1  | Severed roots                      |                |   |   |   | ● |                 |   |   |   | ● | 20          | Need to respect the defined TPZ   |
| 2  | Unbalanced canopy                  |                |   |   |   | ● |                 |   |   |   | ● | 20          | Minimal pruning only              |
| 3  | Wind loading                       |                |   |   | ● |   | ●               |   |   |   |   | 4           | Santa Ana winds from north        |
| 4  | SOE weakness                       |                |   |   | ● |   |                 | ● |   |   |   | 8           | SOE needs careful, robust design  |
| 5  | SOE rupture                        |                |   |   | ● |   | ●               |   |   |   |   | 4           | SOE needs careful, robust design  |
| 6  | Loss of moisture                   |                |   | ● |   |   |                 |   | ● |   |   | 9           | Measured moisture controls        |
| <b>B</b>   | <b>Moisture Issues</b>             |                |   |   |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |             |                                   |
| 1  | Declining health                   |                |   |   | ● |   |                 | ● |   |   |   | 8           | Over watering (bad)               |
| 2  | Structural weakness                |                |   | ● |   |   |                 | ● |   |   |   | 6           | Root pruning                      |
| 3  | Vulnerability to failure           |                |   | ● |   |   |                 | ● |   |   |   | 6           | High winds and seismic event      |
| <b>C</b>   | <b>Building Collisions (clash)</b> |                |   |   |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |             |                                   |
| 1  | Foundation walls                   |                |   |   |   | ● |                 |   |   |   | ● | 25          | Need to move fdn walls north      |
| 2  | Superstructure walls               |                |   |   |   | ● |                 |   |   |   | ● | 25          | Need to move bldg. walls north    |
| 3  | Superstructure balconies           |                |   |   |   | ● |                 |   |   | ● |   | 20          | Need to move bldg. walls north    |
| <b>D</b>   | <b>Construction Interferences</b>  |                |   |   |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |             |                                   |
| 1  | Initial site grading               |                | ● |   |   |   | ●               |   |   |   |   | 2           | Potential damage to canopy        |
| 2  | Foundation SOE (support)           |                |   |   |   | ● |                 |   |   | ● |   | 20          | Pot'l damage to roots & canopy    |
| 3  | Foundation excavation oper'ns      |                |   |   | ● |   |                 |   | ● |   |   | 12          | Pot'l damage to roots & canopy    |
| 4  | Foundation wall construction       |                |   |   | ● |   |                 |   | ● |   |   | 12          | Pot'l damage to roots & canopy    |
| 5  | Superstructure walls               |                |   |   | ● |   |                 |   |   | ● |   | 16          | Pot'l damage to roots & canopy    |
| 6  | Superstructure ext'r finishes      |                |   |   | ● |   |                 |   |   |   | ● | 25          | Conflicts with access scaffolding |
| <b>E</b>   | <b>Final Landscaping Design</b>    |                |   |   |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |             |                                   |
| 1  | Planting integration               |                | ● |   |   |   |                 | ● |   |   |   | 4           | Over watering potential           |
| 2  | Long-term tree protection          |                | ● |   |   |   |                 | ● |   |   |   | 4           | Over watering potential           |
| 3  | Moisture controls                  |                |   | ● |   |   |                 |   | ● |   |   | 9           | Over watering potential           |
| 4  | Chemicals and pollutants           |                |   |   | ● |   |                 |   |   |   | ● | 20          | Wash down pet relief area         |
| <b>F</b>   | <b>Health and Safety (tree)</b>    |                |   |   |   |   |                 |   |   |   |   |             |                                   |
| 1  | Construction chemicals             |                |   |   | ● |   |                 |   | ● |   |   | 12          | Storage and use of chemicals      |
| 2  | Fire                               |                |   |   | ● |   | ●               |   |   |   |   | 5           |                                   |
| 3  | Combustible materials              |                |   |   | ● |   |                 | ● |   |   |   | 10          | Required proper storage           |
| 4  | Soil compression & density         |                |   | ● |   |   |                 | ● |   |   |   | 6           | No operating / stored equipment   |
| 5  | Soil moisture control              |                |   |   | ● |   |                 |   | ● |   |   | 12          | Dust control & SOE containment    |
| 6  | Wind loading and tolerance         |                |   |   | ● |   |                 | ● |   |   |   | 8           | Compromised root capacity         |

## 10. Conclusions

We believe the current Concept Building Design and physical layout need more attention to mitigating objectionable and correctable issues, concerns and measurable impacts to the Protected Native Canyon Live Oak tree located on the 541 property with its canopy and roots overlying a portion of the 511 property.

The issues that need immediate attention (and adjustments) in a revised Concept Design include the following as more fully described above.

- Establishment of a definitive **Tree Protection Zone** and assign designated fence location. Adjust the relevant Concept Design drawing to suit.
  - The Tree Protection Zone is incorrectly shown on many Concept Design drawings.
  - The Protected Native Canyon Live Oak tree is incorrectly shown on several key Concept Design drawings, leading to flawed approach(es) to design and construction.
- Adjust the current building design (e.g. foundation and superstructure) as well as the corresponding shoring and scaffolding requirements to properly accommodate the designated **Tree Protection Zone**.
- Fully address in an adjusted Concept Design, all related construction operations that may impact the designated **Tree Protection Zone** including;
  - Foundation ground support
  - Foundation excavation
  - Superstructure construction
  - Superstructure exterior finish installation (access and scaffolding space requirements)
  - Other miscellaneous work (i.e. utilities) that may impact the Tree Protection Zone
- Consider an integrated 511 landscaping and maintenance plan that respects and embraces the 541 Protected Native Canyon Live Oak tree.

The proposed building height size and configuration (massing), while being the subject of numerous letters and other communications, remains considerably taller than all surrounding buildings, cutting-off natural light and unreasonably dominating the area if only to take advantage of the State's "density bonus concession". The enormous building footprint as illustrated in the Concept Design drawings also confounds and conflicts with a Protected Native Canyon Live Oak tree. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that a modified Concept Design address the 541 Protected Tree while concurrently addressing other impacts and be more harmonious in the immediate neighborhood.

We hope that the City will take into account our concerns as the building design is more fully developed and refined resulting in a well-designed and engineered development that minimizes (and eliminates) correctable impacts and nestles into the mature South Oak Knoll Avenue neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Brian Fulcher and Amanda Elioff (Appellants)  
541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

Letter to K. Johnson and S Cisneros

Date – 06 Mar 26

Page 20 of 25

**Attachments:**

Appendix A – *Glossary of Terms and Definitions*

Appendix B – *Letters from Appellants Related to Protection of the Landmark Native Protected Canyon LiveOak Tree Located at 541 S. Oak Knoll Avenue*

Appendix C – *Reference Documents*

Appendix D - *Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinances and Related Documents*

## Appendix A

### Glossary of Terms and Definitions

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- **Basal flair or root crown**
  - Tree trunk where it emerges from the root system and flairs out to create the base of the tree.
- **Canopy**
  - Area of a tree that consists primarily of branches and leaves.
- **City Trees**
  - Trees in the parkway are managed by the city; homeowners cannot remove or heavily prune them.
- **Construction Restrictions**
  - No excavation, storage, or traffic is permitted within the TPZ.
- **Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)**
  - The standard, specialized method for measuring the diameter of a tree's trunk, taken at 4.5 feet (1.37 meters) above the ground.
  - This measurement helps determine tree volume, biomass, and health, and it is usually taken on the uphill side of a tree to ensure accuracy on slopes
- **Dripline**
  - Means the outermost area of the tree canopy (leafy area of tree).
- **Fencing for Tree Protection**
  - 6-foot high, in-ground chain-link fencing is required around the TPZ
- **Pruning**
  - Only permitted for hazard reduction, with cuts authorized by a qualified arborist, avoiding "flush cuts".
- **Root Protection**
  - Trenching near trees requires specialized techniques, with roots hand-excavated, not cut, to avoid damaging the tree.
- **Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO)**
  - Pasadena Municipal Code, Chapter 8.52
- **Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)**
  - Area within a circle with a radius equal to the greatest distance from the trunk to any overhanging foliage in the tree canopy plus four (4) radial feet.
- **Tree Replacement Value/Cost**
  - Value or cost of the injured or removed tree determined utilizing the most recent edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal, published by the International Society of Arboriculture ("ISA").





## Appendix C

### Reference Documents

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- **Pasadena Planning Staff Report** dated 28 Oct 25
  - Prepared for the Pasadena Design Commission and Public Hearing on 28 Oct 25
  
- **Applicant Concept Design Submission**
  - Reviewed at the Pasadena Design Commission Public Hearing on 28 Oct 25

## Appendix D

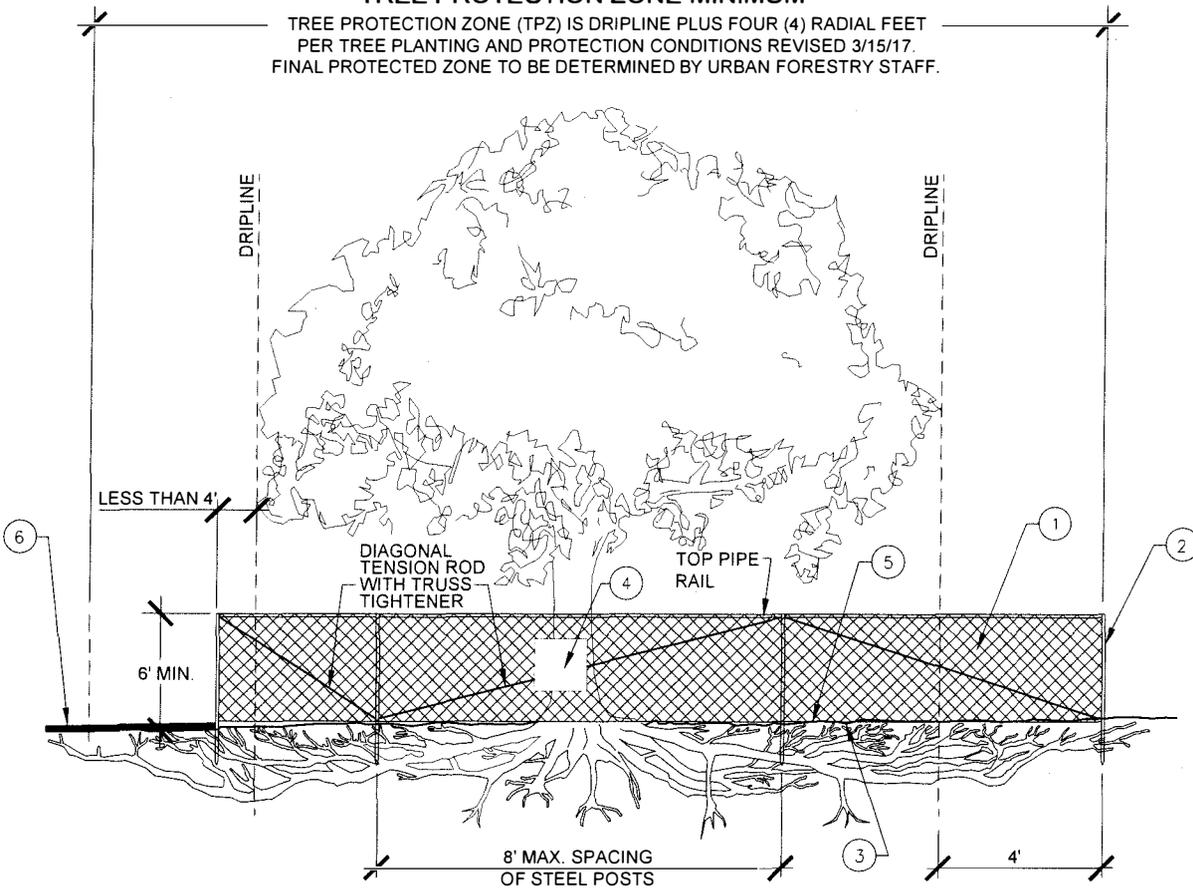
### Pasadena Tree Protection Ordinances and Related Documents

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- TPO\_1 13 Native Trees Protected by the City Trees and Tress Protection Ordinance – May 2002 Amendment
- TPO\_2 Pasadena Tree Ordinance – Municipal Code Chapter 8.52 – City
- TPO\_3 Protected Species List – for the City of Pasadena [including Native – Protected Trees)
- TPO\_4 Tree Protection Guidelines
- TPO\_5 Sample Tree Inventory and Tree Protection Plan
- TPO\_7 Submittal Requirement for Tree Protection Plans
- Tips for Tree Care Flyer
- Pasadena Urban Forestry – Frequently Asked Questions
- Pasadena Urban Forestry – [Urban Forestry - Department of Public Works](#)
- Tree Protection Standard – City of Pasadena – Department of Public Works
  - Standard Plan S-642 (Sheet 1 of 1), dated 24 Aug 2028

### TREE PROTECTION ZONE MINIMUM

TREE PROTECTION ZONE (TPZ) IS DRIPLINE PLUS FOUR (4) RADIAL FEET PER TREE PLANTING AND PROTECTION CONDITIONS REVISED 3/15/17. FINAL PROTECTED ZONE TO BE DETERMINED BY URBAN FORESTRY STAFF.



#### LEGEND:

- ① TREE PROTECTION FENCE - 6' HIGH MINIMUM CHAIN LINK FENCE WITH AN ACCESS GATE. FENCING LIMITS SHALL EXTEND TO TPZ.
- ② 2"Ø x 6" STEEL POSTS INSTALLED AT 8' MAXIMUM ON CENTER, TYPICAL WITH PIPE RAIL AND CORNER BRACES.
- ③ MAINTAIN EXISTING GRADE WITHIN THE TREE PROTECTION FENCE.
- ④ 8 1/2" x 11" MINIMUM RETROREFLECTIVE SIGN WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: 'TREE PROTECTION ZONE'; NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF PROJECT OWNER OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE, 'PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY OF PASADENA CITIZEN SERVICE CENTER TO REPORT ANY CONCERNS (626) 744-7311'. SIGN MUST BE PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED, SPACED A MAXIMUM OF EVERY 50' ALONG EACH FENCE PERIMETER WITH A MINIMUM OF TWO(2) SIGNS, ONE(1) FACING THE STREET AND THE SECOND PLACED ON A DIFFERENT FACE IN THE MOST VISIBLE LOCATION.
- ⑤ PROVIDE MULCH AND TREE IRRIGATION WITHIN TPZ AS DESCRIBED IN TREE PROTECTION GUIDELINES.
- ⑥ PROVIDE STEEL PLATE PROTECTION WHERE FENCING CANNOT EXTEND TO TPZ AND UNPAVED AREAS OUTSIDE OF FENCE BUT WITHIN TPZ WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC AND/OR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY.

#### NOTES:

1. REFER TO TREE PROTECTION GUIDELINES AND ORDINANCE FOR ADDITIONAL TREE PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS. (TREE PROTECTION STANDARD IS PURSUANT TO PMC CHAPTER 8.52)
2. NO MATERIALS STORAGE, TRASH, OR EQUIPMENT OPERATION SHALL OCCUR INSIDE THE PROTECTED ZONE.
3. THE ESTABLISHED PROTECTED ZONE EXTENDS UNDERGROUND AND "TO THE SKY." ANY ENCROACHMENT IS PROHIBITED.
4. TREE PROTECTION IS APPLICABLE DURING THE CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR, ALTERATION, RELOCATION OR REMOVAL OF ANY BUILDING, STRUCTURE OR ACCESSORY STRUCTURE IN THE CITY.
5. A PUBLIC WORKS PERMIT IS REQUIRED FOR THE INSTALLATION OF PUBLIC TREE PROTECTION CHAIN LINK FENCING. PLEASE CONTACT 626-744-4195 FOR PERMIT REQUIREMENTS AND FEES.

### CITY OF PASADENA - DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

DRAWN BY:  
DAVID WONG

CHECKED BY:  
BOB SULISTIO

SUBMITTED BY:  
LOREN PLUTH/  
MICHAEL KING

## TREE PROTECTION STANDARD

APPROVED BY:

CITY ENGINEER RCE NO.57442 EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2019

8/24/2018  
DATE

REVISION: 2  
UNITS: ENG

STANDARD PLAN:

# S-642

SHEET 1 OF 1

S-642.DWG 08/15/18



# Tree Protection Measures with Changing Landscapes

## Continued...

**If there is a green moss or fungus** on the trunk of the tree this is an indication of water hitting the trees' trunk which can damage the tree.

**When green moss or fungus appears on the ground** in your landscape this is an indication that the water is not moving through the soil properly the tree is being over watered.

**To mitigate water movement problems** use a six point pitchfork or tool to carefully poke holes along the edge of the dripline for adequate water penetration in to the planted areas.

**Being aware of changes in the landscape** can assist in early detection of stress/decline and will allow time to make needed adjustments to save drought suffering trees and landscapes.

## Tree Well Maintenance

**Use extra care when using a weed-eater** and seek to avoid hitting the base of the tree as weed-eaters may damage, impede, or kill the growth of trees.

**Remove climbing ivy from the trunk** or branches of the tree, and clear ivy and plants within five feet of the tree trunk.

**Remove rocks from the base of the tree** as rocks can cause poor water movement in the soil.

**Layer three to four inches of mulch in a five-foot area, 1-2 inches from the base of tree to reduce** water evaporation, keep soil cool, deter weeds and promote healthy soil.

## Additional Tree Protection Measures

**Avoid digging under the canopy of tree** which can kill small roots, and reduce the tree's capacity to absorb water, especially in times of drought.

**Use fire wood** from a reputable source to stop the spread of pests and diseases.

**Properly dispose** of contaminated material.

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More information on drought tree care can be found at the California Urban Forests Council website <http://investfromthegroundup.org/wp-content/uploads/Drought-infographic.pdf-Reg-Print-pdf.pdf> or download the Inland Urban Forest Council's tip sheet at <http://cityofpasadena.net/waterandpower/healthytrees/>.

As part of the City of Pasadena's commitment to preserving and growing the City's urban forestry, the Department of Public Works continues to provide educational information on tree maintenance and care during the drought in the City Manager's Weekly Newsletters, Pasadena In Focus issues, and Pasadena Water and Power utility bill insert.

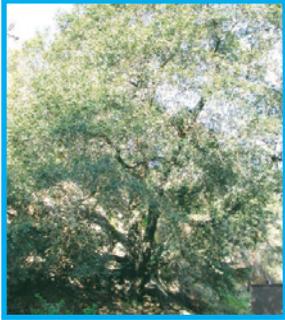
For more information about City trees and tree programs, contact the Department of Public Works Natural & Parks Resources Division at (626) 744-7311, or visit [http://cityofpasadena.net/PublicWorks/Parks\\_Natural\\_Resources\\_Division/](http://cityofpasadena.net/PublicWorks/Parks_Natural_Resources_Division/).



## Canyon Live Oak

(*Quercus chrysolepis*)

The Canyon Live Oak is a variable tree adapted to the often dry, hot conditions in Southern California. It can grow in a shrub form in harsh hill-side conditions, or to heights of 70 feet in open areas.

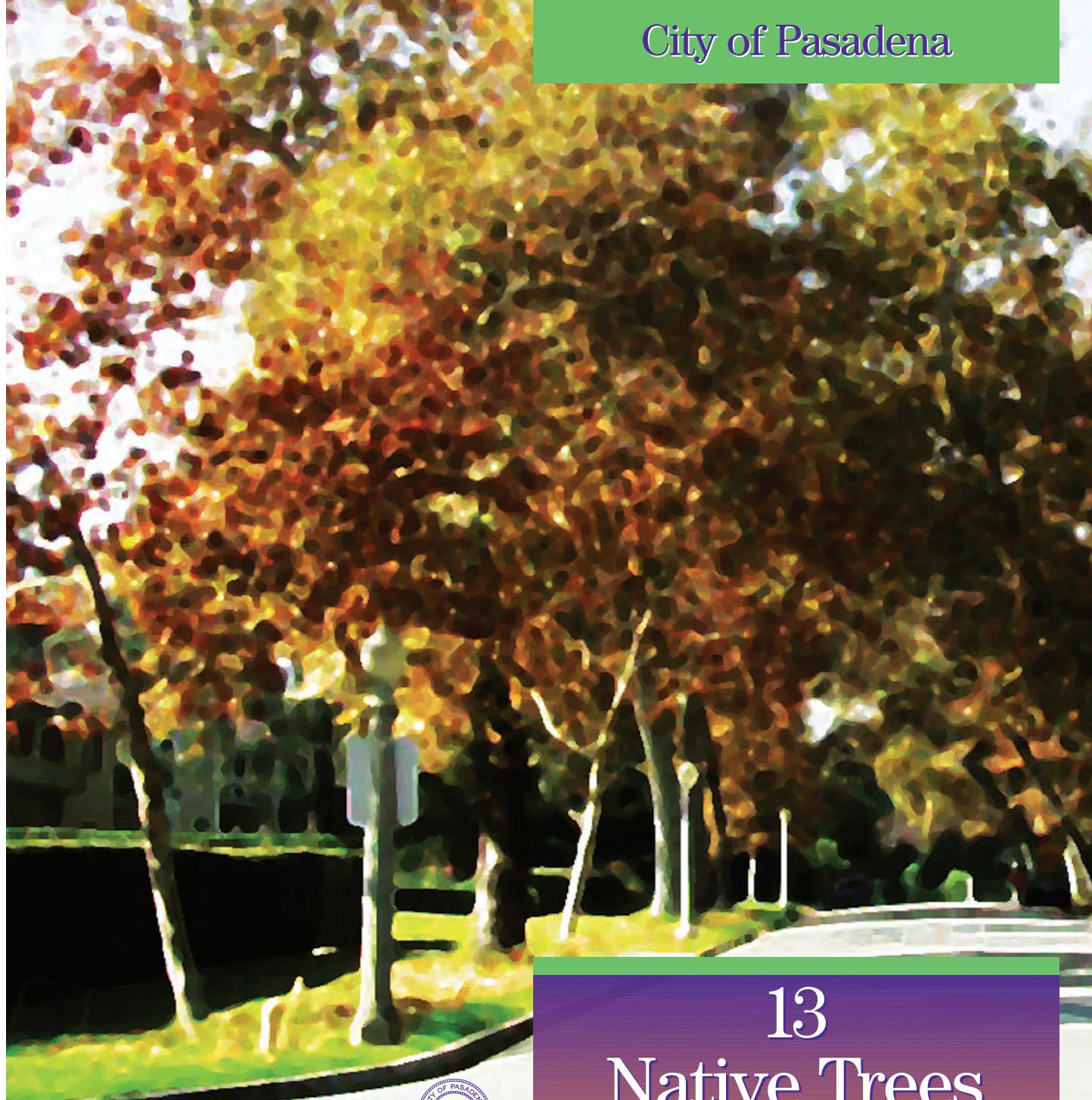
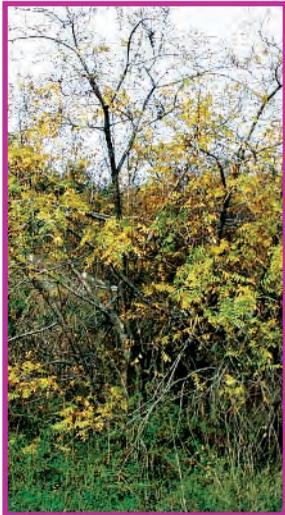


The average canopy spread is 20-60 feet. The leaves are bright, shiny green on top and bluish gray underneath; leaf edges can be spiny or smooth. The bark tends to be smooth while the tree is young, but becomes rougher and grayish with age. Besides its exceptionally strong hard wood, another feature is the large acorns that take two years to mature and can be between 2 to 3 inches long. The scientific name "chrysolepis" means "gold scale" and comes from the tiny golden hairs that cover the underside of the leaves and the bumpy scales of the acorn cups.

## California Black Walnut

(*Juglans californica*)

This native tree is 15-30 feet tall and frequently has several trunks. Trunks of mature trees are dark brown. Many separate leaves, the same size and shape, grow along a stalk up to 11 inches long; they turn from bright green to yellow before falling off in the winter. The walnut is small, thick-shelled and when cracked open resembles the face of an owl. Black walnuts, like acorns, were an important food for indigenous people of California and remain important for wildlife.



**The May 2002 amendment** to the City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance created protection measures for three types of trees on private property — native, specimen, and landmark. Native trees are specified for protection because they help maintain native populations of birds, insects, and other animals, and promote better environmental conditions. The 13 native trees that are protected in the amendment are illustrated and described in this brochure. To qualify for protection, native trees must have a trunk diameter of 8 or more inches at chest height. In residential zones, the trees must be in a specified setback. On non-residential properties, native trees are protected on the entire site.

The brochure is intended as a general guide to identifying native trees. To determine the species on your property, please consult with a certified arborist.

# 13 Native Trees

Protected by the City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance May 2002 Amendment

Department of Public Works  
Parks and Natural Resources



100 North Garfield Ave., Pasadena, CA 91109 (626) 744-4321  
[www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/publicworks](http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/publicworks) ▶ click on tree ordinance



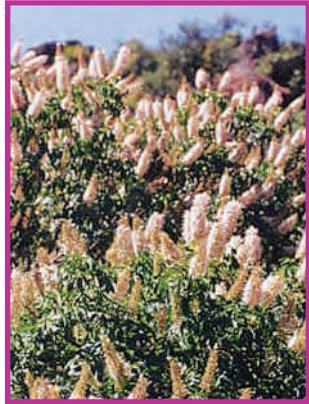
## California Buckeye

(*Aesculus californica*)

Like other native trees, the California Buckeye, or Horse Chestnut, is adapted to Southern California's dry climate. Its umbrella-like canopy spreads out to 30 feet, but it only reaches heights

of 15-25 feet. The palm-shaped leaves include 5-7 leaves that are oblong and pointed at the end. The large, light red or white flower clusters are attractive and pungently scented, producing nectar that is deadly to bees. In native settings, this tree loses its leaves in midsummer; in

cultivated areas, it retains them until late fall. Once the leaves fall, the large, pear-shaped seedpods are silhouetted against the silvery trunk and bare branches.



## Arroyo Willow

(*Salix lasiolepis*)

This tree is native to streams where there is plenty of water, which allows it to form a dense root mass. It may look like a shrub in areas that have frequent scouring floods; otherwise it can reach heights of 35-40 feet with a 45-foot spread. Arroyo Willows frequently have more than one trunk that is smooth and gray-brown when young, becoming

darker and rough with age. Leaves are oblong, dark green on top and silvery-white underneath, turning yellow-brown in summer and falling off in the winter. Large trees may look like they're "weeping" because of their hanging branches and long leaves. In spring, the cottony seeds can be seen blowing from the tree.



## California Sycamore

(*Platanus racemosa*)

Sycamores are stream-loving natives, reaching heights of 80 feet with a canopy spread of 50 feet. The highly recognizable bark sloughs off as the tree grows, displaying a patchwork of light and dark colors. Leaves are broad, deeply fingered and turn light brown/orange before dropping in late fall and winter.

Fruits of this tree are bristly brown balls comprised of many small, narrow seeds connected to tufts of "hair." In natural settings, Sycamores survive dry periods by having deep roots that reach down to ground water. In landscape areas, they need supplemental water during droughts.



## Coast Live Oak

(*Quercus agrifolia*)

One of Pasadena's most common native trees, the Coast Live Oak is highly recognizable by the dense canopy of small, cupped, dark green leaves that have prickly points along the edges. Trunk bark is gray; smooth and light colored in youth, rough and darker when mature. The acorns are dark brown, thin and pointed. Coast Live Oaks are generally slow-growing trees that may reach 70 feet in height with a canopy of 100 feet or more and a root system about the same size as the canopy. The trees drop some of their leaves in the spring, while gradually gaining new leaves. Over 200 native bird species rely on Coast Live Oaks for food and shelter.



## California White Oak/Valley Oak

(*Quercus lobata*)

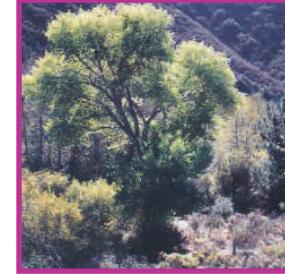
This majestic tree thrives in deep, rich soil and can reach a height of 150 feet, with a spread of 75-100 feet. The name *lobata* denotes the leaf's shape with 7-11 lobes. Leaves are glossy green in spring and summer, turning brown before falling in autumn. Valley Oak acorns are 1-2 inches long and chestnut brown. The bark is gray, thick and cracked. Legend says that when rainy winters are approaching, Valley Oaks drop more acorns than usual.



## Western Cottonwood

(*Populus fremontii*)

This water-loving tree, also called Fremont Cottonwood, grows to heights of 80 feet and has a broad, open canopy. The trunk is gray with thick, rough bark. The triangular leaves are often wider than long. They are shiny yellow-green during spring and summer, but turn bright yellow in the fall before dropping. Fruits are light brown, egg-shaped capsules that open in the spring to release many cottony seeds. Early settlers planted Cottonwoods for shade and windbreaks.



## White Alder

(*Alnus rhobifolia*)

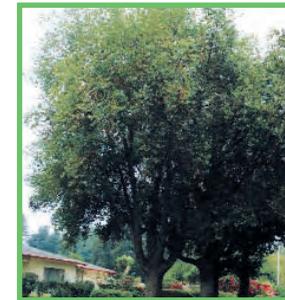
This is a fast-growing tree that will reach heights of 50-70 feet, with a canopy spread of 40 feet. It has one main trunk that is usually very straight and light gray, white or light brown in color. Branches that break off from the trunk leave scars that resemble eyes. Alder leaves are bright green, triangle shaped and have small teeth on the edges. The seeds are contained in tiny cones that are clustered on short stems. Alders need a continuous water supply and grow naturally along streams in Pasadena's canyons.



## California Laurel

(*Umbellularia californica*)

The Laurel is an evergreen tree that can grow 90 feet tall and 50 feet wide. The dark green leaves are glossy on top, finely hairy beneath, 3-5 inches long and leathery. The bark is generally smooth and reddish-brown. The round, 1/2 to 1-inch berry is green when young, turning dark purple when mature. Bay trees need steady access to water and grow naturally on canyon slopes and along streams. When rubbed or crushed, the leaves and twigs are distinctly aromatic and can cause itching in eyes. Leaves are not to be confused with the cultivated bay leaves that are used in cooking.



## Engelmann Oak

(*Quercus engelmannii*)

Also known as the Pasadena Oak, this is a large, wide-spreading evergreen tree. The canopy has an average height of 40-50 feet and can be twice as wide. It has smooth, wavy-edged leaves that are 2-3 inches in length and gray-blue in color. The bark is light gray and furrowed. Acorns are round-tipped and half enclosed in bumpy caps. These Oaks are adapted to Southern California's dry climate but may lose some leaves during drought years.



## Black Cottonwood

(*Populus trichocarpa*)

This tree is named after the dark color of its bark. The tallest native Cottonwood, it reaches heights of 120 feet. Fast growing, Cottonwoods require moist soil that exists along streams and in flood plains. Leaves are heart-shaped and have small serrated-like edges. They are dark green on top and pale green underneath, turning bright yellow before dropping in the fall. The fruit is a round, brown capsule that splits open to release many cottony seeds that drift in the breeze. Cottonwood leaves make a distinct rustling sound in the wind.



## Scrub Oak

(*Quercus berberidifolia*)

This shrub-like Oak is a dense growing, short, wide tree that may reach heights of 15 feet. This species usually grows like a shrub with many trunks. The bark is generally gray, smooth when young and rough when older. The Scrub Oak has small, leathery leaves with spines on the edges and small, oval acorns with knobby caps. This Oak is not common as a street tree in Pasadena, but is abundant in Pasadena's foothills and the Arroyo Seco.



## Chapter 8.52 – CITY TREES AND TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE

### 8.52.010 - Short title.

This chapter shall be known as the "city trees and tree protection ordinance."

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

### 8.52.015 - Purposes of ordinance.

Pasadena is graced by the presence of thousands of mature trees that contribute long-term aesthetic, environmental, and economic benefits to the city. Aesthetically, trees offer dimensions in the form of color, shape, texture, scale and variety. Mature trees are often integral components of many historic sites and their presence contributes to the site's cultural and historic significance.

Environmental benefits derived by trees include the filtering of air pollutants; increasing atmospheric oxygen levels; stabilizing soils; reducing heat convection; decreasing wind speed; and reducing the negative effects of solar glare. The biological diversity of wildlife and plant communities is enhanced by the favorable conditions created by trees.

The economic benefits derived from trees include increased property values, and additional revenue generated by businesses, visitors and new residents attracted to the urban forest image of the city. Trees are a major capital asset to the city and like any valuable asset they require appropriate care and protection.

Therefore, it is the purpose of this ordinance to:

- A. Preserve and grow Pasadena's canopy cover by protecting landmark, native and specimen trees on specified areas of private property and expanding the protection of street trees and trees on public property.
- B. Safeguard the City's urban forest by providing for the regulation of the protection, planting, maintenance and removal of trees in the city.
- C. Protect the visual and aesthetic character of the city.
- D. Improve and enhance property values by conserving and adding to the distinctive and unique aesthetic character of the many areas of Pasadena.
- E. Improve the quality of life for residents, visitors and wildlife.
- F. Create favorable conditions for the protection of designated landmark, native and specimen trees, for the benefit of current and future residents of Pasadena.
- G. Maintain and enhance the general health, safety and welfare of the city and its residents by assisting in counteracting air pollution and in minimizing soil erosion and other related environmental damage.
- H. Protect and maintain healthy trees in the land use planning processes as set forth herein.
- I. Establish procedures and practices for fulfilling the purposes of this city tree and tree protection ordinance.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

## 8.52.020 - Definitions.

For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms are defined as follows:

- A. "City" shall mean the City of Pasadena.
- B. "City manager" means the city manager and such representative as he or she may designate in writing.
- C. "Diameter-at-breast-height (DBH)" means the diameter of the tree 4½ feet above ground on the uphill side of the tree. If a tree forks below breast height, it is considered "a multi-trunk." A measuring tape can be used to measure tree trunk circumference and then the circumference divided by 3.14 to determine diameter.
- D. "Established corner yard" means the area between the side property line and the principal structure on a lot.
- E. "Established front yard" means the area between the front property line and the principal structure on a lot.
- F. "Hazard" or "hazardous" means a tree, or part of a tree, that has a high potential for failure and falling on a nearby object because of dead or dying branches, roots or trunk.
- G. "Injure" means any act or omission which substantially affects or seriously jeopardizes the health of a living tree, in the determination of the city manager.
- H. "Landmark tree" means a tree designated as a landmark under Chapter 17.62 of this code as a tree of historic or cultural significance and of importance to the community due to any of the following factors: It is one of the largest or oldest trees of the species located in the city; it has historical significance due to an association with a historic building, site, street, person or event; or it is a defining landmark or significant outstanding feature of a neighborhood.
- I. "Landmark-eligible tree" means a tree which meets the criteria for designation as a landmark tree, as determined by the review authority.
- J. "Located" or "location" of a tree means that place where any portion of the trunk of a tree is found at natural grade.
- K. "Maintain" or "maintenance" means pruning, trimming, spraying, fertilizing, watering, treating for disease or injury or any other similar act which promotes growth, health, beauty and life of trees.
- L. "Master street tree plan" means the comprehensive street tree plan approved by the city council, which lists the official street tree to be planted or replaced for all streets or sections of streets within the city.
- M. "Mature tree" means an otherwise non-protected tree with a diameter-at-breast-height (DBH) of 19 inches or greater.
- N. "Median" or "traffic island" means a raised area within a street not used for vehicular traffic.
- O. "Multi-trunk" means any tree with multiple trunks attributed to a single tree. Each trunk shall be measured at a height of 4½ feet above natural grade, and the combined areas of the trunks shall be used to determine the tree's size for the purposes of this ordinance.
- P. "Native tree" means any tree with a trunk more than 8 inches in diameter at a height of 4 ½ feet above natural grade that is one of the following species: *Quercus agrifolia* (Coast live oak), *Quercus engelmannii* (Engelmann oak), *Quercus chrysolepis* (Canyon oak), *Platanus racemosa* (California sycamore), *Juglans californica* (California walnut), *Quercus berberidifolia* (Scrub oak), *Quercus lobata* (Valley oak), *Umbellularia californica* (California bay), *Populus fremontii* (Cottonwood), *Alnus rhombifolia* (California alder), *Populus trichocarpa* (Black cottonwood), *Salix lasiolepis* (Arroyo willow), and *Aesculus californica* (California buckeye).
- Q. "Official street tree" means an approved species of street tree designated in the master street tree plan.

- R. "Parkway" means an area between the property line and the face of the curb, or an area between the property line and the area where the face of the curb would ordinarily be located.
- S. "Property owner" means the person listed as the owner in fee simple of a lot or parcel with the office of county recorder or lawfully exercising the power of the property owner with respect to said lot or parcel.
- T. "Protected tree" means a native, specimen, landmark, landmark-eligible, mature (except for the trees in RS or RM-12 zones), or public tree.
- U. "Pruning" means the removal of dead, dying, diseased, live interfering, and weak branches according to the most recent standards of the International Society of Arboriculture.
- V. "Public benefit" means a public purpose, service or use which affects residents as a community and not merely as particular individuals.
- W. "Public tree" means a tree located in a place or area under ownership or control of the city including but without limitation streets, parkways, open space, parkland and including city owned property under the operational control of another entity by virtue of a lease, license, operating or other agreement.
- X. "Replacement matrix" means the table of requirements for replanting replacement trees on private property when removing protected tree/s per Finding 6 in Section 8.52.075.
- Y. "Specimen tree" means any tree meeting the criteria established by resolution of the city council by species and size of tree which is thereby presumed to possess distinctive form, size or age, and to be an outstanding specimen of a desirable species and to warrant the protections of this chapter.
- Z. "Street" means any public right-of-way regardless of whether it is described as a street, avenue, road, boulevard, drive, lane, court, place, alley, or by any other such designation.
- AA. "Street tree" means any public tree whose trunk is located primarily within any parkway, public sidewalk, street median, traffic island or other right-of-way under the ownership or control of the city by easement, license, fee title or other permissive grant of use.
- BB. "Tree" means a woody plant that has a single main trunk with clear apical dominance (i.e., one primary stem is significantly larger than the secondary stem/s).

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7184, § 2, 3-15-2010)

#### **8.52.025 - Applicability.**

The provisions of this chapter providing protection for specific trees shall apply as follows, unless excepted by provisions of this chapter.

- A. Native and specimen trees located in the established front yard, required side yard, established corner yard, or required rear yard of all property located in a single-family residential or RM-12 multifamily residential zone, and in all areas of all other zoning districts within the city.
- B. Landmark trees and trees that meet the criteria for designation as a landmark as determined by the review authority.
- C. Public trees located at all places within the city.
- D. Mature trees in all zoning districts except for trees on properties subject to the RS or RM-12 development standards.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7184, § 3, 3-15-2010)

**8.52.030 - City manager responsibilities.**

The city manager shall:

- A. By use of city employees, private contractors or authorized volunteers, plant, maintain and otherwise care for, or, if necessary, remove public trees;
- B. Prepare an annual program for tree planting and tree care in public places of the city;
- C. Recommend to the city council changes or additions to the master street tree plan as needed;
- D. Inspect the planting, maintenance and removal of all public trees;
- E. Develop maintenance standards as they relate to trees in public places;
- F. Make determinations on public tree removal based upon tree reports prepared by certified arborists, other relevant facts, and upon established public tree removal criteria;
- G. Review development and construction plans as they affect mature, landmark, landmark-eligible, native, public and specimen trees;
- H. Act as advisor to the design commission of the city;
- I. Prepare and periodically revise the tree protection guidelines;
- J. Prepare and submit the specimen tree list, and any revisions thereto to the city council for adoption by resolution;
- K. Issue permits and make determinations specified under this chapter;
- L. Maintain a comprehensive inventory of public trees; and
- M. Act as the enforcement official who is designated to issue a compliance order or an administrative citation to enforce this chapter pursuant to Chapter 1.25 or 1.26, respectively, of this code.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7184, § 4, 3-15-2010; Ord. No. 7322, § 2, 5-7-2018)

**8.52.032 - Tree protection guidelines.**

Tree protection guidelines are the standards and specifications for the protection of trees under this chapter. The tree protection guidelines, and any revision thereto, shall be prepared by the city manager. All guidelines and any revisions thereto shall be effective upon publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the city. All published guidelines shall be filed with the city clerk and will be linked to the official website of the city.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7322, § 3, 5-7-2018)

**8.52.040 - Consultation policy.**

All departments, agencies and personnel of the city shall consult with the city manager prior to engaging in any action which would require the removal of, or which would otherwise substantially affect or seriously jeopardize the health of any existing public tree.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

**8.52.050 - Design commission.**

The design commission shall review, advise and make recommendations to the city council relating to the city's tree planting, maintenance and removal practices and proposed amendments to the master street tree plan.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

**8.52.060 - Protection policy.**

It shall be the policy of the city to protect and maintain mature and healthy trees. Special consideration shall be afforded mature, public, landmark, landmark-eligible, native and specimen trees as set forth in this chapter.

- A. Incentives for the Preservation of Mature Trees. When considering an application for any permit or approval that preserves mature trees, a decision may be made through the design review process or other entitlement process to waive development standards or accept alternative solutions to assist in the preservation of these trees. The review authority or director, if there is no other review authority, may modify the development standards or accept alternative solutions to assist in the preservation of protected trees. Modifications may include a reduction to garden requirements, guest parking requirements, location of driveways and building height limits. The review authority may approve the modification of up to two development standards after first finding that:
1. Applicant investigated alternative site designs and building footprints using existing development standards;
  2. Tree/s to be preserved is/are in good health and condition (taking into account species and longevity) as determined by a certified arborist;
  3. Project includes a well integrated and thoughtful design solution that enhances the property and its surroundings;
  4. Project is not injurious to adjacent properties or uses, or detrimental to environmental quality, quality of life, or the health, safety, and welfare of the public; and
  5. Project is consistent with the objectives and policies of the applicable design guidelines and the citywide design principles in the general plan.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7184, § 5, 3-15-2010)

**8.52.065 - Designation of landmark trees.**

Any person or city agency may propose to the historic preservation commission that a tree meets the criteria set forth in Section 8.52.020 and should be designated as a landmark under Chapter 17.62 and, thereby, as a landmark tree under this Chapter 8.52.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7184, § 6, 3-15-2010)

#### **8.52.066 - Designation of native and specimen trees.**

Designation of native, specimen and mature trees. All trees meeting the definition of native, specimen, landmark, landmark-eligible, or mature trees in Section 8.52.020 are automatically subject to the protections of this chapter, as of the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7184, § 7, 3-15-2010)

#### **8.52.070 - Private property tree removal and landmark tree pruning permits—Applications.**

- A. Where other discretionary approval is requested: Where a property owner wishes to remove a tree protected under this ordinance as part of a plan for which a discretionary approval under Title 17 of this code is otherwise required, the application for discretionary approval shall also be deemed an application for a permit under this chapter to the decision maker for the discretionary approval. Any decision on the application for a permit shall be subject to the same procedures for appeal and call for review as a decision on the associated discretionary approval.
- B. Where no discretionary approval is requested: Where a property owner wishes to remove a tree protected under this ordinance on private property, and no other discretionary approval is required under Title 17 of this code, an application shall be made to the city manager or his/her designee for a permit according to the standard application procedures and submittal requirements set forth in Chapter 17.60 except that the decision shall be made in accordance with the time set forth in Section 8.52.075(B). A decision on an application shall be made according to the standards of this chapter and shall be subject to the same procedures for appeal and call for review set forth in Chapter 17.72 as if it were a decision of the director within the meaning of that chapter. No noticed public hearing shall be required for an application under this section unless otherwise required by another section of this code or state or federal law.
- C. Landmark tree pruning. Any property owner desiring to prune a landmark tree located on their property shall make an application to the city manager on a form provided by the city to assure that the pruning shall be conducted according to the most recent standards of the International Society of Arboriculture.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7184, § 8, 3-15-2010)

#### **8.52.075 - Private property tree removal and landmark tree pruning permits—Issuance.**

- A. Any permit or approval which will result in injury to or removal of a mature, landmark, landmark-eligible, native or specimen tree protected under this chapter shall be denied unless one of the following findings is made: (1) there is a public benefit as defined in Section 8.52.024(R), or a public health, safety or welfare benefit, to the injury or removal that outweighs the protection of the specific tree; or (2) the present condition of the tree is such that it is not reasonably likely to survive; or (3) tree is an objective feature of the tree that makes the tree not suitable for the protections of this chapter; or (4) there would be a substantial hardship to a private property owner in the enjoyment and use of real property if the injury or removal is not permitted; or (5) to not permit injury to or removal of a tree would constitute a taking of the underlying real property; or (6) the project, as defined in Section 17.12.020, includes a landscape design plan that emphasizes a tree canopy that is sustainable over the long term by adhering to the replacement matrix prepared by the city manager and included in the associated administrative guidelines. Finding 6 shall not apply to permits or approvals seeking removal of a landmark tree and landmark-eligible trees. In addition, for

removal of a landmark tree, any such permit or approval shall be denied unless procedures specified for removal of landmarks in Chapter 17.62 are first followed.

- B. An application shall be granted, denied, or granted conditionally on the date of the associated discretionary decision, or, if none, within 15 business days after a complete application is made. The approval may be based on imposed conditions reasonably necessary to meet the standards of this chapter.
- C. Alternative to Replacement Matrix Requirements. When using Finding 6 for removal of protected trees, the planting of required replacement trees on-site may be satisfied through the following alternative, in compliance with the city's regulations for the implementation of this chapter.
  - 1. Alternative Replacement Fee. The developer may request to pay a fee instead of planting on site up to 50 percent of the required number of replacement trees, as follows:
    - a. The amount of the fee shall be 100 percent of the appraised value of the tree/s that cannot be replaced.
      - i. Applicant must submit an application that includes: an appraisal by a certified arborist utilizing the most recent edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal (published by the International Society of Arboriculture), the number replacement trees calculated using the replacement matrix, and a report by a certified arborist or landscape architect that determines that the number of required on-site replacement trees would inhibit healthy growth (e.g., overcrowding of new trees; interfere with roots and canopy of existing protected trees and street trees);
      - ii. Up to 50 percent of the required replacement trees must be planted on-site and the replacement fee shall be a maximum of 50 percent of the appraised value of all trees to be removed, prorated as necessary.
    - b. The review authority may approve an alternative replacement fee only after first making all of the following findings:
      - i. Applicant investigated alternative site designs and building footprints using existing development standards;
      - ii. Placing the required number of replacement trees on site with existing plan is not conducive to a sustainable landscape plan (e.g., overcrowding with existing or new trees; occluding important view corridors; disrupting the configuration of existing open space; or a landscape design which has historic or aesthetic importance; interfering with existing site features—walls, driveways, berms, planting beds, pergolas—which have historic or aesthetic importance);
      - iii. A minimum of 50 percent of the required replacement trees are on-site and the spacing and selection of the proposed trees and the landscape design contributes to the city's long-term goals of a sustainable urban forest as determined by the city's arborist;
      - iv. Project includes a well-integrated and thoughtful design solution that enhances the property and its surroundings;
      - v. Project is not injurious to adjacent properties or uses, or detrimental to environmental quality, quality of life, or the health, safety, and welfare of the public; and
      - vi. Project is consistent with the objectives and policies of the applicable design guidelines and the citywide design principles in the general plan.
    - c. One-half of the alternative replacement fee required by this subsection shall be paid (or alternate security provided in a form acceptable to the director of finance) before issuance of a building permit for any part of the project. The remainder of the fee shall be paid before a certificate of occupancy is issued for any portion of the project.

- d. Fees collected in compliance with this section shall be specified for additional plantings that are above and beyond the city's regular planting programs.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7184, § 9, 3-15-2010; Ord. No. 7322, § 4, 5-7-2018)

#### **8.52.076 - Work on public trees.**

Public Trees. No permits will be issued to any person or entity for pruning or removal of public trees, and all pruning and removal of public trees shall be undertaken by employees or contractors of the city pursuant to Section 8.52.080. Any person desiring to initiate special maintenance or removal of a public tree by the city, may make a written request to the city manager and pay the costs of service and replacement at rates established by the city manager and set forth in the tree protection guidelines, should the request be granted. Any such request will be considered based on the provisions of this chapter, established public tree removal criteria, other ongoing public tree work and available resources.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7322, § 5, 5-7-2018)

#### **8.52.077 - Tree relocation.**

If recommended by a certified arborist or landscape architect, proposals to relocate a protected tree shall be considered by the review authority if after receiving an approval, the applicant posts a performance bond (or alternate security provided in a form acceptable to the director of finance) in an amount equal to 100% of the appraised value of relocated tree/s, calculated using the most recent edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal published by the International Society of Arboriculture) to ensure that the relocated trees are properly established and maintained for three years. Landmark trees are ineligible for relocation.

(Ord. No. 7184, § 11, 3-15-2010)

#### **8.52.080 - Exemptions—No permit required for certain pruning and removal.**

- A. No permit is required to prune a native or specimen tree on private property as long as the tree is not injured.
- B. No permit is required to prune, injure or remove a tree that is not explicitly protected by this chapter.
- C. Where immediate action is required for the protection of life or property, no permit is required to remove or to injure a protected tree which has been determined to be hazardous, by the city manager or his/her designee, any police officer or any fire fighter, after inspection of the tree.
- D. No permit is required for city employees or contractors of the city to do the following: to prune native, public or specimen trees under the direction of the city manager; to prune native, public or specimen trees as required for compliance with statewide regulations applicable to trees around electrical lines; to injure or remove native, public or specimen trees as the city manager has determined is necessary or prudent for the public health, safety or welfare provided advance notice is given by the city manager to the city council unless advance notice is not feasible, in which case notice will be given promptly thereafter. All tree removal shall be otherwise consistent with adopted public tree removal criteria.

- E. No permit is required to prune, injure or remove a tree on a project for which a variance, conditional use permit or design review approval has been obtained from the city prior to the effective date of this chapter or for a project for which a valid building permit has been lawfully issued by the city prior to the effective date of this ordinance.
- F. No permit is required for any tree removal undertaken to cover the city-owned drainage channel known as the East Side Storm Drain as shown on Drawing No. 5095 on file in the offices of the city department of public works and transportation.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7184, § 10, 3-15-2010)

#### **8.52.085 - Prohibited acts.**

The following are prohibited acts under this chapter unless expressly exempted:

- A. **Landmark Tree.** To prune, injure, or to remove without a permit, a landmark tree located anywhere in the city.
- B. **Native Tree.** To injure, or to remove without a permit, any native tree located in the established front yard, required side yard, established corner yard, or required rear yard of all property located in a single-family residential or RM-12 multifamily residential zone, and in all areas of all other zoning district anywhere in the city.
- C. **Public Tree.** To prune, to injure or to remove a public tree located anywhere in the city.
- D. **Specimen Tree.** To injure, or to remove without a permit, any specimen tree located in the established front yard, required side yard, established corner yard, or required rear yard of all property located in a single-family residential or RM-12 multifamily residential zone, and in all areas of all other zoning districts anywhere in the city.
- E. **Landmark-Eligible Tree.** To injure, or to remove without a permit, any landmark-eligible tree located in the established front yard, required side yard, established corner yard, or required rear yard of all projects subject to RS and RM-12 development standards, and in all areas of all other zoning district anywhere in the city.
- F. **Mature Tree.** To injure, or to remove without a permit, any mature tree located in any zone except projects subject to RS and RM-12 development standards.
- G. To plant a tree of a species other than the official street tree in a parkway, median or traffic island, and a violator shall be subject to a civil penalty.
- H. To fail to adhere to the terms and conditions of any permit issued under this chapter.
- I. To fail to adhere to the terms of any tree protection plan imposed as a condition of any discretionary land use approval or development agreement with the city.
- J. To do or commit any unpermitted act that is injurious to a protected tree, including, but not limited to, causing root damage, damage to the trunk, scarring, or any other unpermitted alteration of a protected tree.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7184, § 12, 3-15-2010; Ord. No. 7322, § 6, 5-7-2018)

#### **8.52.090 - Sidewalk and street repair.**

The repair of sidewalks, curbs, gutters or streets may create a need to prune tree roots to the extent that the tree is damaged or becomes unstable. When this occurs, the city manager, whose decision shall be final, shall give consideration to the following in lieu of action that may damage, destabilize or cause the removal of a tree:

- A. To not make such improvements;
- B. To displace the sidewalk laterally away from the tree trunk, either locally for each tree, or uniformly along length of the street;
- C. To displace the curb and gutter laterally into the paved roadway of the street, either locally, or uniformly along a length of the street, which in some cases may necessitate the prohibiting of street parking of vehicles at all times, provided such displacement does not create traffic hazard, or conditions adverse to proper street sweeping or drainage;
- D. To defer repairs with temporary asphalt patch to eliminate hazard;
- E. To widen the parkway;
- F. To relocate the sidewalk or curb;
- G. To eliminate the sidewalk on one side of the street;
- H. To raise the sidewalk.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

#### **8.52.100 - Hazards—Private property.**

It shall be unlawful and a violation of this chapter to allow any tree, shrub or plant located primarily on private property to create a hazard or to create danger or likelihood of harm to any public place, public area, parkway or street or to public health, safety or welfare.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

#### **8.52.110 - Protection of trees during improvements.**

During the construction, repair, alteration, relocation or removal of any building, structure or accessory structure in the city, no person in control of such work shall leave any protected tree without sufficient guards or protections to prevent injury to the protected tree, in connection with such construction, repair, alteration, relocation or removal and it shall be unlawful and a violation of this chapter to do so.

Condition monitoring shall be required for all projects with affected protected trees and/or the planting to ensure that trees are properly established and maintained for three years.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7184, § 13, 3-15-2010)

#### **8.52.120 - Attachments to street trees.**

No person shall, without the written permission of the city manager, attach or keep attached to any public tree, street tree, shrub or plant in any street, park or other public place of the city, or to the guard or stake intended for the protection thereof, any wire, rope, sign, nail or any other device whatsoever.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

**8.52.140 - Interference.**

No person shall interfere with any city employee or city contractor acting under this chapter.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

**8.52.150 - Notice of public tree removal.**

The city manager shall give at least 10 days written notice to abutting property owners prior to the removal of any public tree. No notice shall be required to be given, however, if the public tree has been determined to be hazardous under the standards in Section 8.52.080(C). In the event of a decision under this chapter for the removal of 3 or more public trees in an area, the city manager shall also notify the city council, the design commission and any neighborhood organizations located in such area which are known.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

**8.52.155 - Prosecution of violations.**

A violation of any provision of this chapter shall be prosecuted as a misdemeanor or infraction at the option of the city prosecutor and as further set forth in Section 8.52.160 with respect to penalties and administrative proceedings.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7322, § 7, 5-7-2018)

**8.52.160 - Penalties and administrative proceedings.**

- A. Misdemeanors. Any person who violates any provision of this chapter and is convicted of a misdemeanor shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000.00 or by imprisonment for a period of not more than 6 months or by both such fine and imprisonment.
- B. Infractions. Any person who violates any provision of this chapter and is convicted of an infraction shall be punished by a fine as established in Section 1.24.025. Each person convicted may be deemed guilty of a separate offense for every day during any portion of which any violation is committed or permitted.
- C. In addition to the penalty provisions of subsections A and B of this section, violations of Sections 8.52.085, 8.52.100, 8.52.110, 8.52.120 or 8.52.140 may be subject to the administrative proceedings set forth in Chapters 1.25 and 1.26 of this code, including, but without limitation, civil penalties, late payment penalties, administrative fees, other related charges and, to the maximum extent permitted by law, tree replacement costs as established by the city manager and as set forth in the tree protection guidelines.
- D. Civil Penalties. In addition to the penalty provisions of subsections A, B and C of this section, the city may bring a civil action against any person who commits, allows, or maintains a violation of any provision of this chapter. As part of such civil action, a court may assess against any person who commits, allows or maintains a violation of any provision of this chapter a civil penalty in an amount up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) per violation or in an amount as set forth below:

1. Where the violation has resulted in irreparable injury to or removal of a tree, the civil penalty shall be in an amount of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) per tree unlawfully injured or removed, or in the full amount of the replacement value of each such tree, whichever amount is higher. Such amount shall be payable to the city. Replacement value for the purposes of this section shall be determined utilizing the most recent edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal, published by the International Society of Arboriculture ("ISA").
  2. Injunctive Relief. A civil action may be commenced to abate, enjoin, or otherwise compel the cessation of such violation.
  3. Costs. In any civil action brought pursuant to this chapter in which the city prevails, the court shall award to the city all costs of investigation and preparation for trial, the costs of trial, reasonable expenses including overhead and administrative costs incurred in prosecuting the action, and reasonable attorney fees.
- E. In addition to the penalty provisions of subsections A, B, C, and D of this section, the city may suspend or revoke any application for, or grant of, any discretionary permit that may be associated with the address upon which such irreparable injury or removal of a protected tree has occurred.
1. Protected Trees. If a tree that is protected by this chapter is irreparably injured or removed in violation of this chapter after the responsible person has been previously notified or warned of the tree's protected status, then no building or construction-related permits shall be issued, and no permits or use of the property shall be allowed, from the date of irreparable injury or removal for a period of one year.
  2. Date of Actual Injury or Removal. For purposes of this section, the irreparable injury or removal of any tree protected by this chapter shall be presumed to have occurred on the date the city has actual knowledge of the injury or removal. The person responsible for the injury or removal shall have the burden of proving a different date if one is claimed.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 7322, § 8, 5-7-2018)

**8.52.165 - Remedies not exclusive.**

To the maximum extent permitted by law, administrative remedies specified in this chapter are in addition to and do not supersede or limit any and all other remedies, civil or criminal. The remedies provided for herein shall be cumulative and not exclusive.

(Ord. 6896 § 2 (part), 2002)

**Protected Species List For the City of Pasadena**

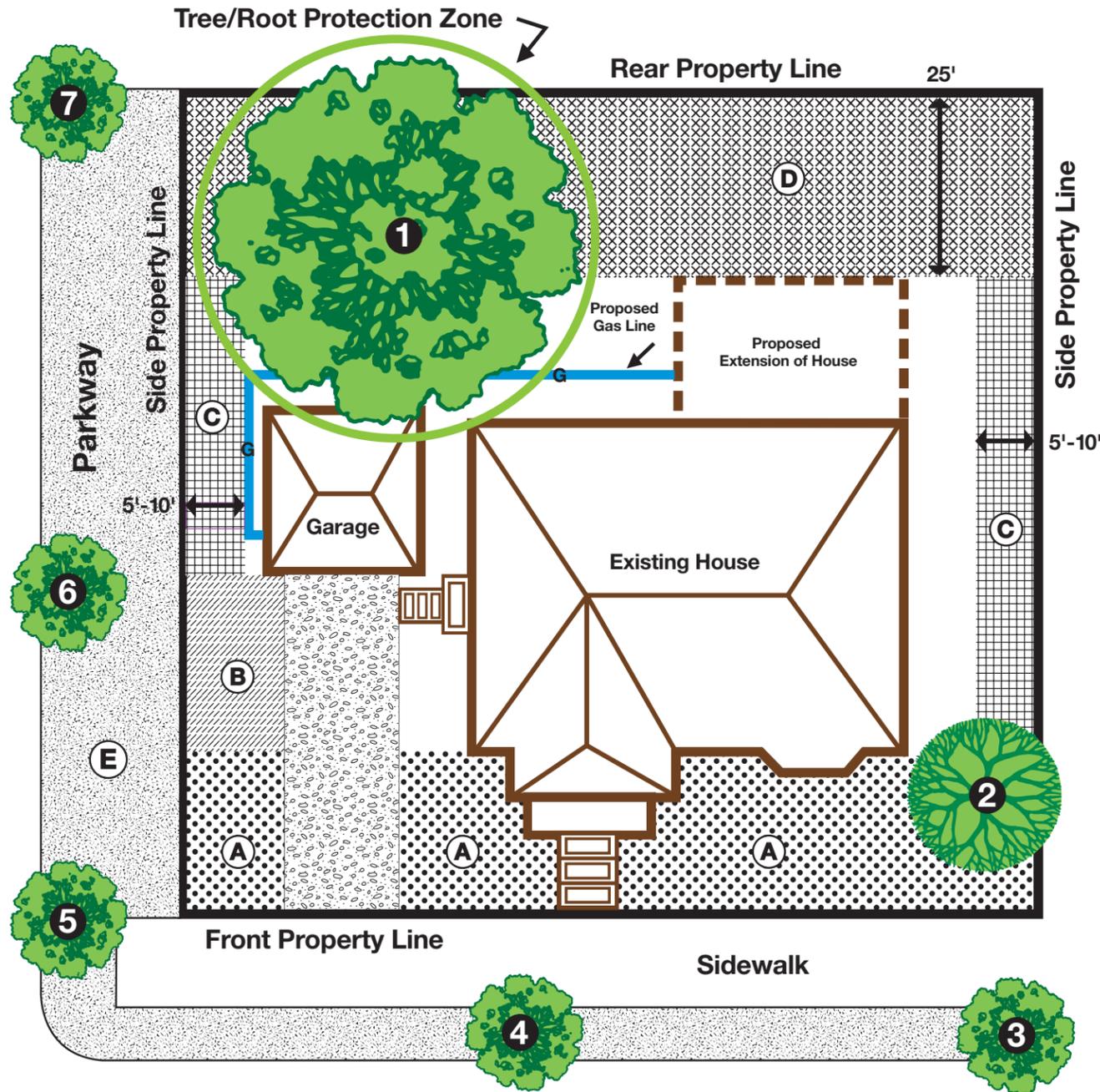
| <b>Genus</b>           | <b>Species</b>                        | <b>Common Name</b>       | <b>Protection Size</b> |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Acer</i>            | <i>macrophyllum</i>                   | Bigleaf maple            | 20"                    |
| <i>Acer</i>            | <i>buergeranum</i>                    | Trident maple            | 12"                    |
| <i>Acer</i>            | <i>palmanum</i>                       | Japanese maple           | 12"                    |
| <i>Aesculus</i>        | <i>x carnea</i>                       | Red horse chestnut       | 12"                    |
| <i>Aesculus</i>        | <i>x hippocastamum</i>                | Horse chestnut tree      | 12"                    |
| <i>Agonis</i>          | <i>flexuosa</i>                       | Australian peppermint    | 12"                    |
| <i>Albizia</i>         | <i>julibrissin</i>                    | Mimosa silk tree         | 20"                    |
| <i>Angophora</i>       | <i>costata</i>                        | <i>Gum myrtle</i>        | 25"                    |
| <i>Araucaria</i>       | <i>heterophylla</i>                   | Star pine                | 15"                    |
| <i>Arbutus</i>         | <i>menziesii</i>                      | Pacific madrone          | 12"                    |
| <i>Arbutus</i>         | <i>unedo</i>                          | Strawberry tree          | 12"                    |
| <i>Archontophoenix</i> | <i>cunninghamiana</i>                 | King palm                | 12'                    |
| <i>Bauhinia</i>        | <i>candida</i>                        | White orchid tree        | 18"                    |
| <i>Bauhinia</i>        | <i>variegata</i>                      | Variiegated orchid tree  | 18"                    |
| <i>Bauhinia</i>        | <i>blakeana</i>                       | Hong Kong orchid         | 18"                    |
| <i>Brachychiton</i>    | <i>acerifolius</i>                    | Flame tree               | 25"                    |
| <i>Brachychiton</i>    | <i>discolor</i>                       | Hat tree                 | 25"                    |
| <i>Brahea</i>          | <i>armata</i>                         | Mexican blue palm        | 10'                    |
| <i>Brahea</i>          | <i>edulis</i>                         | Guadalupe palm           | 10'                    |
| <i>Butia</i>           | <i>capitata</i>                       | Pindo palm               | 10'                    |
| <i>Callistemon</i>     | <i>citrinus</i>                       | <i>Lemon bottlebrush</i> | 20"                    |
| <i>Calocedrus</i>      | <i>decurrrens</i>                     | Incense cedar            | 12"                    |
| <i>Calodendrum</i>     | <i>capense</i>                        | Cape chestnut            | 12"                    |
| <i>Camellia</i>        | <i>sp.</i>                            | Camellia                 | 8"                     |
| <i>Carya</i>           | <i>illinoensis</i>                    | Pecan                    | 20"                    |
| <i>Casuarina</i>       | <i>cunninghamiana</i>                 | <i>River she-oak</i>     | 25"                    |
| <i>Casuarina</i>       | <i>equisetifolia</i>                  | <i>Horsetail tree</i>    | 25"                    |
| <i>Casuarina</i>       | <i>stricta</i>                        | <i>Beefwood</i>          | 25"                    |
| <i>Cassia</i>          | <i>excelsa</i>                        | Crown of Gold            | 12"                    |
| <i>Castanospermum</i>  | <i>australe</i>                       | Australian chestnut      | 20"                    |
| <i>Catalpa</i>         | <i>speciosa</i>                       | Western catalpa          | 15"                    |
| <i>Cedrus</i>          | <i>atlantica</i>                      | Atlas cedar              | 20"                    |
| <i>Cedrus</i>          | <i>deodora</i>                        | Deodar cedar             | 20"                    |
| <i>Cercidium</i>       | <i>microphyllum</i>                   | Little leaf Palo Verde   | 12"                    |
| <i>Cercidium</i>       | <i>floridum</i>                       | Blue Palo Verde          | 15"                    |
| <i>Cercis</i>          | <i>canadensis</i>                     | Eastern redbud           | 8"                     |
| <i>Cercis</i>          | <i>occidentalis</i>                   | Western redbud           | 8"                     |
| <i>Chamaerops</i>      | <i>humilis</i>                        | <i>European fan palm</i> | 20"                    |
| <i>Chilopsis</i>       | <i>linearis</i> 'AZT Bi-Color'        | Desert willow            | 10"                    |
| <i>Chilopsis</i>       | <i>linearis</i> 'AZT Desert Amethyst' | Desert willow            | 10"                    |

|                        |                            |                          |     |
|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| <i>Chionanthus</i>     | <i>retusus</i>             | Chinese fringe tree      | 10" |
| <i>Chitalpa</i>        | <i>tashkentensis</i>       | Chitalapa                | 12" |
| <i>Chorisia</i>        | <i>insignis</i>            | White floss silk         | 25" |
| <i>Chorisia</i>        | <i>speciosa</i>            | Floss silk               | 25" |
| <i>Cinnamomum</i>      | <i>camphora</i>            | Camphor                  | 18" |
| <i>Dombeya</i>         | <i>cacumium</i>            | Dombeya                  | 20" |
| <i>Dracaena</i>        | <i>draco</i>               | Dragon tree              | 12" |
| <i>Erythrina</i>       | <i>bidwillii</i>           | Coral bean tree          | 12" |
| <i>Erythrina</i>       | <i>caffra</i>              | Coral tree               | 18" |
| <i>Erythrina</i>       | <i>coralloides</i>         | Naked coral tree         | 18" |
| <i>Erythrina</i>       | <i>crista-galli</i>        | Cockspur coral tree      | 12" |
| <i>Eucalyptus</i>      | <i>nicholii</i>            | Willow peppermint        | 20" |
| <i>Eucalyptus</i>      | <i>citridoria</i>          | Lemon scented gum        | 25" |
| <i>Eucalyptus</i>      | <i>cladocalyx</i>          | Sugar gum                | 25" |
| <i>Eucalyptus</i>      | <i>deglupta</i>            | Mindanao gum             | 20" |
| <i>Eucalyptus</i>      | <i>ficifolia</i>           | Red flowering gum        | 25" |
| <i>Eucalyptus</i>      | <i>leucoxydon</i>          | White ironbark           | 25" |
| <i>Eucalyptus</i>      | <i>parvifolia</i>          | Small-leaved gum         | 25" |
| <i>Eucalyptus</i>      | <i>sideroxydon</i>         | Red ironbark             | 20" |
| <i>Ficus</i>           | <i>macrophylla</i>         | Morton Bay fig           | 30" |
| <i>Ficus</i>           | <i>microcarpa 'Nitida'</i> | Indian laurel fig        | 30" |
| <i>Fraxinus</i>        | <i>oxycarpa</i>            | Raywood ash              | 30" |
| <i>Fremontodendron</i> | <i>californicum</i>        | Flannel bush             | 12" |
| <i>Geijera</i>         | <i>parviflora</i>          | Australian willow        | 12" |
| <i>Ginkgo</i>          | <i>biloba, male</i>        | Maidenhair tree          | 18" |
| <i>Grevillea</i>       | <i>robusta</i>             | Silk oak                 | 20" |
| <i>Heteromeles</i>     | <i>arbutifolia</i>         | California holly or Toyo | 10" |
| <i>Jacaranda</i>       | <i>mimosifolia</i>         | Jacaranda                | 12" |
| <i>Juglans</i>         | <i>nigra</i>               | Black walnut             | 25" |
| <i>Juglans</i>         | <i>regia</i>               | English walnut           | 25" |
| <i>Koelreuteria</i>    | <i>bipinnata</i>           | Chinese flame tree       | 15" |
| <i>Lagerstroemia</i>   | <i>indica</i>              | Crepe myrtle             | 12" |
| <i>Leptospermum</i>    | <i>laevigatum</i>          | Australian tea tree      | 12" |
| <i>Liquidambar</i>     | <i>styraciflua</i>         | American sweet gum       | 20" |
| <i>Liriodendron</i>    | <i>tulipifera</i>          | Tulip tree               | 15" |
| <i>Livistona</i>       | <i>australis</i>           | Australian cabbage pal   | 15" |
| <i>Livistona</i>       | <i>chinensis</i>           | Chinese fan palm         | 15" |
| <i>Magnolia</i>        | <i>grandiflora</i>         | Southern magnolia        | 20" |
| <i>Melaleuca</i>       | <i>linariifolia</i>        | Flax leafed paperbark    | 25" |
| <i>Melaleuca</i>       | <i>quinquenervia</i>       | Cajeput tree             | 25" |
| <i>Melia</i>           | <i>azedarach</i>           | Chinaberry               | 18" |
| <i>Michelia</i>        | <i>doltsopa</i>            | No common name           | 12" |
| <i>Olea</i>            | <i>europaea</i>            | Olive                    | 15" |
| <i>Phoenix</i>         | <i>canariensis</i>         | Canary Island date palm  | 20' |

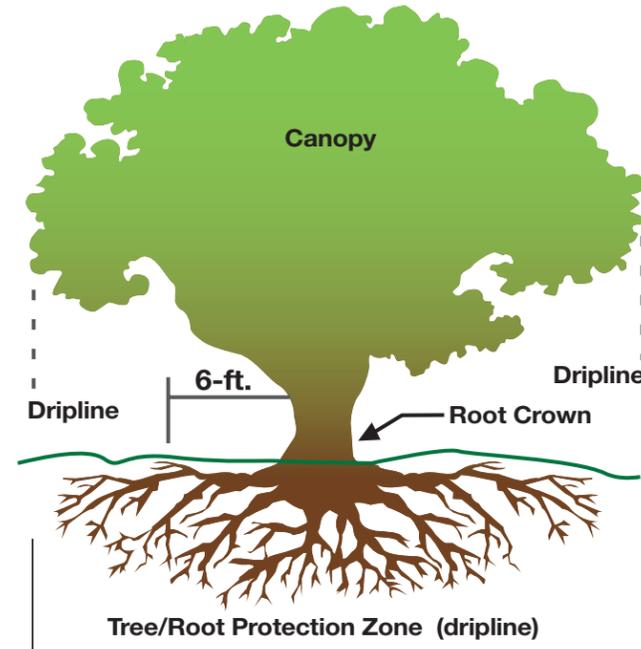
|                     |                            |                               |     |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Phoenix</i>      | <i>dactylifera</i>         | Date palm                     | 20' |
| <i>Phoenix</i>      | <i>reclinata</i>           | Senegal date palm             | 10' |
| <i>Pinus</i>        | <i>brutia</i>              | Calabrian pine                | 20" |
| <i>Pinus</i>        | <i>coulteri</i>            | Coulter pine                  | 20" |
| <i>Pinus</i>        | <i>radiata</i>             | Monterey pine                 | 20" |
| <i>Pinus</i>        | <i>canariensis</i>         | Canary Island pine            | 25" |
| <i>Pinus</i>        | <i>halepensis</i>          | Aleppo pine                   | 20" |
| <i>Pinus</i>        | <i>pinea</i>               | Italian stone pine            | 25" |
| <i>Pinus</i>        | <i>torreyana</i>           | Torrey pine                   | 25" |
| <i>Pittosporum</i>  | <i>undulatum</i>           | Victorian box                 | 15" |
| <i>Platanus</i>     | <i>acerifolia</i>          | London plane tree             | 15" |
| <i>Podocarpus</i>   | <i>gracilior</i>           | Fern pine                     | 20" |
| <i>Pseudotsuga</i>  | <i>menziesii</i>           | <i>Douglas fir</i>            | 25" |
| <i>Quercus</i>      | <i>douglasii</i>           | Blue oak                      | 12" |
| <i>Quercus</i>      | <i>kelloggii</i>           | California black oak          | 12" |
| <i>Quercus</i>      | <i>macrocarpa</i>          | Burr oak                      | 12" |
| <i>Quercus</i>      | <i>robur</i>               | English oak                   | 12" |
| <i>Quercus</i>      | <i>rubra</i>               | Northern red oak              | 12" |
| <i>Quercus</i>      | <i>suber</i>               | Cork oak                      | 12" |
| <i>Quercus</i>      | <i>virginiana</i>          | Live oak                      | 12" |
| <i>Sambucus</i>     | <i>mexicana</i>            | Mexican elderberry            | 15" |
| <i>Schinus</i>      | <i>molle</i>               | California pepper             | 25" |
| <i>Sequoia</i>      | <i>sempervirens</i>        | Redwood                       | 25" |
| <i>Stenocarpus</i>  | <i>sinuatus</i>            | <i>Firewheel tree</i>         | 12" |
| <i>Syzygium</i>     | <i>paniculata</i>          | <i>Eugenia or brush cherr</i> | 12" |
| <i>Tabebuia</i>     | <i>chrysotricha</i>        | Trumpet tree                  | 10" |
| <i>Tabebuia</i>     | <i>avellanedae</i>         | Trumpet tree                  | 10" |
| <i>Tabebuia</i>     | <i>impetiginosa or ipe</i> | Pink trumpet tree             | 10" |
| <i>Tristania</i>    | <i>conferta</i>            | Brisbane box                  | 20" |
| <i>Ulmus</i>        | <i>parvifolia</i>          | Chinese elm                   | 20" |
| <i>Washingtonia</i> | <i>filifera</i>            | California fan palm           | 35' |
| <i>Zelkova</i>      | <i>serrata</i>             | Sawleaf zelkova               | 15" |
|                     |                            |                               |     |
| <b>NATIVE</b>       | <b>Protected Trees</b>     |                               |     |
| <i>Aesculus</i>     | <i>californica</i>         | California buckeye            | 8"  |
| <i>Alnus</i>        | <i>rhobifolia</i>          | White alder                   | 8"  |
| <i>Juglans</i>      | <i>californica</i>         | California black walnut       | 8"  |
| <i>Platanus</i>     | <i>racemosa</i>            | California sycamore           | 8"  |
| <i>Populus</i>      | <i>fremontii</i>           | Western cottonwood            | 8"  |
| <i>Populus</i>      | <i>trichocarpa</i>         | Black cottonwood              | 8"  |
| <i>Quercus</i>      | <i>agrifolia</i>           | Coast live oak                | 8"  |
| <i>Quercus</i>      | <i>berberidifolia</i>      | Scrub oak                     | 8"  |
| <i>Quercus</i>      | <i>chrysolepis</i>         | Canyon live oak               | 8"  |
| <i>Quercus</i>      | <i>engelmannii</i>         | Mesa oak, Engelmann           | 8"  |

|                                 |                   |    |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|----|
| <i>Quercus lobata</i>           | Valley oak        | 8" |
| <i>Salix lasiolepis</i>         | Arroyo willow     | 8" |
| <i>Umbellularia californica</i> | California laurel | 8" |

# Sample TREE INVENTORY and TREE PROTECTION PLAN for making improvements on residential property.



**Please Note:** Before obtaining a permit to build an addition onto your home, a tree inventory must be made. If one of more of your trees qualifies for protection, then a tree protection plan will be required prior to construction.



## Specimen and Native Tree Protection Areas

(residential zones RS-1, RS-2, RS-4, RS-6, and RS-12)

- A **Native tree** is "native" to the Pasadena area, and is one of 13 tree species identified in the "City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance #8.52." Trees must be 8 inches diameter at 4 feet above natural grade to qualify for protection.
  - A **Specimen tree** is a tree of a particular size and species established on a list that was passed by resolution of the City Council.
- (A) Front yard**  
In single-family residential zones, native and specimen trees located in the area between the front property line and the principal structure. (This does not include projections such as chimneys, trellises, porches, patios, and bays.)
- (B) Corner yard**  
In single-family residential zones, native and specimen trees located in the area between the side property line and the principal structure.
- (C) Side or corner yard**  
In corner lots that lie within single-family residential zones, native and specimen are protected if they are located in the area that is typically 10% of the lot width; 5-foot minimum or 10-foot maximum.
- (D) Rear yard**  
In single-family residential zones, native and specimen trees located 0 to 25 feet from the back property line are protected. In multi-family (two or more on a lot) zones, native and specimen trees located 0 to 10 feet from the back property line are protected, if they meet the size and species requirements.
- (E) Public right-of-way**  
All trees located between the curb face and the property line are publicly maintained trees, and are protected by the City of Pasadena's municipal code.

See PMC Title 17 (Zoning Code) for specific yard requirements.

## Sample of a Tree Inventory

| Tree No. | Tree Species         | Trunk DBH* | Height   | Condition | Tree Protection           |
|----------|----------------------|------------|----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| 1        | Cinnamomum camphora  | 36" DBH    | 35' tall | Good      | Protection Zone D         |
| 2        | Citrus sinensis      | 12" DBH    | 20' tall | Poor      | Fruit trees not protected |
| 3        | Magnolia grandiflora | 24" DBH    | 32' tall | Good      | Protection Zone E         |
| 4        | Magnolia grandiflora | 24" DBH    | 45' tall | Good      | Protection Zone E         |
| 5        | Zelkova serrata      | 22" DBH    | 28' tall | Good      | Protection Zone E         |
| 6        | Zelkova serrata      | 15" DBH    | 22' tall | Good      | Protection Zone E         |
| 7        | Zelkova serrata      | 12" DBH    | 15' tall | Good      | Protection Zone E         |

\*Diameter at 4.5 feet above natural grade.

## City of Pasadena

An ordinance amending Chapter #8.52 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance and amending-related sections of Title 17 and Chapter #1.25

## These guidelines establish a "Tree/Root Protection Zone" to safeguard the health of protected trees.

Tree #1 is a specimen tree, which is protected. Tree roots are generally located in the top 12-24 inches of soil and can extend to a distance exceeding the tree's height and/or width.

### To comply with the tree protection guidelines:

Any required trenching should be routed in a manner that minimizes root damage.

All work conducted in the ground within the root protection area of any protected tree should be accomplished with hand tools.

Construction activity should be diverted from the Tree/Root Protection Zone. Cutting of roots should be avoided (i.e., place pipes and cables below uncut roots).

### Additional Protective Measures

- Protective chain-link fencing with an access gate of minimal width should be installed.
- The Tree/Root Protection Zone should be irrigated sufficiently with clean, potable water to keep the tree in good health and vigor before, during, and after construction. This may mean deeply soaking the ground periodically.
- No construction staging or disposal of construction materials or byproducts is allowed within the Tree/Root Protection Zone.

### Public Trees – Maintained by the City of Pasadena

These trees are located in the parkway between the curb face and the property line, and therefore are public trees. To have any work done on these trees, contact Forestry Operations at 626-744-4321.

# Submittal Requirements for Tree Protection Plans

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The items listed below are basic requirements to be included in the tree protection package. As each project is unique, the applicant should consult with city staff to determine exact submittal requirements. Required information may be shown on detailed grading, footing, landscape (planting), irrigation, demolition, utility, and/or architectural plans as part of the tree protection plan package.

## Standard Plan Requirements:

1. Clearly differentiate between existing and proposed site improvements on all plans.
2. Include preparer's name, title, license number, address, and telephone number (preparer must be a Certified Arborist, a Landscape Architect, or other qualified professional as approved by the City Manager).
3. Include project title, project address, and property owner's name.
4. Provide date of last revision, north arrow, and scale (no smaller than 1" = 20'-0"). All plans must be drawn to scale.
5. Label all property lines.
6. Show and label existing and proposed easements.
7. Label and provide width of adjacent streets, highways, access driveways, easements, and existing improvements within the public right-of-ways.
8. Prepare a staging plan showing storage location of all construction materials and equipment, and vehicular and equipment ingress and egress.

## Trees:

1. Identify existing trees and show exact locations to scale as follows:
  - A. All Public Trees (regardless of size)
  - B. Trees in hillside zones (HD) over 4" in diameter
  - C. Trees in all other areas over 8" in diameter
  - D. Show each trunk for multi-trunk trees
2. The tree's genus, species, and common name must be directly on the plan or keyed to a legend. Indicate whether trees are single- or multi-trunk, to be removed or retained. If symbols are used for trees, a different symbol must be used for each species.
3. Draw the Root Protection Zone and label. The Root Protection Zone is defined as the area within a circle with a radius equal to the greatest distance from the trunk to any overhanging foliage in the canopy.
4. Draw and label the Root Protection Zone of adjacent property trees if the tree is a protected tree and will be affected by the proposed site improvements.
5. For all existing trees to be retained on site clearly show the location of fencing protecting the Root Protection Zone as well as location of support poles, and access gate showing direction of swing. Fencing must be located at or beyond the Root Protection Zone. The protective fencing must be in-ground chain link and at least 5 feet in height.
6. Where mulch is required, show the mulch area and indicate mulch materials and depth.
7. On the plans, include notes or measures to maintain and/or improve the health of the protected trees. These measures may include a schedule of watering the tree(s) during construction, deadwood removal, integrated pest management and similar cultural practices.

**Utilities:**

1. Show location of proposed utility lines (above and below grade), and width, depth, and method of tunneling or digging of proposed trenches.
2. Show point-of-connection for utilities and controllers.

**Grading/Drainage:**

1. Show approximate width and location of all existing or proposed drainage easements and watercourses; indicate drainage structures.
2. Show existing and proposed contour lines.

**Structures:**

1. Outline and label all existing or proposed structures (including accessory structures such as pools, trellises, spas, fences, and walls) drawn to scale, and shown in their exact location.
2. Provide outline of all roof overhangs as dotted lines and label.
3. Indicate location, width, and depth of all trenches for footings including excavations for basements, pools, spas or any other subsurface improvement.

**Irrigation:**

Indicate location, width, depth and method of tunneling or digging of proposed trenches for irrigation lines (mainlines and lateral lines) effecting protected trees.

**Photographs:**

1. Provide photograph of protected trees that show the tree(s) form and orientation on the property, as well as the conditions on the site. Protected trees on adjacent properties that are affected by the project must also be shown.
2. Photographs must be labeled with the property address, date, and keyed to a site plan showing the viewpoint in which the photograph was taken.

# City of Pasadena Tree Protection Guidelines

Revised 5/13/19

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## **Purpose:**

The City's Tree Protection Guidelines are established for projects subject to Chapter 8.52 'City Trees and Tree Protection' and for projects for which compliance with the Tree Protection Guidelines is a condition of approval. Specifically, the guidelines seek to avoid negative impacts to protected trees that may occur during construction such as:

- Mechanical injury to roots, trunks or branches
- Compaction of soil
- Changes to existing grade, which may expose or suffocate roots

Definitions for standardized terms and diagrams are included in the guidelines.

## **A. General Requirements:**

1. Applicants may be required to place a security deposit in the amount of the assessed value of the tree as determined using the most recent version of the International Society of Arboriculture guide to plant appraisal. The security deposit will be returned to the applicant upon successful completion of the project and upon verification that the tree has not sustained significant damage during construction. If significant damage has been sustained, and the subject tree requires further monitoring post-construction, the City Manager or designee may hold the security deposit for an additional period of time. If the subject tree has fallen into irreversible decline and must be removed based on its condition, the applicant may forfeit the deposit to the City in order to cover removal and replacement costs.
2. Violations of the City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance may result in administrative fines in an amount up to the Tree Replacement Value of the subject tree(s).
3. Compliance Orders issued respective to violations of the City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance may include corrective action to replace the tree canopy loss that resulted from tree removal or catastrophic damage to a protected tree.
4. Violations to the Tree Protection Guidelines may result in fines assessed per day and imposed per violation, and the potential generation of a stop work order on the construction project.
5. When a tree protection plan is required, the plan may include written recommendations for the health and long-term welfare of the protected trees during the pre-construction, demolition, construction, and post-construction development phases. Notes on the plans would include specifics on avoiding injury, damage treatment and inspections of protected trees.
6. If an applicant finds that the implementation of the following guidelines is impracticable due to the unique site, landscaping, or other characteristics of the project, the applicant may submit a request to deviate from the guidelines to the Department reviewing the permit application. The Department of Public Works and the Department of Planning and Community Development will review the applicant's tree protection measures for public trees and private trees, respectively. The Director of Public Works and the Director of Planning and Community Development (or their designees) may approve requests to deviate from these guidelines.

Such requests may be submitted by the applicant on a tree protection plan; consulting arborist report; or other manner that articulates how the tree protection measures cannot be reasonably implemented.

## **B. Tree Protection Zone:**

The Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) shall be established to the extent of the tree's dripline plus four (4) radial feet. The guidelines herein shall be applied to the TPZ to safeguard the health of protected trees. Tree roots are generally located in the top 12–24 inches of soil and can extend to a distance exceeding the trees height and/or width.

1. Refer to Standard Plan S-642 'Tree Protection Standard' for full details.
2. Protective (6-foot high minimum) chain-link fencing with an access gate of minimal width should be installed around the TPZ to the extent practicable subject to approval by staff prior to the commencement of any grading, construction, or demolition. Fencing must also include 8 ½" x 11" (minimum) signage that includes the following information: Tree Protection Zone; name and contact information of project owner or authorized representative; and "Please contact the Pasadena Citizen Service Center to report any concerns (626) 744-7311."
3. The TPZ shall be irrigated sufficiently with clean water to keep the tree in good health and vigor before, during, and after construction. This may mean deeply soaking the ground periodically.
4. No construction staging or disposal of construction materials or byproducts including but not limited to paint, plaster, or chemical solutions is allowed in the TPZ.
5. The TPZ should not be subjected to flooding incidental to the construction work.
6. All work conducted in the ground within the TPZ of any protected tree should be accomplished with hand tools, unless an air spade is utilized. Trenches in the TPZ should be tunneled, or completed with an air spade to avoid damage to roots within the TPZ. Information regarding air spades is available from staff.
7. Where structural footings are required and major roots (over 3" in diameter) will be impacted, the engineer of record should submit acceptable footing design alternatives and or location alternatives to staff before proceeding with further plan review.
8. Where more than 50% of the TPZ is impacted or roots greater than 3 inches in diameter are to be removed within the TPZ, the engineer of record should submit acceptable design alternatives to staff for review.
9. Any required trenching should be routed in such a manner as to minimize root damage. Radial trenching (radial to the tree trunk) is preferred as it is less harmful than tangential trenching. Construction activity should be diverted from the TPZ. Cutting of roots should be avoided (i.e. place pipes and cables below uncut roots). Wherever possible and in accordance with applicable code requirements, the same trench should be used for multiple utilities.
10. "Natural" or pre-construction grade should be maintained in the TPZ. At no time during or after construction should soil be in contact with the trunk of the tree above the basal flair.
11. In areas where the grade around the protected tree will be lowered, some root cutting may be unavoidable. Cuts should be clean and made at right angles to the roots. When practical, cut roots back to a branching lateral root.

12. When removing existing pavement in the TPZ, avoid the use of heavy equipment, which will compact and damage the root system.
13. If staff requires mulch in the TPZ, the mulch materials and location should be shown on the plan. Larger projects will require construction staging plans to indicate where materials will be stored and how the equipment will move in and around the property to minimize damage to the TPZ. Root damage and soil compaction may be mitigated in some cases by using trench covers or mulch in the TPZ.

#### **C. Pruning:**

\* Pruning guidelines are for private trees only. Contact the Department of Public Works for public tree service requests 626-744-7311.

1. Pruning of all trees should be in accordance with industry standards (International Society of Arboriculture or ANZI 133.1).
2. Pruning of oaks should be limited to the removal of dead wood and the correction of potentially hazardous conditions, as evaluated by a qualified arborist. Excessive pruning is harmful to oaks. Removal or reduction of major structural limbs should be done only as required for actual building clearance or safety. If limbs must be removed, cuts should be made perpendicular to the branch, to limit the size of the cut face. The branch bark collar should be preserved (i. e. no "flush cuts"), and cuts should be made in such a way as to prevent the tearing of bark from the tree.
3. Pruning of trees other than oaks should be limited to the removal or reduction of major structural limbs and should be done only as required for actual building clearance or safety. If limbs must be removed, cuts should be made perpendicular to the branch, to limit the size of the cut face. The branch bark collar should be preserved (i. e. no "flush cuts"), and cuts should be made in such a way as to prevent the tearing of bark from the tree.
4. Landmark Trees must be pruned by or under the direction of a qualified arborist.

#### **D. Inspections:**

1. Inspection of Protective Fencing: City staff may require inspection of fencing to verify placement and approval of materials prior to the commencement of construction.
2. Pre-construction meeting. City staff may require an on-site pre-construction meeting with the contractor and or applicant to discuss tree protection with the site supervisor, grading equipment contractors, and demolition crew.
3. Inspection of rough grading. City staff may require inspection to ensure protected trees will not be injured by compaction, cut or fill, drainage and trenching activities.
4. Special Activity in the Tree Protection Zone: City staff may require the direct on-site supervision of work in the tree protection zone.
5. Periodic Inspections: City staff may require inspections verifying adherence to tree protection measures during the on-going construction process. The cost for inspections by City staff or a contract Certified Arborist may be invoiced to the property owner.

#### **E. Definitions:**

1. *Basal flair* or *root crown* means the tree trunk where it emerges from the root system and flairs out

to create the base of the tree.

2. *Canopy* means the area of a tree that consists primarily of branches and leaves.
3. *Dripline* means the outermost area of the tree canopy (leafy area of tree).
4. *Certified Arborist* means an individual who has demonstrated knowledge and competency through obtainment of the current International Society of Arboriculture arborist certification, or who is a member of the American Society of Consulting Arborists.
5. *Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)* means the area within a circle with a radius equal to the greatest distance from the trunk to any overhanging foliage in the tree canopy plus four (4) radial feet.
6. *Tree Replacement Value/Cost:* the value or cost of the injured or removed tree determined utilizing the most recent edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal, published by the International Society of Arboriculture ("ISA").

APPROVED BY:



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Steve Mermell, City Manager