

LANDARC

Landscape Architecture - Site Planning - 10050 Reevesbury Dr - Beverly Hills - 90210 - 310 - 858-7355

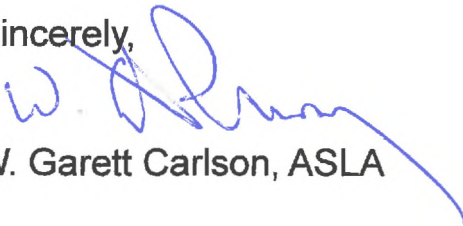
February 19, 2014

Michael Espinosa

Re: council file no. 14-0019 street tree guidelines and policies

Dear Michael, Here are some items to add to the file as I promised you today. Thanks for adding them.

Sincerely,



W. Garrett Carlson, ASLA

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To: Wes Hernandez
Re: BCA tree trimming

Wes,

Is there a possibility of getting a few answers for our meeting on Tuesday at 1pm at station 99, I think you will be there.

- 1) Can we see a copy of the order to cut the trees from the state. Date and person responsible for this order.
- 2) How did the tree company get this contract. Were there bids and if so who were the other bidders and what were the bid numbers.
- 3) What qualifications does this company have. Can we see their arborists lic #. It does not show on his card.....Yon.
- 4) Why are they cutting protected trees, particularly oaks and sycamores?
- 5) Can we get them to stop until we get these answers?

PS Do you know if the canopies are cut our temps will rise and energy costs will go up. Cities all over the country are planting trees to help lower energy costs. Is there any documentation that canopy trees are a fire hazard?

Thanks for your help, Mary Ann asked me to fax this to you.....garett carlson

Several months ago suspicious tree trimmers showed up in Laurel Canyon on a Saturday and destroyed \$100s of thousands of dollars worth of trees. Their order was cut all trees at the curb clear to the sky! How could this happen?

As it turned out the order was given out by our own L.A. Fire Dept. Their claim is that it is a state code that is being pushed by the state and they are under a deadline to finish. As it turns out this code: Title 32: Cutting trees back over road surface. This code # 503.2.1 reads as follows: Fire apparatus access roads shall have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet, exclusive of shoulders, except for approved security gates in accordance with section 503.6, and an unobstructed vertical clearance clear to the sky. EXCEPTION: A minimum vertical clearance of 13 feet and 6 inches may be allowed for protected tree species adjacent to access roads. Any applicable tree trimming permit from the appropriate agency is required.

As it turns out this code was written 20 years ago and is no longer in existence. The new L. A. Fire code written in 2010 takes precedence over all other codes prior. The new code says nothing about vertical clearance to the sky. Los Angeles does however have its list of protected trees. The main ones being Oaks, Sycamores and Walnuts. These are the trees you see most in our canyons. These trees are being cut down with all the others with no care or concern. As it turns out the state has nothing to do with this trimming and it is the City of L.A. that has put up the money and given the order. Who in the city has put up our money to do something so senseless when there are so many other projects that really need it?

Since BCA had a little notice before they reached our canyon we had several meetings with the Fire Dept Brush Clearance Unit and the tree trimming group: IEC from Panorama City. The outcome was that they would raise the canopies to 14 feet and thin as necessary. This started out all right on the first day. However on the second day they then reverted back to their old ways. We in the canyon love our trees and see no fire danger in these old trees forming a beautiful canopy over our streets. They have already ruined several canyons and will continue to destroy more if someone does not stop this now. The trees provide habitat for wild life, they shade the streets and cut down the heat thus saving energy. These trees were planted well over 50 to 100 years ago for our pleasure and enjoyment. Street trees are planted close to the street to canopy over the street. When they are cut from the curb up the tree is ruined. The Fire Dept. claims these trees are a fire hazard but in reality most of these trees such as Ficus, Sycamores, even Eucalyptus and Pines hold 100s of gallons of water and in reality will slow a fire down and allow Fire fighters to save property and lives. Quite often when a fire gets to a well watered garden it will go right around and find easier stuff to burn. We as a group are only trying to make a little sense of this madness. The Fire Dept will not give us any straight answers and have lied to us thru this whole process. What is being done is very wrong, the big question is why? And who can stop it?

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DWP tree trimming to clear power lines

Each year our trees get cut more and more. The company in charge is Davy Tree Co, They have a large contract with DWP to clear the wires each year. What needs to be done according to a DWP person that I talked with several years ago is this: Only the two high tension wires on top need to be cleared with a 4-6ft diameter around the wires, the lower wires do not matter at all. What Davy is doing is cutting the entire tree down to 12ft below these wires. A big flat top! This forces the tree to grow out and down and basically ruins the tree. Why is this done, because its fast and easy and the company makes a larger profit. This is lowering our property value and ruining our environment. DWP should spend their money on putting the wires underground. In the long run it would save money. As for me I would be willing to help by paying a larger bill every two months.

Sincerely,



W. Garrett Carlson, ASLA

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Landscape Architecture - Site Planning - 10050 Reevesbury Dr - Beverly Hills - 90210 - 310 - 858-7355

March 5, 2012

Jon Cespedes Arborist
IEC tree trimming Co.
P.O. Box 4218
Panorama City, Calif. 91412

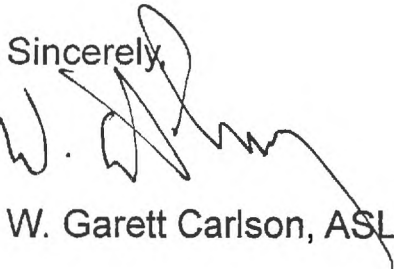
Dear Jon,

Thanks for allowing me to give you a tour of my project in Beverly Park last Saturday. Not a bad place to hang your hat! I hope you enjoyed it. I wanted you to better understand my caring for our large beautiful trees in Benedict Canyon. I have lived here for over 40 years and I am a bit passionate about the trees. I hope I have not driven you crazy! I do appreciate your time spent with us.

As a licensed arborist you know that it is not good to trim Oaks in the winter due to disease and never trim pines in the warm weather which is from this point forward. The pine has a big problem with the Beetle as you know. If trimmed in warm weather it will attract the bug and 6 months later the entire tree will be dead. This is very difficult to fix once it happens. You may or may not know that a large mature pine 50 years and older can be valued at over \$200,000.00 and large old oaks even more. Also that Oaks and Calif. Sycamores and Calif. Walnuts are protected trees as well as a few others. I am always concerned about old trees, they can be very sensitive.

I know the fire dept. has instructed you to trim all these trees in a certain way and your contract is based on that way. All of us in BCA thank you for the time and care you have given us.

Sincerely,



W. Garrett Carlson, ASLA

Note: This person is one of the leading arborists in the state.

Jan C. Scow Consulting Arborists, LLC

Disease and Pest Diagnosis, Hazard Evaluation, Restorative Pruning Advice, Value Assessment

3887 Woodcliff Rd.
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403
(818) 789-9127

3/15/12

Benedict Canyon Association

SUBJECT: Los Angeles City mountain roadway tree clearance

BACKGROUND: In recent months, the City of Los Angeles has been contracting with one or more tree pruning companies to prune the trees along various hillside and canyon roadways. It is our understanding that the City's pruning goal is driven by fire safety and that the instruction is to clear "to the sky" above specified roadways. Typically this work has been done in a rather simplistic, unprofessional manner that causes unnecessary damage to the trees. You asked me to address these issues as they relate to tree health, safety, and proper pruning practices. As an example of the poor quality work we looked at several trees on Mulholland Drive that were recently pruned.

There are six basic issues that I have addressed below:

1. Pruning that creates future failure risk above roadways
2. Pruning that may create health issues
3. Damaging protected tree species unnecessarily
4. Poor pruning quality
5. Monetary value of trees being pruned on private property
6. Environmental impacts adequately studied?

Pruning that Creates Failure Risk Above Roadways

In many cases which we observed, tree limbs or whole tree trunks have been cut abruptly at the edge of the roadway. I would refer to this as a "**hazard cut**". This type of a pruning cut can become extremely dangerous within a few years because of the way that new growth attaches at the location of the cut. New limbs typically grow from the edges of these cuts surrounding the cut face. They grow quickly and are attached to the surface of the wounded limb or trunk very superficially. It is often the case that these cuts also become decayed, which further weakens the new limb attachments. Within a few short years these new

shoots become large limbs, 3-4 inches in diameter, that may break away under their own weight and fall to the ground. Needless to say, the City will not be happy if these limbs hit passing cars. This problem can be especially severe in fast growing pine and eucalyptus trees.

Pruning that may create health issues

There are several ways to damage the health of a tree when pruning is done.

1) Removing an excessive amount of foliage or wood

We have seen many cases in this hillside roadway clearance project where trees have been excessively pruned. Removing a high percentage of the foliage from a tree, or making very large cuts that remove whole trunks or very large limbs can shock a tree, and cause it to decline and possibly die. This is especially true of pine trees and some *Eucalyptus* trees.

2) Pruning at the wrong time of year

When trees are pruned is important and may impact the effect of the pruning on the trees' health. In general, the following rules apply:

Coast live oak	July or August (reduces likelihood of powdery mildew)
Pine trees	December or January (reduces likelihood of borers)
Eucalyptus trees	December or January (reduces likelihood of borers)

3) Pruning species that are intolerant of pruning

Some trees do not react well to pruning, for various reasons. We noted Monterey pines, for example, that had been pruned on the Mulholland corridor. These trees are more likely to get pine-pitch canker disease (and borers) if they are pruned.

Damaging protected tree species unnecessarily

We have seen many protected native oak, walnut, and sycamore trees pruned severely. These trees are protected by LA City ordinance because the City feels they are valuable assets that warrant protection. None of these three tree species are very flammable, and it is questionable that they need this type of severe pruning to reduce fire risk.

Poor pruning quality

Much of the pruning that has been done is just of very poor quality. Bad pruning cuts leaving unnecessary stubs are common. Cutting the limbs off too close to the trunk (flush cuts) is also bad for the trees. Cutting off very large limbs, if absolutely necessary, should be done at an appropriately sized side branch, not just wherever is convenient.

Monetary value of trees being pruned on private property

Many of the trees that the City is damaging are actually growing on private property. These are not all City right-of-way trees. Trees on private property are

being damaged by careless workers at the expense of private property owners. Below are a few examples of the value of a "typical" tree that might be damaged along these mountain corridors.

Coast live oak (<i>Q. agrifolia</i>)	10" trunk	average condition	\$5500
Coast live oak	24" trunk	good condition	\$38,100
Coast live oak	36" trunk	excellent condition	\$98,400
Aleppo pine (<i>P. halepensis</i>)	15" trunk	average condition	\$8700
Canary Isl. pine (<i>P. canariensis</i>)	20" trunk	good condition	\$18,100

Obviously these are fictitious examples, but the numbers are realistic, and trees of much higher value could easily be affected by this work.¹

Environmental impacts adequately studied?

Finally, we have been asked if there were any environmental impact reports carried out prior to authorizing the damage to thousands of trees in the mountain corridors. We are unaware of any such report, but this is certainly an issue that should be addressed. What environmental review, if any, is required for such a large scale tree pruning and removal project as this? If required, was it done properly and was the public invited to comment?

CONCLUSIONS: It is obvious that this contract is a high-production, low-quality effort, and perhaps that is seen by the City as a cost-cutting measure. However the work could be supervised better so that proper pruning choices are made in the field. Choices which either will not increase the costs, or which will save money in the long run. In many cases, making the proper pruning cuts will not take any additional time. In some cases, it may be possible, and even desirable, to prune less off of protected tree species (native oaks, sycamores, and walnuts). In some cases, making the wrong cuts (as in heading cuts at the road's edge) may end up costing the City dearly to settle lawsuits caused by trees made more dangerous by poor pruning. And, there is also the potential that private property owners could litigate the damage to their trees by this poor quality work.

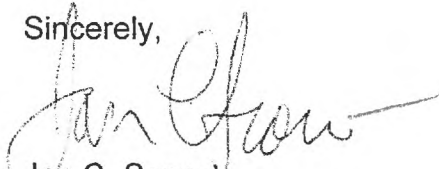
¹ These appraisal examples were performed on imaginary trees, using the "trunk formula method" based on the 9th edition of the Guide for Plant Appraisal, written by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers and published by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA, 2000), and using INSTALLED COST data based on current market research and the Species Classification and Group Assignment, published by the Western Chapter of the ISA (2004).

The trunk formula method is based on the assumption that a tree the size of the appraised tree could not be replaced in-kind with an available specimen of the same size. It relies on extrapolating the data from a smaller and more readily available nursery tree and increasing that cost proportionately for size, then *depreciating* the cost for factors such as species, location, and condition of the tree to arrive at an estimate of value.

Appraisals are based on *installed cost* of the largest readily available nursery tree, generally wholesale price of the tree multiplied by two¹ (or three).

Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance or if you have any additional questions. Our goal is to satisfy our clients and help them to better care for their trees in the most effective way possible. We look forward to working with you toward that goal!

Sincerely,



Jan C. Scow
ASCA Registered Consulting Arborist #382
ISA Certified Arborist # WC1972



Canary Island pine with "heading cuts" at road's edge



Eucalyptus with large “heading cuts” at road’s edge



Eucalyptus with large "heading cut" above busy roadside area



Aleppo pine with extremely large "hazard cuts" above busy intersection



(see details below)

Note location of very large cuts at road's edge



Note paint used to “disguise” excessively large cut



This is an extremely busy intersection



Creating health issues- There are several ways to damage the health of a tree when pruning is done. A few are:

1) Removing an excessive amount of foliage or wood

We have seen many cases in this hillside roadway clearance project where trees have been excessively pruned, but the below photo is a good example of removing an excessive amount of the tree, and this may cause this tree to succumb to beetle attack, or other health issues.

Excessively pruned Aleppo pine



2) Pruning at the wrong time of year

Native oaks are best pruned in July or August, not in late winter or early spring.

3) Pruning species that is intolerant of pruning

Monterey pines, such as seen in the final illustrations, are generally not very tolerant of pruning, as it makes them more susceptible to pine pitch canker.

Damage to protected tree species- We have seen many protected native oak and walnut trees pruned needlessly severely and excessively. Although all the photos below are of oaks, there are many examples of walnuts pruned badly as well in the mountain corridors. We are not sure why the City needs to trim all the roadways "to the sky", but native oaks, walnuts, and sycamores are not highly flammable trees and it would seem that, since the City has an ordinance protecting them from unnecessary damage, perhaps the clearance pruning could be done in a more sensitive fashion. Below we have shown some examples of poor pruning on protected oaks.

This oak has several poorly implemented pruning cuts



This cut should have been made closer to its point of attachment



Not much left of this oak



Another poorly executed cut on a protected oak



And again...

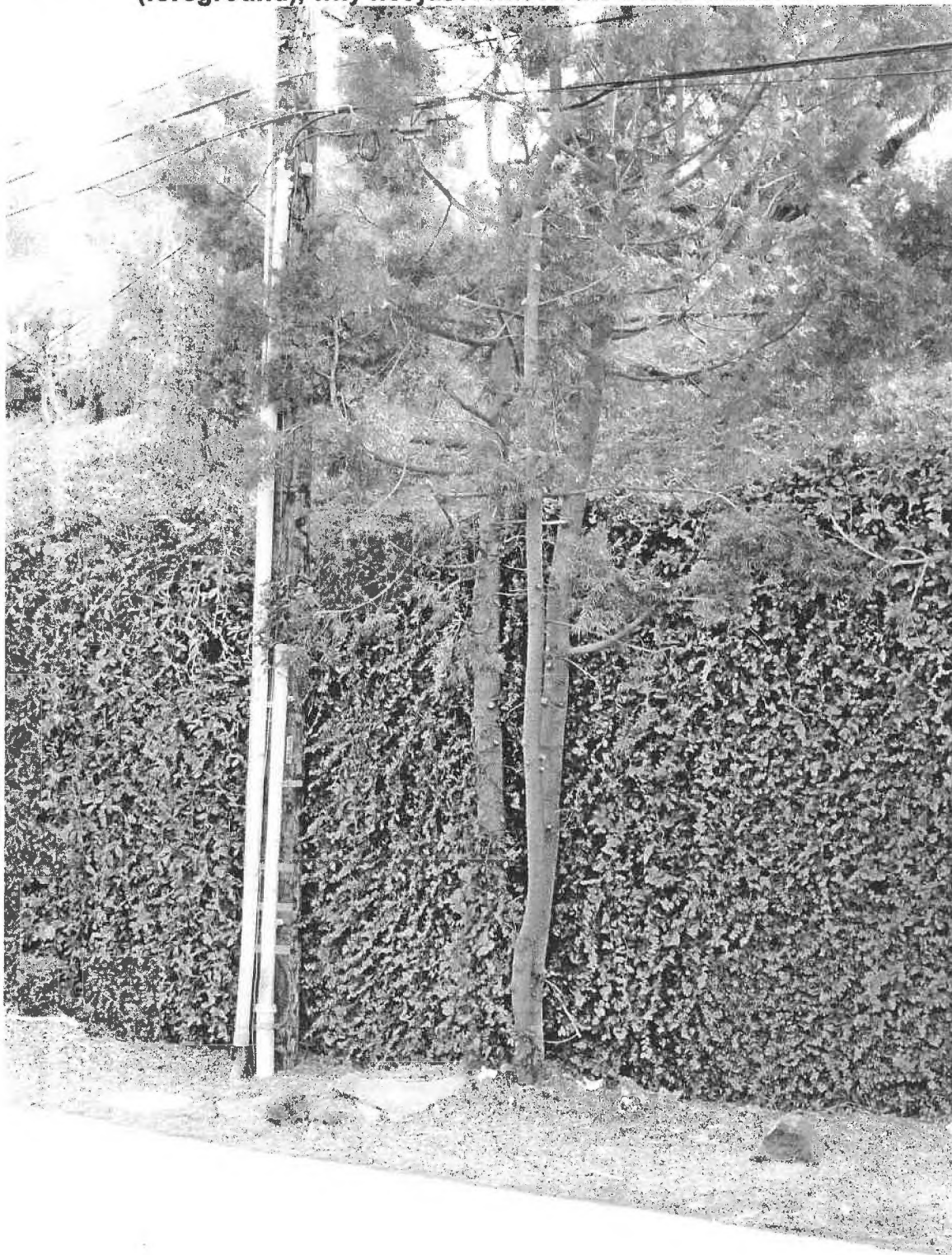


Unnecessarily poor pruning- As stated previously, much of the pruning seen in this project could qualify as poor quality pruning. However some of this poor pruning is just not necessary, and for the same amount of effort, the pruning cuts could be done properly. Small limbs on pine trees, for example, usually die when truncated (heading cuts). The proper cut, if any cut is necessary, is to remove those small limbs, not just kill them and leave them in the tree to add dead, dry, ladder fuel.

Unnecessary (and sloppy)...



Rather than stripping off all the limbs and then topping this fern pine trunk (foreground), why not just remove the whole trunk???



Extraordinarily poor pruning of a Peruvian pepper



(It's hard to imagine why this was necessary, or how it could be beneficial in the long term).