

January 27, 2015 – By email

Ms. Mickleson:

The *Eucalyptus globules* (blue gum) tree growing in the driveway, near the entrance to the King Pool Swim Center should be removed. The City of Berkeley is responsible for the care of this tree and to provide a safe, usable, space for the public.

This tree is extremely large. Although that characteristic adds to its charm, older and larger trees have an increased likelihood of failure and the possibility of shedding branches. In this case, a large cavity exists in the main trunk where the four primary stems originate. This cavity extends downward for at least four feet and has filled with bark, leaf and fruit litter. The cavity is not readily visible from the ground, but a large fungal fruiting body on the exposed wound is.

The fruiting body (conk) is from the wood decay organism *Ganoderma applanatum*. This is an important wood decay fungi. The conks indicate serious decay and their presence can be reason for immediate removal.

In addition to the existence of the trunk cavity and the presence of a wood decay organism, this tree's structure also has an inherent weakness. The four large stems growing from a single basal trunk is less strong than that of a single trunked tree.

Many considerations are made when assessing a tree for risk. One of those considerations is known as the presence of a "target." A target is simply defined as people that would be injured or killed and property that would be damaged in the event of a failure. As a result of the location and size of this tree, its great height and extremely large stems and limbs, the consequences of any failure would be severe. A failure could also significantly disrupt the pool, tennis courts, or school activities.

All trees pose some risk. Particularly during storm events with high winds and saturated soils. The City's Urban Forestry Unit maintains the public trees in a manner to reduce tree failures. However, the weaknesses of this tree cannot be corrected by proper and reasonable arboriculture practices. Pruning would not reduce the risk to an acceptable level. Extreme pruning can cause additional problems with the water sprouts that grow from the pruning cuts.

Therefore, the combination of the tree's structural weakness, the potential consequences of a failure and the lack of appropriate risk mitigation measures that can be applied, allows only the removal of this tree as the option of last resort.

The Urban Forestry Unit takes decisions about the removal of large park trees very seriously. Many of the City's Arborists participated in the process of inspecting this

tree. Proper Municipal tree care balances the science of arboriculture with risk management.

Thank you.

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