

October 25, 2023

Nancy Kent
City of Piedmont
120 Vista Avenue
Piedmont CA 94611

Subject: Sweetgum assessment
416 Park Way

Dear Ms. Kent:

You requested that I evaluate the health and structural condition of three sweetgums (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) located at 416 Park Way. I visited the site on October 20th to review tree conditions. This letter summarizes my observations, assessment, and recommendation.

Description of the Trees

Each of the trees had been topped for line clearance. As a result, crowns were one-sided with lateral branches extending towards and over the residence. Trunk diameters ranged from 21 to 38 inches. Overall vigor was good with few dead or dying branches. Trees #98 and 99 had fair structure, whereas tree #97 had poor structure.

Lateral branches of tree #99 turned upwards to form a candelabra shape (Photo 1). Branch attachments were narrow, crossing, and were poorly formed. A large girdling root was present extending a third of the way around the tree.

Tree #98 had a 21-inch diameter trunk, the smallest of the group. It appeared to have stronger, wider lateral branch attachments (Photo 2) than the other two trees. Large, heavy limbs extended over the house.

Tree #97 had a cavity with decay on the street side (Photo 3, next page). A 12 ft. long wound was present on the house side, resulting from the failure of a scaffold branch (Photo 4, next page). Response growth indicated the presence of internal decay, potentially extending into the main trunk.



Photo 1. Tree #99 was close to the southwest corner of Park Way and Masa Ave. Lateral branching was poorly formed turning upright.

Photo 2 (middle). Branching of tree #98 had fair structure.

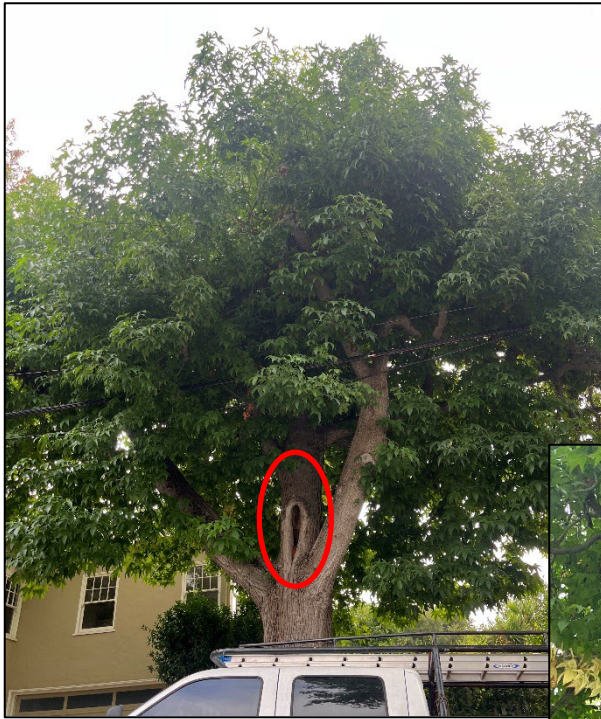


Photo 3 (left). Tree #97 had a cavity with decay on the street side.

Photo 4 (below). A 12 ft. tear down wound was present on the east side of tree #97.



Recommendation

I recommend removal of tree #97. The tree had poor structure and a history of branch failure resulting in decaying cavities and wounds. I am not aware of any arboriculturally sound treatment or techniques to further mitigate these defects without compromising the tree's structure. The tree's condition will not improve. Decay will only worsen, increasing the likelihood of failure over time. Removal and replacement is a prudent management option.

I recommend retaining trees #98 and 99. Prune both trees with the goal of removing dead, broken, crossing, and weakly attached branches, and reducing the end weight of branches over the home. These trees should be inspected on the standard City inspection cycle.

Sincerely,

Darya Barar, Managing Consulting Urban Forester
ISA Certified Arborist No. WE-6757A
Registered Consulting Arborist #693
ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified