

Client: Mary Breeze

Arborist: Zach Vought

Project Address: 28 Elkhorn Way, San Anselmo

Inspection Date: June 3, 2020



ASSIGNMENT/ BACKGROUND

Scott Breeze asked me to perform a visual assessment of a Deodar cedar tree location in the backyard of his parent's home at 28 Elk Horn Way in San Anselmo. The purpose of this report is to document the condition of the subject tree to satisfy the Town of San Anselmo's requirement for an arborist's report to accompany heritage tree removal permit applications.

OBSERVATIONS

(See Glossary definitions for terms in **bold**)

Tree-1

Species Deodar cedar (*Cedrus deodara*)

Size 25 inches dbh¹, qualifying as Heritage per the Town of San Anselmo Municipal Code.

Location In the back yard on a slope below the home (Figure 1, 2).

There is a solar panel array installed on the slope south of the tree. Cones from the subject tree reportedly impact the panels (Figure 3).

Condition The subject tree is in **good health** and appears stable, with no obvious canopy asymmetry or lean. The subject tree is one of many deodar cedars on the slope, all of which are reportedly volunteers. The group of trees form a continuous mass of canopy in the southeast portion of the property.

DISCUSSION

Deodar cedar is a successful non-native ornamental tree in California. It is drought tolerant and relatively pest and disease free and has a large growth potential. When site conditions are favorable, it regularly achieves heights over 50 feet and a trunk diameter of three feet. As such the species is best suited for larger lots with ample space for the trunk and canopy to expand. Though the subject tree and smaller cedars onsite appear healthy and stable, there is an argument to be made that they contribute to elevated fire risk.

FIRESafeMARIN.com characterizes cedars as having poor resistance to fire.

The property is located in a "high" fire hazard zone in the **Wildland Urban Interface** (WUI). Properties located in the WUI are subject to strict **defensible space** standards. I understand Ms. Breeze intends on improving her

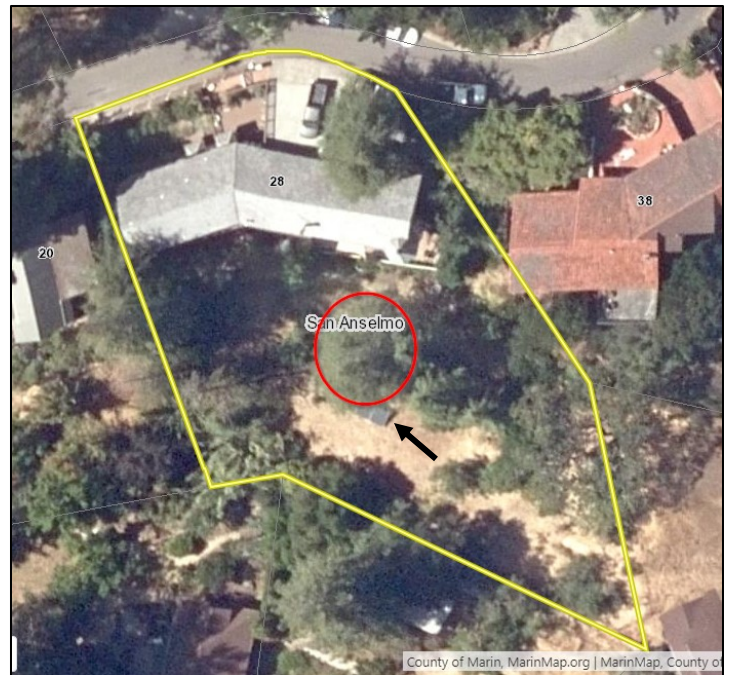


Figure 1. Aerial image of 28 Elk Horn Way indicating parcel lines and approximate canopy dripline of the subject tree. Black arrow indicates the location of solar panels.

¹ Trunk diameter measured (in inches) at four- and one-half feet above grade, from the upslope side of the tree

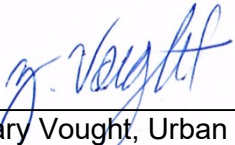
defensible space by removing the subject tree and other non-heritage cedars on the slope below the home. Given the location of the property in the WUI removing these trees is a reasonable risk mitigation action and is supported by the recommendations provided on the FIRESafeMARIN page regarding [defensible space](#). Additionally, the subject tree is limiting solar access to the solar array, an undesirable condition that could be abated by removing the tree.

CONCLUSIONS

The subject trees pose a fire risk to the Breeze property and are limiting solar access. Removing the trees is a reasonable action to manage high fire risk onsite.

RECOMMENDATION

To abate the issues described above, remove the subject tree and additional non-heritage cedars.



Zachary Vought, Urban Forester
RCA #691, ISA Certified Arborist
WE-9995A & TRAQ



Figure 2. Subject tree viewed from the backyard



Figure 3

Glossary

Defensible space zone (DSZ)- the vegetated area surrounding homes, managed in a way to reduce fire danger. The primary goals of maintaining the DSZ is to reduce the risk of fire spread to homes and to increase the chances for firefighters to defend homes during a fire. Maintaining defensible space in fire prone areas (and especially within the WUI) is emphasized.

Health – overall health or ability of the plant to deal with stress (vitality). Health assessment is based on the appearance of foliage, incremental growth, and the amount of living vascular tissue.

Form – The plant's overall appearance as it relates to its shape or silhouette. Can be negatively affected by crown asymmetries.

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.

Wildland Urban Interface- A Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) is a zone of transition between wildland (unoccupied land) and human development. Communities in the WUI are at risk of catastrophic wildfire and their presence disrupts the ecology (Wikipedia 2019).

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 or other trees. Even structurally sound, healthy trees are wind thrown during severe storms or other weather events. Consequently, a conclusion that a tree does not require corrective surgery or removal is not a guarantee of no risk, hazard, or sound health.

Table 1. Tree Condition Ratings

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			