

April 2016

Date: 3/8/16

Requested by: Jeff Ruppert

Address: jeff@ruppertconstruction.com

Location of Tree: 554 Alan Rd., Santa Barbara, CA 93109

Tree Species: *Liquidambar styraciflua*

Common Name: American Sweetgum

Requested Reason for Removal: Public hazard.

Current designated Street Tree: *Pistacia chinensis*, Chinese Pistache (January 24, 1990)

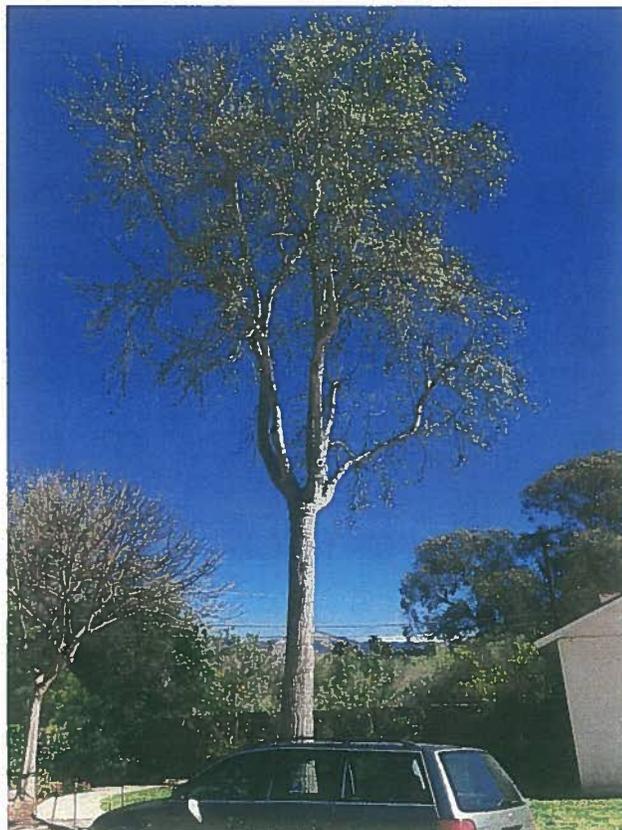
Advisory Committee Recommendation: Approve Removal: Deny Removal:

Staff Recommendation: Approve Removal: Deny Removal:

Date Posted: 4/15/16

Comments: The Committee recommends that the Commission deny the removal.

PHOTO INVENTORY





CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

City of Santa Barbara
Parks and Recreation Department
STREET TREE REMOVAL APPLICATION

MAR 08 2016

PARK & RECREATION
PARKS DIVISION

PAID

Mailing Address:
PO Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA 93102
(805) 564-5433 FAX (805) 897-2524

Office Address:
402 E. Ortega St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Application Fee: \$50 (effective July 1, 2010)

DATE OF REQUEST:	3-4-14
APPLICANT:	Jeff Ruppert
ADJACENT OWNER NAME: (IF DIFFERENT THAN APPLICANT)	Jeff@ruppertconstruction.com
MAILING/EMAIL ADDRESS:	554 Alan Rd. SB, CA 93109
DAYTIME PHONE:	(805) 448-4425
TREE LOCATION (ADDRESS):	same
TREE SPECIES (IF KNOWN):	Liquidambar styraciflua
REASON(S) FOR REMOVAL:	public hazard

PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

1. Property owner letter, indicating reasons for removal. Also include whether:
 - a. The removal application is associated with new development or redevelopment of property
 - b. Status of development application, including whether the project is scheduled for review by the Single Family Design Board, Architectural Board of Review or Historic Landmarks Commission
 - c. The tree is a designated Specimen or Historic Tree
2. Photo of tree(s) proposed for removal
3. Development plan/Landscape plan

February 18, 2016

Parks Commission
P.O. Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

Re: Removal of Parkway Tree at 554 Alan Road, Santa
Barbara, CA 93109

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing this letter as a follow up to the three letters we have previously submitted (Sept. 2010, Aug. 2012, and Oct. 2014 attached) to renew our request that the City consider removing the sugar gum tree located in the parkway in front of our home. This removal request is not associated with any new or re-development of our property.

The tree is a public hazard. The spiky pods litter the ground and pose significant threat to pedestrians, pets and bicyclists. The roots of the tree are already uplifting the recently re-done sidewalk, The sidewalk is well-traveled, and with the forthcoming city acquisition of the adjacent property as parkland, we anticipate even more foot traffic.

The city would be better served to allow the removal of the tree and the planting of one or more trees that conform to the rest of the neighborhood and do not expose the city to potential liability.

In speaking with city tree trimmers working in our neighborhood over the last several days, we were told that no new sugar gum trees have been planted in the city for years – but many such trees are being removed every year for the obvious reasons we have set forth in our letters.

Since the tree is still relatively small, they advised us to again submit an application for the removal of the tree as it would be easier to remove at its current size. We will also renew our commitment to purchase and plant a replacement tree or trees at our own expense if the sugar gum is removed.

We would appreciate a reply and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeff and Kara Ruppert
554 Alan Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
805.448.4425

October 25, 2014

Parks Commission
P.O. Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

Re: Removal of Parkway Tree at 554 Alan Road, Santa
Barbara, CA 93109

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing this letter as a follow up to the two letters we have previously submitted (Sept. 2010 and Aug. 2012, attached) to renew our request that the City consider removing the sugar gum tree located in the parkway in front of our home. This removal request is not associated with any new or re-development of our property.

Anyone familiar with the Alan Road neighborhood knows that the sidewalk in front of our home is used extensively by the neighborhood to access the property at the end of Alan Road. We have witnessed minor injuries to people and their animals as a result of the fallen pods littering the sidewalk. The pods also pose a very serious threat to our 82 year old neighbor, who crosses the street to visit almost daily and has to navigate the numerous pods which accumulate. In addition, in the last several years our son has stepped on pods on a number of occasions, and in one instance it required a visit to his pediatrician for a tetanus shot as a precaution.

According to the City website regarding parkway trees, residents are required to "...clean up fallen debris such as leaves or berries..." In such a case as ours, we are simply unable to keep the sidewalks clear of the fallen pods. We did not plant the tree, have documented over several years that it is a public hazard, and therefore should have no liability regarding it, and in the event a liability issue arises, we are certain that a jury of our peers would agree and hold the City liable instead.

We are, quite frankly, flabbergasted that the City has thus far chosen to ignore our offer to purchase and plant a replacement tree at our own expense if they will simply take the other tree down.

We would appreciate a reply and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeff and Kara Ruppert
554 Alan Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
805.448.4425

August 21, 2012

Parks Commission
P.O. Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

Re: Removal of Parkway Tree at 554 Alan Road, Santa
Barbara, CA 93109

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing this letter as a follow up to the letter we submitted in the fall of 2010 (attached) to which we never received a reply.

We would like to renew our request that the City consider removing the sugar gum tree located in the parkway in front of our home for the reasons specified in our previous letter and for the following additional reasons: city workers recently trimming the trees on Alan Road suggested to me that the sugar gum tree in front of our home was encroaching on the sidewalk (and had had its roots cut back at least once in recent years by city staff). They told me it is still a fairly young and comparatively small tree and removing it now might be beneficial - to prevent further sidewalk encroachment and necessary trimming of the roots, which might actually fatally damage the tree and cause it to die.

We do enjoy the shade the tree provides and would be willing to purchase and plant at our own expense a replacement tree, such as a Japanese pistachio (which is the type of tree planted throughout the majority of the neighborhood). In fact, we would actually like to purchase and plant 2 additional trees in the parkway if the sugar gum is removed.

We would appreciate a reply and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeff and Kara Ruppert
554 Alan Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
805.448.4425

September 7, 2010

Parks Commission
P.O. Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

Re: Removal of Parkway Tree at 554 Alan Road, Santa
Barbara, CA 93109

To Whom It May Concern:

We are submitting this letter in accordance with Santa Barbara City guidelines to request that one of the parkway trees (sugar gum) in front of our home be removed. According to applicable guidelines, the Arborist and Street Tree Advisory Committee may recommend the removal of a tree if it is, among other reasons, a threat to public safety or it can no longer be maintained in a healthy, safe and attractive condition. We strongly believe that this tree poses a hazard to both public use of the sidewalk and to private use of our front lawn. Additionally, if left intact, it will prevent full and safe enjoyment of our front lawn for significant periods of time every year.

We are a family with two young children, aged 3 and 7, who moved into our home in November, 2009. At that time, the front yard and parkway was virtually useless, overgrown with ivy and crabgrass. Over the course of the succeeding months, we worked on the front yard, eventually planting a lawn with a special type of grass that would be nice for our kids to play on. As we head into fall and start to encounter more and more of the spiky pods that fall from the tree, we are concerned that this tree will prevent us from continuing to fully enjoy the use of our lawn due to the massive numbers of pods that the tree sheds every year for many months.

Last fall, we witnessed this happen, and even though it did not significantly affect our use of our front yard (due to the condition of the front yard at the time we moved in), it did pose a significant hazard to us and to everyone that uses the sidewalk. As many of you are probably well aware, hundreds of spiky pods fall from the tree throughout the day, which will require us to inspect the lawn thoroughly each and every time we (especially our children) want to use it. Despite due diligence, each of us and our children have been "stabbed" by the balls on numerous occasions, have tripped and fallen, and Kara once even badly twisted her ankle as a result of accidently stepping on one.

Prior to our occupancy of this house, the house was occupied for over 20 years by an elderly widow who did not make use of the front yard in a way that the spiky pods would affect her enjoyment. We know this from firsthand knowledge - Jeff lived in the house across the street (561 Alan Road) for the last 13 years, and the widow's brother has also lived across the street (555 Alan Road) for over 20 years. Therefore, considering the changes that have occurred since the tree was originally planted, we respectfully request that you make a decision recommending the removal of the offending tree.

Thank you for your prompt consideration and we look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Jeff and Kara Ruppert
554 Alan Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
805.448.4425

