

**Client:** All Seasons Tree Care

**Arborist:** Zach Vought

**Project Address:** 85 Melville Ave., San Anselmo

**Inspection Date:** August 7, 2020



## ASSIGNMENT/ BACKGROUND

Uriel Barron of All Seasons Tree Care asked me to perform a visual assessment of the Deodar Cedar tree in the front yard of his client's home in San Anselmo. The homeowner is reportedly interested in maximizing defensible space around the home - as a part of this work, the tree is slated for removal. The purpose of this report is to document the condition of the tree to satisfy the Town of San Anselmo requirement for an arborist report to accompany

## OBSERVATIONS

Tree-1

Species	deodar cedar ( <i>Cedrus deodara</i> )
Size	The tree stands approximately 40 feet tall. The trunk diameter measures 25.2 inches dbh <sup>1</sup> , qualifying as Heritage per San Anselmo Municipal Code.
Location	Front yard on the slope just below the brick pathway (Figure 3).
Condition	
Health	<b>Good.</b> No canopy dieback or significant deadwood in the canopy.
Structure	<b>Good.</b>
Form	<b>Good.</b>



Figure 1. Subject tree as viewed from the road.

## 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 is healthy and stable, there is an argument to be made that they contribute to elevated fire risk. [FIRESafeMARIN.com](http://FIRESafeMARIN.com) characterizes cedars as having poor resistance to fire.

The property is located in a "very high" fire hazard zone in the **Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)**. Properties located in the WUI are subject to strict **defensible space** standards. I understand the property owner intends on improving her defensible space by removing the subject tree. Given the location of the property in the WUI removing the tree is a reasonable risk mitigation action and is supported by the recommendations provided on

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

the FIRESafeMARIN page regarding [defensible space](#).

## CONCLUSIONS

The subject tree is poorly located near the home which has required frequent pruning to maintain clearance. Deodar cedar is considered fire prone and thus not ideal for compact properties within the WUI. For these reasons it is reasonable to remove the tree to mitigate the elevated fire risk it poses.

## RECOMMENDATION

Whole tree removal to abate all fire risk associated with the tree.



Figure 2. Proximity of the canopy to the home and roof.



Figure 3. Tree location map

## 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.



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WE-9995A & TRAQ

**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			