



TO: Ms. O

SITE: E Seattle, WA

RE: Pruning one Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*)

DATE: 10/28/2019

PROJECT ARBORIST: Allen Taylor

I visited the site at 9AM on Friday October 25th. I met with Ms. O who provided me with a letter from the city of Seattle. She informed me that she had been cited by the city for providing insufficient right of way clearance. The subject of the citation was a Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*) located in her front yard. I measured the diameter of the subject tree to be ten and a half inches at three feet above the ground. The tree is approximately ten feet tall. Ms. O asked that I provide pruning specifications that would improve the right of way clearance while also not causing undue damage to the health, structure, and aesthetic beauty of the tree.

The City of Seattle Department of transportation requires eight feet of clearance above a sidewalk and fourteen feet of clearance over the street.¹ There are three large low branches which are primarily growing within the sidewalk clearance zone. I propose that two of the three branches be removed. Other smaller branches (1" diameter and smaller) may also be removed or reduced to provide clearance. The current clearance is approximately five and a half feet above the sidewalk. The proposed pruning will improve the clearance to approximately seven and a half feet.

In my professional opinion the removal of the third branch will cause significant harm to the aesthetic beauty and value of the tree (see **Appendix 1: Photos**). Additionally it will subject the trunk to a third large wound. The subject tree is an exceptionally large and well formed specimen of a weeping cultivar of Japanese maple. It is one of the finest weeping Japanese maples I have observed during my career. Ms. O informed me that it had been nominated for landmark tree status.

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<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/About/DocumentLibrary/StreetTreeManualWEB.pdf>



This is a mature tree. As trees age, they become less resilient to the stress of pruning. With a large, older tree it is essential to remove as little foliage as possible to achieve the pruning objective. A generally accepted guideline is that no more than 10% of the foliage should be removed from a mature tree in a one year period.²

It is vital to minimize the number of large wounds created at the trunk. Whenever a branch is removed a tree is subjected to multiple stresses. The first is the loss of photosynthetic capacity quantified as the loss of foliage. Secondly the wound itself must be closed and “compartmentalized” by the tree to prevent the entry of pathogens. The larger a wound is the more difficult it is for a tree to properly compartmentalize.

The more wounds that are created and the larger those wounds are it becomes increasingly likely that a tree may suffer an adverse outcome as a result of the pruning. These negative outcomes can take years or even decades to manifest. It would be preferable for tree health to not remove any of the large branches, but this is not practical given the location of the tree and requirements for clearance over the sidewalk.

In my professional opinion, careful pruning of the subject Japanese maple tree can result in significantly improved clearance and a minimal impact to tree health, structure, and aesthetic value.

² Gilman, E. F., & Gilman, E. F. (2012). An illustrated guide to pruning. Clifton Park, NY: Delmar.



Pruning Specifications:

- All work will conform to the ANSI A300 (Part 1) 2017 pruning standard
- Work should be performed under the supervision of an ISA Certified Arborist
- A natural pruning system will be used
- Work should be performed during the winter when the tree is dormant (no leaves)
- No more than 10% of the total leaf area is to be removed

Pruning Objective:

Provide 7.5' of clearance above the sidewalk and 14' of clearance above the street

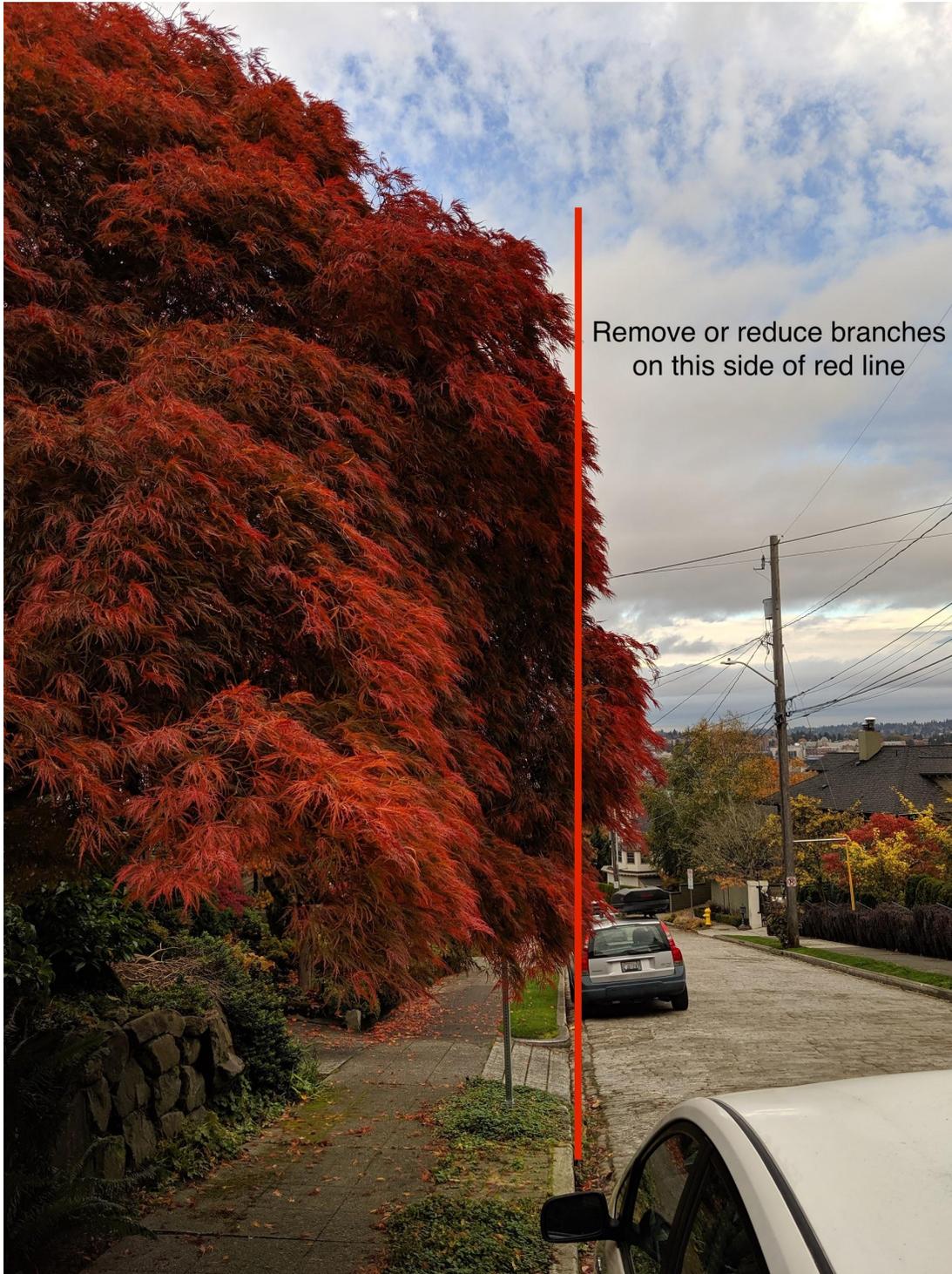
Pruning Treatment:

- Remove two low east branches (3" and 4.2" diameter)
- Retain low 4.3" diameter east branch (7.5' above sidewalk)
- Reduce or remove other branches (1" diameter and smaller) as needed to provide 8' of clearance over the sidewalk
- Reduce or remove branches as needed to provide 14 feet of vertical clearance over the street



Appendix 1: Photos







Appendix 2: Assumptions & Limiting Conditions

1. Any legal description provided to the consultant/appraiser is assumed to be correct. Any titles and ownerships to any property are assumed to be good and marketable. No responsibility is assumed for matters legal in character. Any and all property is appraised or evaluated as though free and clear, under responsible ownership and competent management.
2. Care has been taken to obtain all information from reliable sources. All data has been verified insofar as possible; however, the consultant/appraiser can neither guarantee nor be responsible for the accuracy of information provided by others.
3. The consultant/appraiser shall not be required to give testimony or attend court by reason of this report unless subsequent contractual agreements are made, including payment of an additional fee for such services as described in the fee schedule and contract of engagement.
4. Loss or alteration of any part of this report invalidates the entire report.
5. Possession of this report or a copy thereof does not imply right of publication or use for any purpose by any other than the person to whom it is addressed, without the prior written or verbal consent of the consultant/appraiser.
6. Neither all nor any part of the contents of this report, nor copy thereof, shall be conveyed by anyone, including the client, to the public through advertising, public relations, news, sales or other media, without the prior expressed written or verbal consent of the consultant/appraiser particularly as to value conclusions, identity of the consultant/appraiser, or any reference to any professional society or institute or any initialed designation conferred upon the consultant/appraiser as stated in his qualification.
7. This report and values herein represent the opinion of the consultant/appraiser, and the consultant's/appraiser's fee is in no way contingent upon the reporting of a specified value, a stipulated results, the occurrence of a subsequent event, nor upon any finding to be reported.
8. Sketches, diagrams, graphs, and photographs in this report, being intended as visual aids, are not necessarily to scale and should not be construed as engineering or architectural reports or surveys.
9. Unless expressed otherwise: (1) information contained in this report covers only those items that were examined and reflects the condition of those items at the time of inspection; and (2) the inspection is limited to visual examination of accessible items without dissection, excavation, probing, or coring. Consultant makes no warranty or guarantee, expressed or implied, that problems or deficiencies of the plants or property in question may not arise in the future.



Ms. O Pruning Specifications
Conservation Tree Care
Seattle, Wa
conservationtreecare.com



Appendix 3: Certification of Performance

I Allen Taylor, certify that:

- I have personally inspected the trees and property referred to in this report and have stated my findings accurately. The extent of the evaluation or appraisal is stated in the attached report and the Terms of Assignment.
- I have no current or prospective interest in the vegetation or the property that is the subject of this report and have no personal interest or bias with respect to the parties involved.
- The analysis, opinions, and conclusions stated herein are my own and are based on current scientific procedures and facts.
- My analysis, opinions, and conclusions were developed and this report has been prepared according to commonly accepted arboricultural practices.
- No one provided significant professional assistance to me, except as indicated within the report.
- 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.



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Seattle, Wa
conservationtreecare.com

Appendix 4: Curriculum vitae

Allen Taylor
Conservation Tree Care
12037 80th Ave S
Seattle Wa, 98178
206-486-3398

Education:

Bachelors of Science, Forestry, University of Vermont: Class of 2009

Certifications:

Tree Risk Assessment Qualification, International Society of Arboriculture
Board Certified Master Arborist (PN-7316B), International Society of Arboriculture
Registered Consulting Arborist (RCA #643), American Society of Consulting Arborists

Work Experience:

Nine years full time experience in the field of Arboriculture. Extensive experience pruning trees to enhance health and safety. Worked to remedy hazardous or failed trees or tree parts through pruning or removal. Experience evaluating tree health and impact on surrounding environment including conducting basic tree risk assessments. Member in good standing of the International Society of Arboriculture and the American Society of Consulting Arborists.

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