



2405 Nueces Street and 504 W. 24th Street
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Heritage Tree Variance Package

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ITEM FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION AGENDA

COMMISSION
DATE REQUESTED: April 7, 2021

ADDRESS
OF PROPERTY: 2405 Nueces Street and 504 West 24th Street

CASE FOLDER: TP 182241

NAME OF APPLICANT: Drenner Group

CITY ARBORIST: Naomi Rotramel (512) 974-9135
naomi.rotramel@austintexas.gov

ORDINANCE: Heritage Tree Ordinance (LDC 25-8-641)

REQUEST: The applicant is seeking the removal of two (2) Heritage trees, one with a single stem over 30" in diameter.

STAFF
RECOMMENDATION: The request meets the City Arborist approval criteria set forth in LDC 25-8-624(A)(2), thus the variance is recommended.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Ms. Linda Guerrero, Chair
City of Austin Environmental Commission

FROM: Naomi Rotramel, City Arborist Program
Development Services Department

DATE: March 31, 2021

CASE FOLDER: TP #182241

REQUEST: The applicant is requesting to remove two heritage trees, one with a single-stem greater than 30 inches as allowed under LDC 25-8-643.

Project Description

The subject property is located at 504 W 24th Street and 2405 Nueces Street. The lot size is .43 acres (18,944 SF) and is zoned CS-NP (Commercial Services – Neighborhood Plan).

The property is located in the University Neighborhood Overlay (UNO) in the Inner West Campus subdistrict. The property is located in the Lady Bird Lake watershed, classified as an urban watershed.

The site is currently being operated as a multi-tenant retail center with surface parking. The site is currently 80% impervious cover. The current intent is to develop a 307-unit housing tower with 4,000 sq. ft. of ground floor retail.

The applicant requested a pre-development consultation with City Arborist program review staff. All trees on site are proposed for removal. The scope of the consultation focused on three site trees: a Protected red oak, and the two Heritage trees associated with this variance request.

A 25" heritage pecan and a single-stem 32" heritage red oak are requested for removal that, and per the Land Development Code, necessitate a Land Use Commission variance.

Tree Evaluation

Measurements

The subject trees are one heritage 32" red oak (#913) and one heritage 25" pecan (# 911).

Tree #913 red oak

Canopy Conditions

Major asymmetry, unbalanced crown, and an overextended limb (Exhibit 1).

Structure/Trunk

Multiple attachments - all the leaders of the tree are connected at one place on the trunk. This is inherently a weakness with this tree's union due to lack of branch taper (Exhibit 2).

Included bark was observed between two unions where stems grow closely together causing weak, under-supported branch angles which may cause branch or total tree failure (Exhibit 3).

Root system

Root system is almost entirely covered with disturbed and compacted impervious cover. Tree been buried to an unknown depth as the root flare is not visible.

Overall Condition

Tree #913 is in fair condition due to structure and poor attachments.

Tree #911 pecan

Canopy Conditions

Displays a heightened loading on the stems as a result of the length and excessive end weight of the branches and lack of inner branches.

Large cavity in one of the main leaders and hypoxylon canker on live tissue (Exhibits 4 & 5).

Structure/Trunk

Trunk has a 20 degree lean.

Root System

Root system is almost entirely covered with disturbed and compacted impervious cover. Evidence that the tree has begun to grow into the decking resulting in girdling the cambium layer of tree (Exhibit 5).

Tree been buried to an unknown depth as the root flare is not visible.

Overall Condition

Tree #911 is in poor condition due to structure and large leader decay.

Variance Request

The variance request is to allow removal of two heritage trees, one with a stem greater than 30 inches as allowed under LDC 25-8-643.

Recommendation

The City Arborist recommends removal of both trees due to the applicant demonstrating that the trees prevent reasonable use of the site.

Based upon tree location, zoning, site characteristics, and the proposed use, the City Arborist believes the applicant has provided sufficient evidence that LDC 25-8-624(A) (2) has been met. Further, there do not appear to be any waivers, variances, or

modifications of code that would allow development concurrent with the preservation of these trees.

Mitigation

The Environmental Criteria Manual standard is 300% mitigation. Mitigation for this site shall be addressed by further enhancing the streetscape planting conditions required under the UNO Great Streets program. The applicant has proposed a menu of options that support greater tree health and longevity such as structural soil cells, permeable paving, and expanded, continuous planting beds. Additionally, the applicant is proposing a five-year tree care plan to provide ongoing maintenance for all new trees, and one-time improvements to additional streetscape trees and tree grates as needed and identified.

Please contact 512-974-9135 or naomi.rotramel@austintexas.gov if you have questions.

Naomi Rotramel

Naomi Rotramel, City Arborist
Development Services Department

Exhibit 1

Tree #913: Unbalanced canopy; overextended limb



Exhibit 2

Tree #193: Multiple attachments



Included bark at multiple attachment to main trunk



Exhibit 3

Tree #913: included bark between leaders



Exhibit 4

Tree #911 Pecan:

Leaning structure; hypoxylon canker on live tissue



Exhibit 5 #911 pecan

Large cavity in major leader; growing in to decking – girdling trunk cambium layer

