



**Purpose:**

City Of South Pasadena  
Tree Removal Request

**Project Site:**

1040 Orange Grove Ave  
South Pasadena, Ca 91030

**Prepared For:**

Arvin Tseng

**Prepared By:**

**Leonardo Moran**

Registered Consulting Arborist (RCA) # 660  
Certified Arborist: WE-11356A  
Qualified Applicator License (QAL) # 136278  
Tree Risk Assessment Qualified  
TPAQ (Appraisal Qualified)

**Oct 21<sup>st</sup>**

**2024**





10/21/2024

Arvin Tseng  
1040 Orange Grove Ave.  
South Pasadena, Ca 91030

***Subject: Diseased and Defective Canary Island Palm Removal Request***

Arvin,

You expressed concerns regarding 2 mature Canary Island Date Palms in your front yard. You described a situation in which these tall heavy trees are located over the roof of your house on top of the bedroom that your child sleeps in. I visited the site on October 8<sup>th</sup> and collected data and made observations. This brief report describes my observations and concludes with my recommendations. This report is required because of the City of South Pasadena's Tree Ordinance requires permit for any tree removal.

Summary:

The 2 Palm trees are planted too close together. The crowding has created a lean in their growth. Although the lean is slight, the two trunks are leaning away from each other. This species of Palm is very top heavy and not well adapted to resist leaning.

The two palms have built up planters around their base. The planters are full of soil and mulch. Trees do not do well when their natural grades are disturbed. The addition of soil above the original grade is a formula for decay and rot. Upon doing some manual digging at the base of the tree, I discovered areas that has apparently rotten roots and sunken trunk tissue with white fungal mycelia growing on it. This is generally an indicator that a fungal disease has begun digesting the structural tissue of the tree and weakening the trunk.

The crown of the trees appear to have Fusarium dieback, a widespread fungal disease that attacks this species. The fungus is a vascular disease meaning that once it has made its way into the vascular bundles of the tree, it will spread throughout all parts. The prognosis for this disease unfortunately is a slow and certain decline. You can see how the tree on the right side has a pocket where the fronds are noticeably discolored (dark) and are falling off the tree prematurely. This disease has no effective cure.

The last concerning condition that I noticed is that while the base of the Palm trees have a diameter of 30" and 36", over-pruning of these trees in the past have led to dangerous and irreversible taper in the trunks to about 18" (approx.) near the middle. From this narrow point upwards, the palm trunks widen again. Allowing these trees to continue getting taller and heavier above this 'pinch' point is unsafe.

These trees are also poised to impact the utility lines as they continue to grow taller. It is the general consensus of Utility companies to remove Palm trees adjacent to high voltage power line due to the hazard posed by falling fronds.

Based on my experience, the 2 Canary Island Palms in your front yard pose a potential hazard due to some unusual and worrying root and trunk characteristics as well as showing symptoms of a fatal fungal disease evident in the bud. These trees are a non-native species that are declining throughout the region. The risk of tree retention is too great to ignore. The potentially severe consequences of these trees failing makes tree removal the only prudent mitigation option.

You have a landscape plan in which you are planting 7 different types of trees to offset the removal of these Palms. The species you selected are more appropriate for a smaller yard. They will add diversity, attract pollinators, provide aesthetic value while being more appropriately sized for the space.

#### Observations:

The subject property is located on a flat lot in a suburban neighborhood of South Pasadena. The property is 7,052sqft lot and the home is a craftsman style 2 story building with yellow siding. There is a large Chinese Elm growing in the parkway that partially shield the home from view of the street. In the small front yard, there are 2 large Canary Island Palm trees. The Palms have a wood picket-fence style square planters built around them which show up in google street view photos in 2022. The subject property was purchased in September of 2024.

The driveway is on the left side and there is a small metal fence enclosing the front yard area. There is a citrus tree on a planter strip adjacent to the driveway and a small crape myrtle on the right side of the front yard.

I did not enter the back yard since the subject trees are in the front yard and there was no need to inspect the rear yard.

#### Tree Descriptions/Conditions:

Tree #	Tree Species	Common Name	DBH	Height	Spread	Grade	Comments
1	<i>Phoenix Canariensis</i>	Canary Island Palm	36" (stump)	50' est.	25' est	D	Grade raised, Poor Trunk Taper, Lean (Removal)
2	<i>Pheonix Canariensis</i>	Canary Island Palm	30"	50' est.	25' est.	D-	Grade raised, Poor Trunk Taper, Lean, Fusarium (Removal)

Photos:

Google Satellite View with trees marked



Street view from Dec 2020 (Notice lean on the trunk of the Palm on the right (Tree #2) (Notice the original grade of the trees seen here)





Street View Dec 2020 (Notice trunk taper) (Palms appear to be trimmed and healthy) (Notice the proximity to the high voltage power lines)





Site Photo Taken Oct 8th





Palm Tree #1 (Notice the significant taper creating a weak point about 20ft up the trunk)





Palm Tree #2 (Background) (Notice the significant taper in the trunk about 20ft up. There is also a 'crook' in the tree where the angle of the trunk changes).





Palm Tree#2 (Notice the diseased canopy showing signs of 'Fusarium dieback')





Palm Tree #1 Canopy (Notice the decaying bud and weeds growing out of the bud)





Palm Tree #2 (Notice the soil grade has been raised around the base of the tree)





Palm Tree #1 (notice proximity to power lines/service lines)

#### Discussion:

Firstly it is important to discuss the characteristics of the subject tree species. *Phoenix canariensis* are very massive Palm trees that boast significant trunk diameters and huge fronds with wide spreading fronds. These trees can be seen in Beverly Hills for example, reaching over 70ft tall. The fronds have large thorns along the petiole. These trees are largely farm grown in areas like Indio and other desert regions with lots of sun and low humidity. The soil types are sandy and well drained.

The conditions in South Pasadena are quite different from the inland areas where these trees are grown and in the urban forest. In the urban environment these trees are exposed to all types of

different airborne pathogens, varying soil types, confined planting spaces, poor pruning practices, climbing spikes, and marine influence + coastal rains. With our back to back rainy years and the gloomy early summer we experienced in 2024, the prevalence of Fusarium wilt has increased significantly. Once a Canary Island Date Palm becomes infected, removal of the tree is recommended to prevent the spread to other nearby healthy trees. The pathogen can lay dormant in the soil and therefore replanting of the same species tree is not recommended as re-infection is likely.

These Palms also develop their trunk size at an early age and maintain a uniform trunk girth as they grow. These trees are not supposed to have fronds removed past the horizontal plane as this creates an unnatural taper that predisposes the tree to poor form. The subject trees are displaying a very significant reduction in taper. This is a serious defect that only become more important as the trees grow taller.

These trees are not known to withstand leans. While some species like the Mexican fan palm can withstand leans, these slender flexible palms are much different than the stout Phoenix canariensis. These trees have huge buds with enormous weight which needs to be centered over the base of the tree. I'm concerned about the uncorrected lean of these trees. I think that it was caused because the trees are planted too close together and their fronds are overlapping and competing.

Palm trees have fibrous root systems that grow from a root initiation zone. Palms like these are not adapted to disturbed soil grades or erosion. These trees do not need mulch or rich compost and actually become more susceptible to disease when they are exposed to grade changes and thick compost/mulch layers.

The South Pasadena Tree Ordinance states that reasons for tree removal include:

*(1) Where the tree poses a reasonable risk of injury or harm to persons or property or is substantially interfering with the structural integrity or the use of an existing structure (including, but not limited to, a fence or wall), swimming pool, or building and there is no feasible and reasonable alternative to mitigate the interference.*

The trees are flawed and could cause significant injury to persons as the decayed portions of the bud can suddenly drop large clusters of diseased fronds. These trees are located directly over the front entrance and parking area in the driveway. The 'pinched' trunks are a weak point that are not capable of safely supporting the huge weight of the massive tree canopy especially since the trees are leaning and the weight is off-center.

*(3) Where a written determination has been made by a certified arborist, after a visual inspection or scientific evaluation, that the tree is so diseased or damaged that it is no longer viable or is a threat to persons or property, including to other trees. The director or commission may waive the requirement for a certified arborist's written statement when the tree can reasonably be determined to be dead by a layperson's visual inspection or when, after conducting an inspection of the tree, the director determines that the tree poses an obvious and imminent threat to life or property.*

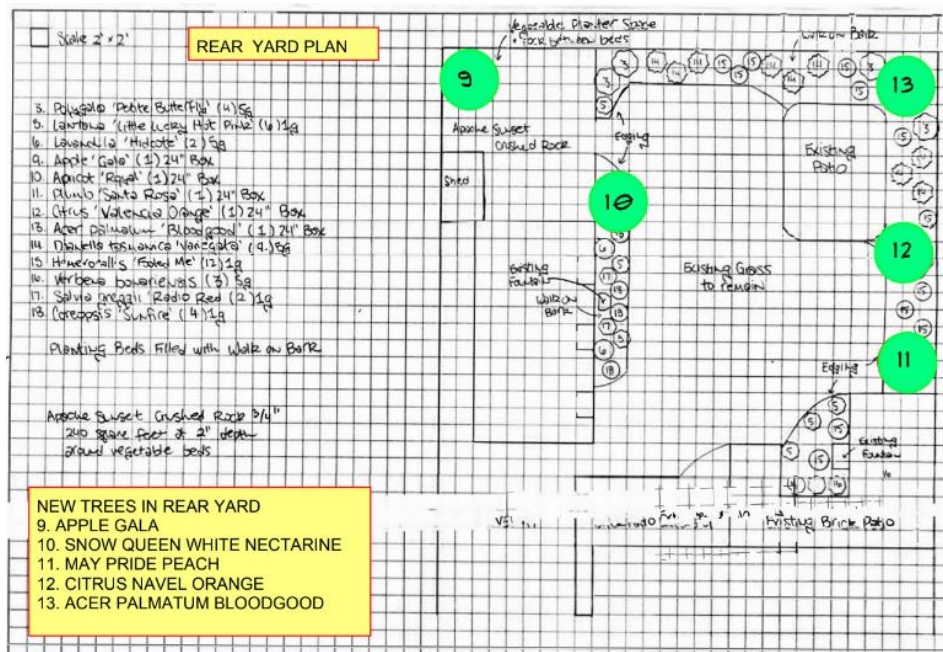
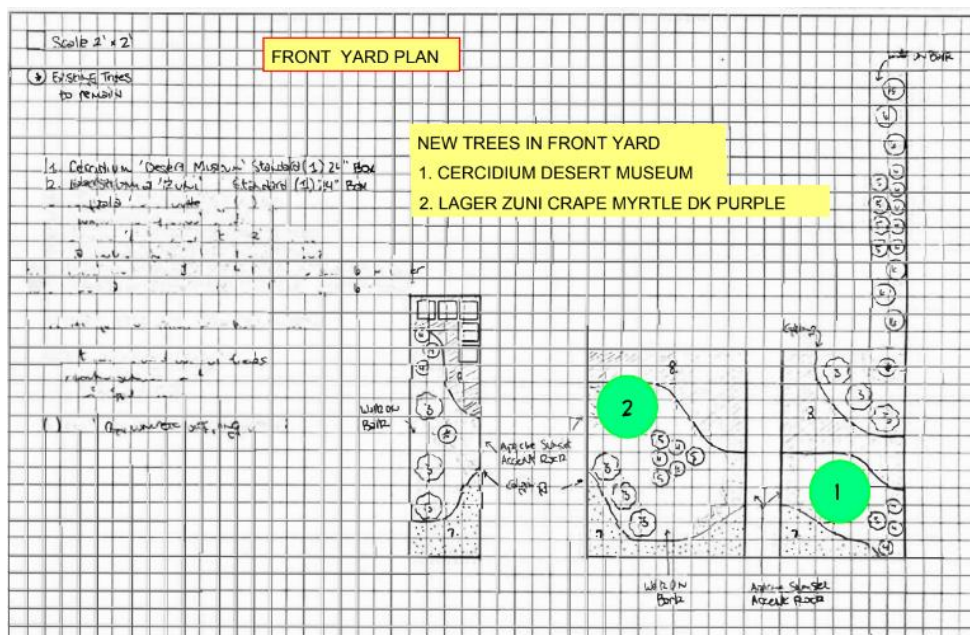
There is evidence that the trees have both fungal issues at the base of the tree from grade disturbance as well as Fusarium dieback clearly evident in the canopy. Fusarium dieback is considered to be untreatable and fatal. Retention of these trees can also spread airborne spores and threaten nearby healthy trees.



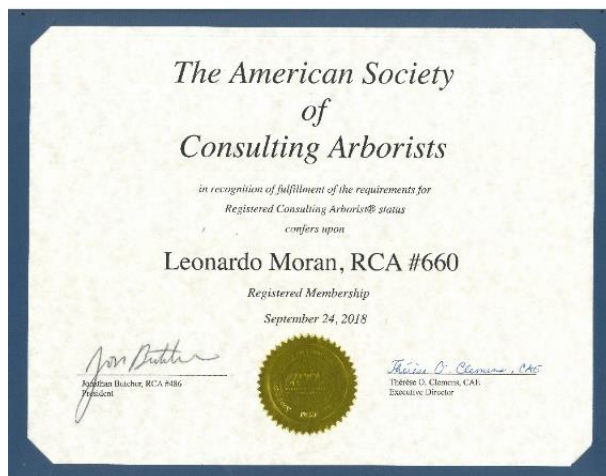
### Recommendations:

The current recommendation is to remove and stump grind the subject trees and demolish the above ground planters in order to remove the trees completely. Remove as much of the ground up stump shavings and soil in order to remove as much of the diseased soil as possible. Import fill soil to cover the stump locations.

### Mitigation:



### Credentials



### Assumptions & Limiting Conditions

1. Care has been taken to obtain all information from reliable sources. All data had been verified insofar as possible; however, the consultant can neither guarantee nor be responsible for the accuracy of the information provided by others
2. The consultant shall not be required to give testimony or to attend court by reason of this report unless subsequent contractual arrangements are made, including payment of an additional fee for such services as described in the fee schedule.
3. Loss or alteration of any part of this report invalidates the entire report.
4. Possession of this report or a copy thereof does not imply right of publication or use for any purpose by any other than the person to whom it is addressed, without the prior expressed written or verbal consent of the consultant.
5. This report represents the opinion of the consultant, and the consultant's fee is in no way contingent upon the reporting of a specified value, a stipulated result, the occurrence of a subsequent event, nor upon any findings to be reported.
6. Sketches, diagrams, graphs, and photographs in this report, being intended as visual aids, are not necessarily to scale and should not be so construed as engineering or architectural reports or surveys.
7. Unless expressed otherwise, information contained in this report covers only those items that were examined and reflects the condition of those items at the time of inspection. There is no warranty or guarantee, expressed or implied, that problems or deficiencies of the plants or property in question may not arise in the future.

### Certification of Performance

I, Leonardo Moran, certify that:

1. I have personally inspected the tree and property referred to in this report and have stated my findings accurately.
  2. I have no current or prospective interest in the tree or the property that is the subject of this report and have no personal interest or bias with respect to the parties involved.
  3. The analysis, opinions and conclusions stated herein are my own and are based on current scientific procedures and facts.
  4. My analysis, opinions and conclusions were developed and this report has been prepared according to commonly accepted arboricultural practices.
  5. No one provided significant professional assistance to me, except as indicated within the report.
  6. My compensation is not contingent upon the reporting of a predetermined conclusion that favors the cause of the client or any other party nor upon the results of the assessment, the attainment of stipulated results, or the occurrence of any subsequent events.
- I further certify that I am a member in good standing of the American Society of Consulting Arborists and the International Society of Arboriculture. I have been involved in the field of Arboriculture in a full-time capacity for a period of twelve years.

Signed:

Dated: 10/21/2024

Leonardo Moran, Registered Consulting Arborist #660