

# **Arborist Tree Assessment Report**

**Lower Laurel School  
Menlo Park, California**

**Prepared for**  
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**Prepared by**  
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March 6, 2017

## Introduction

### Assignment

At the request of Menlo Park City School District, I was asked to provide a tree assessment of significant trees on the grounds and within 8 feet of the grounds of Lower Laurel School located at 90 Edge Rd, Atherton, CA 94027. A recent tree failure has prompted the need to inspect all the large trees around the property for health and safety.

### Survey Methods

A visual assessment of the trees was made from the ground. No samples were collected for laboratory analysis, nor were the trees climbed as neither were part of the assignment. The trees had previously been affixed with numerical aluminum tags which are referred to in the report.

## Observations

On March 6, 2017, I visited the school to assess the health and conditions in and around the school property. There are 25 significant trees or areas of trees included in the survey of which 23 are on this property. Many of the trees are mature, some have been maintained where as others have not been maintained for some time.

Each tree is photographed with observations and recommendations for maintenance. There are some trees that require further investigation with **resistograph** if they are to stay; other trees show evidence of root decay and are therefore a hazard and should be removed.

For the last 4 or 5 years, the trees at the school have been under drought stress. Limited rain and irrigation have stunted the growth reducing the requirement for pruning. Recent rainfalls far exceeding the annual rainfall average have saturated the soils causing reduced stability but also the potential for excessive growth on the native live and valley oaks through the next year.

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## 1. Live oak in Play Ground



### **Observations**

Good health and condition. Young tree structurally pruned a couple of years ago. Putting on a lot of new growth.

### **Recommendations**

Lighten canopy throughout taking weight off lower longer limbs

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## 2. Pines, oaks and cedars on neighbor's property adjacent to Play Ground K



### **Observations**

Fair health and condition. Unmaintained for many years. One large dead pine branch over play area; heavy one sided oak over play area; long heavy cedar branches over play area.

### **Recommendations**

Remove dead limbs, lighten heavier limbs, prune back oak.



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## 3. Live oak over Lunch Area B



### **Observations**

Good health and condition. Recently maintained.

### **Recommendations**

Lighten low long limbs over building further with larger (>4") diameter cuts

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## 4. Incense cedar at Lunch Area B



### **Observations**

Fair health and condition. Significant lean, some dead wood, thinning canopy.

### **Recommendations**

Remove dead wood and lighten canopy



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## 5. Oak at F2 Classroom



### **Observations**

Good health and fair condition. Co-dominant trunks and a lot of dead wood. Not been maintained for some time.

### **Recommendations**

Remove dead wood and lighten canopy throughout

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## 6. Neighbor's trees on east side of property adjacent to fire road



### **Observations**

Good health and fair condition. Co-dominant trunks and a lot of dead wood. Not been maintained for some time.

### **Recommendations**

Remove dead wood and lighten canopy throughout



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## 7. Live oak at C2



### **Observations**

Good health and fair condition. Significant lean. Expecting a lot of growth this year.

### **Recommendations**

Remove dead wood and lighten canopy throughout

## 8. Live oak at Multipurpose Building



### **Observations**

Poor health and condition. No improvement from previous year. Evidence of *phytophthora* at base of tree suggesting potential root decay and root loss.

### **Recommendations**

Cut to ground level.

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## 9. 2<sup>nd</sup> Live oak at Multipurpose Building



### Observations

Fair health and condition. Thinning canopy and evidence of *phytophthora* at base of tree suggesting root decay and root loss. Significant lean over building.

### Recommendations

Cut to ground level.



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## 10. Elm



### **Observations**

Health and condition difficult to determine at this time of year. Some large visible dead wood. Expecting a lot of new growth this year after the rain. Some long heavy branches.

### **Recommendations**

Thin, lighten and remove dead wood throughout.

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## 11. Oak over A26



### **Observations**

Good health and condition. Recently maintained. One heavy branch over building.

### **Recommendations**

Lighten heavy branch over building.



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## 12. Oak by Main Office



### **Observations**

Fair health and condition. Some decay and cavities on larger limbs.

### **Recommendations**

Recently maintained, lighten one or two select heavier limbs.



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## 13. Large valley oak



### Observations

Good health and condition. No signs of disease or decay at base of trunk. Canopy thick and healthy

### Recommendations

**Resistograph** trunk and root crown to detect for decay or cavities at base of tree. If all well, then lighten tree throughout, reducing the 2 lower limbs back to their first lateral. Remove and replace cable over building if deemed necessary.

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## 14. 2<sup>nd</sup> Valley oak, #18/910



### Observations

Good health but poor condition. Healthy canopy but several large cavities on the main trunk

### Recommendations

An area of high use, particularly in the summer when this species is at a higher risk of failure. Cut to ground level.



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## 15. 3<sup>rd</sup> Valley oak, #17



### Observations

Good health but poor condition. Healthy canopy but several large cavities on the main trunk

### Recommendations

An area of high use, particularly in the summer when this species is at a higher risk of failure. Cut to ground level.



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## 16. 4<sup>th</sup> Valley oak, #16/909



### Observations

Good health and fair condition. Healthy canopy well balanced canopy.

### Recommendations

**Resistograph** trunk and root crown to detect for decay or cavities at base of tree. If all well, then lighten tree throughout.

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## 17. Valley oak, #14



### **Observations**

Fair health but poor condition. Healthy canopy but several large cavities on the main trunk. Significant root decay at base of tree.

### **Recommendations**

An area of high use, particularly in the summer when this species is at a higher risk of failure. Cut to ground level.



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## 18. Coast live oak at entry on Ringwood



### **Observations**

Fair health and condition. Not been maintained for some time. Large amount of dead wood throughout canopy and heavy limbs.

### **Recommendations**

Thin and lighten throughout, remove dead wood.



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## 19. Neighbor's pine over debris boxes



### **Observations**

Fair health and condition. Not been maintained for some time. Large amount of dead wood throughout canopy over school property.

### **Recommendations**

Remove dead wood over school property.

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## 20. Live oak over pedestrian gate on Ringwood



### **Observations**

Fair health and condition. Perhaps a City tree. Not been maintained for some time. Large amount of dead wood throughout. One sided canopy with large limb growing over play area

### **Recommendations**

Remove dead wood lighten limb over school property.



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## 21. Valley oak over play area



### **Observations**

Fair health and condition. Perhaps a City tree. Not been maintained for some time. Large, heavy limb over play area.

### **Recommendations**

Remove large, heavy limb over play area.



## 22. Elm over play area



### **Observations**

Fair health and condition. Perhaps a City tree. Not been maintained for some time. Large, dead wood in canopy over play area.

### **Recommendations**

Remove large dead wood over play area.

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## 23. Live oak over play area, #903



### **Observations**

Poor health and condition. Been slowly declining for many years. Has been lightened and maintained but continues to decline.

### **Recommendations**

Cut to ground level



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## 24. English laurel at corner of Edge and Ringwood



### **Observations**

Poor health and condition. New growth on part of tree, rest of canopy is dead.

### **Recommendations**

Remove large dead trunks



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## 25. Oak at G2



### **Observations**

Good health and condition. Not been maintained for some time.

### **Recommendations**

Thin and lighten canopy throughout

## Summary and Discussion

Tree #s 2, 6 and 19 are on the north and east neighbor's property lines. The trees need maintenance including removing large dead wood and lightening canopies and branches to prevent the possibility of failure.

Tree #s 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24 and 25 require maintenance whether it be lightening heavily limbs, removing dead wood or pruning the whole canopy of trees. Some of these trees have been worked on recently, whilst others have not been worked on for some time and are now due for maintenance. With the recent rains following 4 years of drought, I suspect many of the healthier trees around the school will put on a lot of growth this year which may lead to limb failure. Pruning of the larger trees to prevent limb failure will require pruning cuts of 4" and greater in diameter.

Tree #s 8 and 9 are growing in the area close to and over the top of the Multipurpose Building. Tree # 8 has had a thinning canopy for many years perhaps from the impacts of construction. I suspect there is some root loss caused by *phytophthora* resulting in a weakened tree and perhaps instability. Tree #9 also has a thinning canopy and probably for the same reasons. It is also leaning over the building. Both trees should be removed.

Tree #s 13 and 16 are large valley oaks on the east side of the school. They appear to be in good health and condition. These trees are frequently used as shade during the summer. As a precaution, I would recommend further investigation with a **resistograph** to determine if there is any decay in the trunks or root crown. If there is no significant decay, the trees should be thinned and lightened throughout.

Tree #s 14, 15, and 17 all have significant decay in their main structural limbs, trunk or root crown. These trees should be removed.

Tree # 23 has been slowly declining for many years. I do not see any signs of disease or insect infestation, however a thinning canopy suggests a problem in the root system. Since this area has a lot of activity during the school day, I recommend removal and replacement of this tree.

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## **Glossary**

<b>Canopy</b>	The part of the crown composed of leaves and small twigs. <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Cavities</b>	An open wound, characterized by the presence of extensive decay and resulting in a hollow. <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Decay</b>	Process of degradation of woody tissues by fungi and bacteria through the decomposition of cellulose and lignin <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Dripline</b>	The width of the crown as measured by the lateral extent of the foliage. <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Phytophthora</b>	Pathogen causing crown rot and root rot diseases
<b>Resitograph</b>	An instrument that detects decay and cavities in trees
<b>Root crown</b>	The point at which the trunk flares out at the base of the tree to become the root system.
<b>Species</b>	A Classification that identifies a particular plant.



## **Certification of Performance<sup>(3)</sup>**

I, Robert Weatherill certify:

- \* That I have personally inspected the tree(s) and/or the property referred to in this report, and have stated my findings accurately. The extent of the evaluation and appraisal is stated in the attached report and the Terms and Conditions;
- \* That I have no current or prospective interest in the vegetation or the property that is the subject of this report, and I have no personal interest or bias with respect to the parties involved;
- \* That the analysis, opinions and conclusions stated herein are my own, and are based on current scientific procedures and facts;
- \* That my compensation is not contingent upon the reporting of a predetermined conclusion that favors the cause of the client or any other party, nor upon the results of the assessment, the attainment of stipulated results, or the occurrence of any subsequent events;
- \* That my analysis, opinions, and conclusions were developed and this report has been prepared according to commonly accepted Arboricultural practices;
- \* That no one provided significant professional assistance to the consultant, except as indicated within the report.

I further certify that I am a member of the International Society of Arboriculture and a Certified Arborist. I have been involved in the practice of arboriculture and the care and study of trees for over 20 years.

Signed



Robert Weatherill  
Certified Arborist WE 1936a

Date: 3/6/17

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