

**Client:** Serena & Chris Clark  
**Project Location:** 129 Laurel Avenue, San Anselmo  
**Inspection Date:** October 17, 2019  
**Arborist:** Ben Anderson



## URBAN FORESTRY ASSOCIATES, INC.

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### Assignment

Rich Torrson of Elite Tree Service contacted Urban Forestry Associates on behalf of Serena Howeth to request an arborist report for a mature Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*) in the side yard of 129 Laurel Avenue. The Howeths would reportedly like to remove the pine and this report is to be used as part of the permit application. Mr. Clark met me on site.

### Observations

Species	Canary Island pine ( <i>Pinus canariensis</i> )
Diameter	31.3 inches
Location	Within one foot of and possibly touching the west property boundary between 129 and 119 Laurel Avenue. The canopy of the tree extends over the home at 129 and the studio above the garage at 119 (Figure 1). The base of the tree is within five feet of the garage foundation at 119. The tree is growing within four feet of a mature incense cedar ( <i>Calocedrus decurrens</i> ) (Figure 2).
Health	Good. See explanation of condition ratings in Table 1. There are many mature trees on the subject property and in the neighborhood generally.
Structure <sup>1</sup>	Good.
Form <sup>2</sup>	Good though it is affected somewhat by the shared canopy space with the incense cedar.
Miscellaneous	The pine needle debris is prolific on both properties. A large amount of needles were accumulated on the roof of the studio at 119 (Figure 2).

### Discussion

The pine is located inside the defensible space zone of the subject home and the neighboring home at 119. Both homes are in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). FIRESafe Marin recommends removing pine trees from inside the defensible space of a structure “due to their fire prone nature”. The leaf litter on the roof of the studio would be very difficult to access to clear as there is no deck and it is on the second story.

### Conclusions

Incense cedar is native to California while Canary Island pine is not. The two trees are planted far too close together for such large species. The cedar is in a preferable location as it is further from foundations, is a native species, and is less fire prone. It is a reasonable management decision to remove the pine to mitigate fire risk to both properties and to favor the health and structure of the cedar. The removal of this tree will not have a significant impact on the overall canopy cover of the neighborhood as the cedar should fill the space nicely.

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<sup>1</sup> **Structure** – Overall stability of the tree or its branches. This can be negatively affected by things such as acute angle crotches, decay cavities, strong leans, stem girdling roots, ambrosia beetles, history of failures, etc.

<sup>2</sup> **Form** – The plant’s overall appearance as it relates to its shape or silhouette. Can be negatively affected by crown asymmetries.

## **SCOPE OF WORK AND LIMITATIONS**

Urban Forestry Associates has no personal or monetary interest in the outcome of this investigation. All observations regarding trees in this report were made by UFA, independently, based on our education and experience. All determinations of health condition, structural condition, or hazard potential of a tree or trees at issue are based on our best professional judgment. The health and hazard assessments in this report are limited by the visual nature of the assessment. Defects may be obscured by soil, brush, vines, aerial foliage, branches, multiple trunks, other trees, etc. Even structurally sound, healthy trees can fail during severe storms. Consequently, even a low risk rating is not a guarantee of no risk, hazard, or sound health.



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Benjamin Anderson, Urban Forester  
ISA Board Certified Master Arborist & TRAQ  
RCA #686, WE #10160B  
(415) 454-4212

**Table 1. Condition ratings table. Taken from *Guide for Plant Appraisal, 10th edition***

Rating category	Condition components		
	Health	Structure	Form
Excellent	High vigor and nearly perfect health with little or no twig dieback, discoloration, or defoliation	Nearly ideal and free of defects.	Nearly ideal for the species. Generally symmetric. Consistent with the intended use.
Good	Vigor is normal for the species. No significant damage due to diseases or pests. Any twig dieback, defoliation, or discoloration is minor.	Well-developed structure. Defects are minor and can be corrected.	Minor asymmetries/deviations from species norm. Mostly consistent with the intended use. Function and aesthetics are not compromised.
Fair	Reduced vigor. Damage due to insects or diseases may be significant and associated with defoliation but is not likely to be fatal. Twig dieback, defoliation, discoloration, and/or dead branches may comprise up to 50% of the crown.	A single defect of a significant nature or multiple moderate defects. Defects are not practical to correct or would require multiple treatments over several years.	Major asymmetries/deviations from species norm and/or intended use. Function and/or aesthetics are compromised.
Poor	Unhealthy and declining in appearance. Poor vigor. Low foliage density and poor foliage color are present. Potentially fatal pest infestation. Extensive twig and/or branch dieback.	A single serious defect or multiple significant defects. Recent change in tree orientation. Observed structural problems cannot be corrected. Failure may occur at any time.	Largely asymmetric/abnormal. Detracts from intended use and/or aesthetics to a significant degree.
Very poor	Poor vigor. Appears to be dying and in the last stages of life. Little live foliage.	Single or multiple severe defects. Failure is probable or imminent.	Visually unappealing. Provides little or no function in the landscape.
Dead			

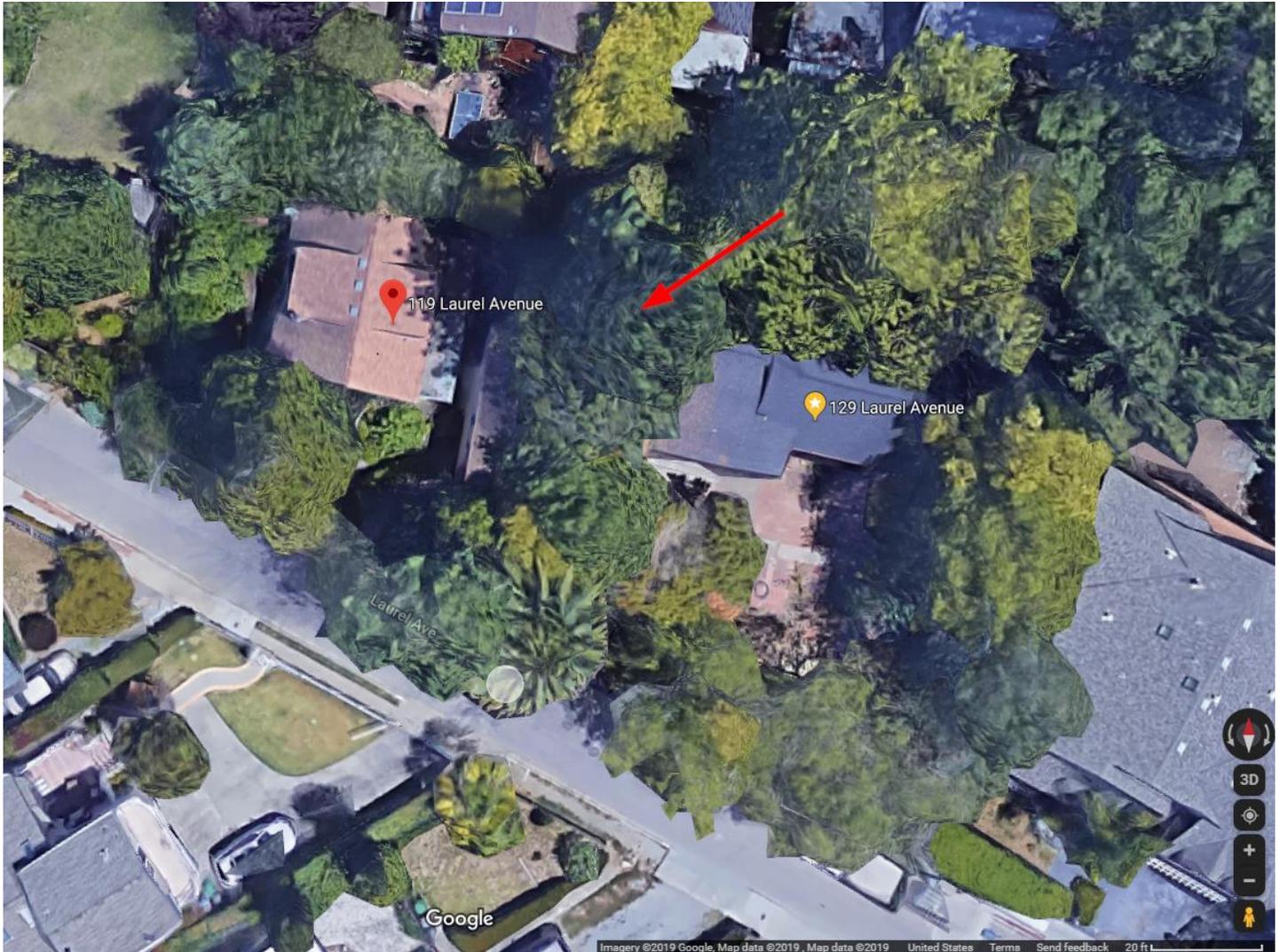
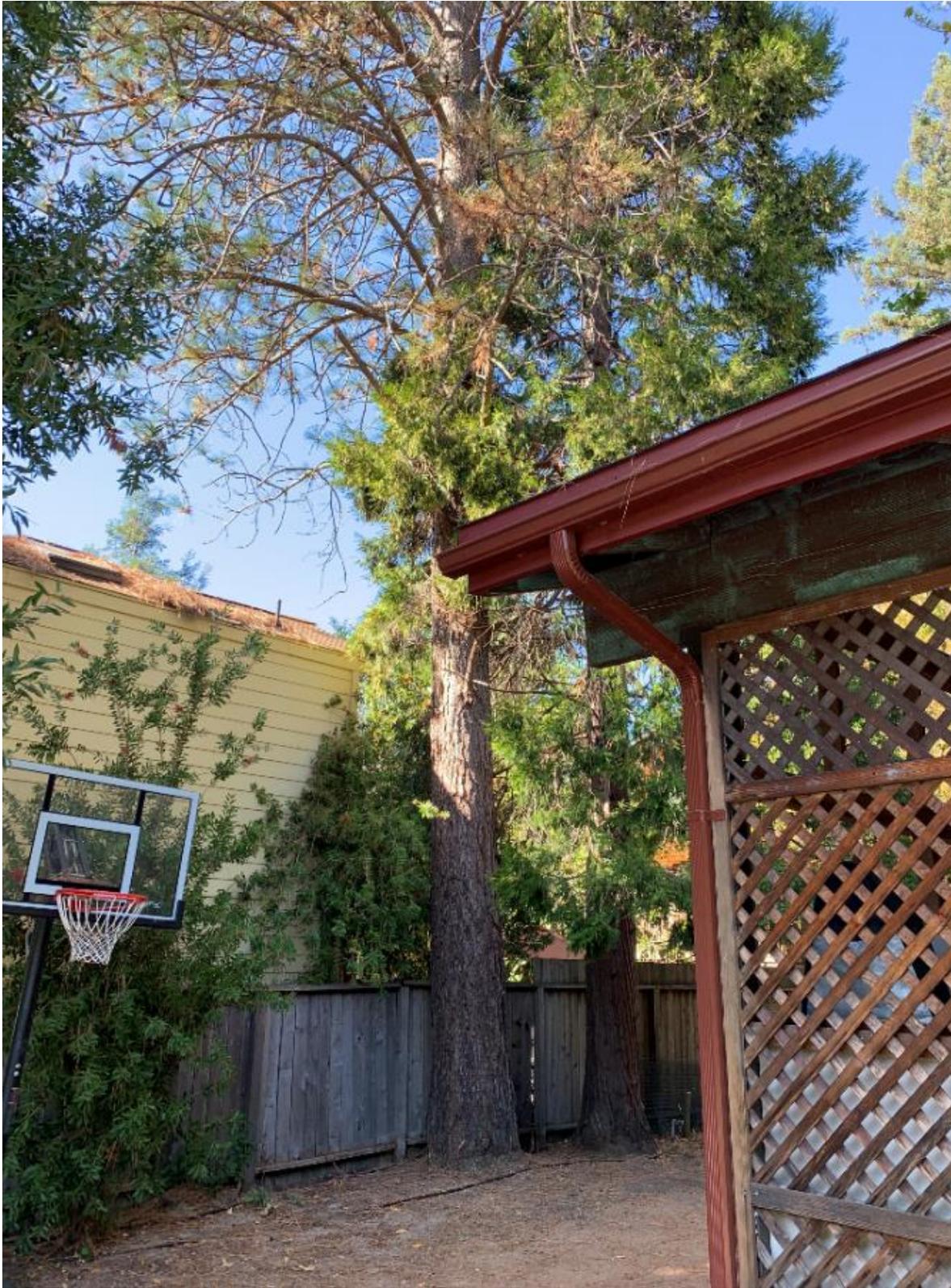


Figure 1. Map of subject property and tree location (indicated with red arrow)



**Figure 2. The subject pine is the center tree in the image. Cedar is to the right. Needle accumulation visible on the roof to the left of the subject tree.**