

## Appendix J

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# Jim Borer, Certified Arborist #496

Specimen tree preservation, and analysis

October 19, 2023

Mr. Matt Waken  
MW Investments

Telefax: This page plus 10

**Re: Summary of Field Inspection and Inventory of Existing Trees, Nov. 12, 2023**  
**TTM 83528**  
**3700 Monterey Avenue**  
**El Monte, Ca.**

Dear Matt,

I am writing as a follow-up to my field inspection and inventory of the existing trees within the subject El Monte, California property and immediately adjacent thereto, that is proposed for re-development. This report is intended to document the existing trees' and palms', sizes, conditions, individual dispositions for long-term conservation in the context of the proposed site redevelopment as proposed, and my opinions and recommendations related thereto. This summary is intended to serve along with the attached 'Excel' spreadsheet to document the trees' and palms' existing locations, varieties, sizes, conditions, their status as native or exceptional 'Heritage Trees', and their dispositions for conservation in the context of the re-development going forward.

## **Assignment**

Travel to the site(s), review the existing trees' conditions, and consider their dispositions for long-term conservation in the context of the proposed project as designed. Prepare and submit this summary report, the attached 'Excel' spreadsheet inventory of the 32 existing specimens, a map establishing the existing specimens' locations within the site, and a bio with my professional qualifications, background, and some professional references.

## **Observations**

There are a total of 32 existing trees within and site (8) or immediately adjacent to (24) the site on the boundaries of the neighboring properties. The driplines of the trees and palms on the adjacent property extend over the fences that seem to define the property boundaries on the eastern and western adjacent properties. These adjacent properties would be encroached to within approximately seven feet by the proposed grading within the subject property. They **may** be additionally, and more closely, encroached by  
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boundary fence or wall construction on the east and west boundaries which are within a few feet of the subject neighboring property boundaries where fence or wall would be developed.

### ***Magnolia grandiflora*, southern magnolia**

#### **Tree numbers 1-3, within TMap 83528 proper**

The magnolias are mostly vigorous specimens that are growing as mature specimens of a species that has a widely dispersed surface root network that is not drought tolerant and which would be adversely affected by any encroachment during the operations.

The three magnolias are growing within the central portion, street frontage, of the project site and would be encroached and exposed to injury by the site demolition and grading operations. The magnolias would be expected to be significantly encroached in the grading process given the remedial grading requirements defined by civil engineers in their report relating to the alluvial soils.

### **Opinions and Recommendations'**

**The magnolias are considered to meet the standard that makes them 'Heritage Trees.** They generally exhibit good canopy densities but poor form and structures that include significant defects, wounds, that would expose them to poor dispositions for long-term conservation in place. The site grading would expose these magnolias to widespread root system encroachment. They are quite mature and are supported by widespread, shallow root systems that would be wounded, expected to under-perform, and unlikely to survive with archetypal vigor or viability after encroachment.

I also consider that the use of magnolias as replacements would be ill-advised given their love of water and with most newly developed landscapes being more drought tolerant. Many other species would be capable of reaching their stature, form, and character without requiring the same amounts of irrigation over the long-term.

### ***Phoenix dactylifera*, date palms**

**Palm numbers 4-7 are growing offsite on the boundary with the property to the east of the site.** The palms are growing at the southern end of the eastern property boundary where the Metrolink communication station is located. They are typical mature specimens that are archetypal in vigor, form, and character, and well-disposed to performing vigorously no matter what happens within the proposed development site.

### **Opinions and Recommendations**

**The date palms are considered to meet the standard that makes them 'Heritage Trees.** The palms are performing vigorously and are well-disposed to continue to do so notwithstanding the nature of the proposed improvements within the project site. No special attention would be required to conserve the palms provided that the improvements are limited to the boundary line or within the proposed property otherwise. The palms do  
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not support widely dispersed surface root systems such as the magnolias referenced above.

### *Quercus agrifolia*, coast live oak trees

**Tree numbers 8-12, growing offsite on property boundary to the east of the site  
Tree numbers 8-12 are growing within the adjacent property to the east of the site boundary fence. They are vigorous maturing specimens that are well-disposed to perform vigorously for the long-term given their existing conditions.**

**The oak number 9-12 are all considered to be ‘Heritage Trees’ given the city’s criteria for establishing that designation. Tree number 9 has a smaller trunk circumference than that which would make it such. Nonetheless they are all designated for long-term conservation.**

### Opinions and Recommendations

**The coast live oak tree numbers 9-12 are considered to meet the standard that makes them ‘Heritage Trees. Tree number 8, also a coast live oak specimen, does not meet any of the size characteristics to make it a ‘Heritage’ trees, however it is designated for long-term conservation.**

The oaks grow immediately adjacent to the subject site on the adjacent property north of the above referenced palms. They are performing vigorously and are well-disposed to continue to do so going forward.

It is my opinion that tree numbers 8, 9, and 12 are reasonably well enough removed from the nearest encroachments, boundary wall to be effectively conserved without too much special care or attention in the development process. Oak tree numbers 10 and 11 would be exposed to much more effects of encroachment given their closer proximity, as close as two feet away, to the boundary location. These trees would require deliberate, simple, conservation methods to limit the effects of grading and permanent barrier boundary wall development upon their root systems and systemic viability. Phil Malcomson discussed the limits of grading being setback from the property boundary grading and that the boundary wall construction would be in the general location of the existing fence.

**The construction of a wall in the existing fence location would require alternative construction methods adjacent to oak tree numbers 10 and 11 to ensure that their root systems are not unduly impacted. The alternate fencing methods could include the use of a wrought iron fence that relies on pier footings that would be centered away from the two oaks trunks or construction of a block wall using grade beams in the sections adjacent to tree number 10 and 11 instead of a conventional linear footing adjacent to their trunks and root crowns.**

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*Ailanthus altissima*, Tree of Heaven, Tree number 13-17

Growing within the project boundary proper

**'Tree of heaven' numbers 13, 15, 16, and 17 are all Heritage Trees as defined by the Heritage Tree Ordinance. Tree number 14 does not meet the minimum size requirements to be considered a Heritage Tree.** The 'trees of heaven' are within a portion of the project site that would be subject to grading, significantly impacted, and are proposed for removal.

The individuals are vigorous specimens of a species that is considered by the California Department of Agriculture to be a noxious weed given their ability to volunteer seed freely and aggressively. These specimens' structures are mechanically wounded on their exposed lower trunks and are proposed for removal.

## Opinions and Recommendations

'Tree of Heaven' number 13, 15, 17, and 17 are considered to meet the standard that makes them 'Heritage Trees. Tree number 14 does not meet the criteria. The 'trees of heaven' have many adverse qualities both individually and as a species, are poor candidates for conservation in any circumstance, and are subject to severe encroachment by site grading operations. **The 'Tree of Heaven' are proposed for removal.**

*Platanus acerifolia*, London plane tree, tree numbers 18-32

**The London plane trees all meet the criteria to be considered Heritage Trees, are growing in a linear row on the adjacent retail property to the west of the subject property.** They are growing between two and four feet from the existing property boundary fence that appears to be the boundary between the two properties. The individual trees are performing vigorously, support good archetypal form and character, and are well-disposed to long-term conservation given their existing conditions and the existing site usages.

The London plane tree proximities to the property boundary could expose their root systems to mechanical damage if a standard wall is constructed in the location of the existing chain link boundary fence. As an alternative to the construction of a standard block wall along the boundary supported by a continuous footing either the construction of a wrought iron fence with pier footings adjacent to the trees or else a block wall build using pier footings and grade beams would inflict less damage to the London plane trees root systems.

## General Conclusion

**All 32 of the trees and palms referred to herein, except numbers 8 and 14, meet the size criteria to be considered Heritage Trees. All trees and palms with this inventory with exceptions of numbers 1-3 and 13-17, which are located within the central project area, are proposed for conservation in place. Numbers 4-12 and 18-32 which are growing on the adjacent properties just beyond the boundaries would require**

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**the use of sympathetic alternative methods of enclosing the property boundaries, either using wrought iron fencing with supporting piers or walls supported by grade beam footings adjacent to the individual offsite trees' trunks.**

I have attached photographs of the trees' existing conditions, the existing tree inventory, 'Excel' spreadsheet, the site map depicting the individual trees' locations, and my C.V. to establish my professional credentials, background, and references. Please reach out to me if you have any questions, if you require additional information, or if you require additional tree conservation support going forward otherwise.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Borer  
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**Enclosure: Photographs of the conditions at the time of the field inspection**  
**'Excel' spreadsheet**  
**Map of tree locations**  
**Professional qualifications, background, and references**

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**Tree #1, *Magnolia grandiflora*, southern magnolia**



**Tree #s 2, and three left to right, and palms 4-7, right to left beyond the utility pole.**

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**Trunks of tree numbers 2 and 3 with their root crowns paved up to with concrete sidewalks and curbs.**



**Tree # 2 with basal wound on trunk, comparable to other wounds on magnolias.**

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**Magnolia tree # 3, larger basal wound.**



**Closer view of off-site date palms, numbers 4-7, and coast live oaks to left, numbers 8-12.**

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**Tree numbers 7, date palm, 8 and 9, coast live oaks on adjacent property to the east of the project site. Boundary fence can be seen beyond the oak trunks to establish proximity to the site.**

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**Tree numbers 15-17, Ailanthus alt. on subject property.**



**Tree numbers 13-17, Ailanthus altissima, right to left as seen herein.**

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Typical for tree numbers 18-32 from property side of boundary fence.



Typical tree numbers 18-32 as seen from adjacent side of property boundary fence.

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