

Report of Findings for the Manzanita on Parker Street

The Landmark Tree Committee of the Urban Forestry Council met on Tuesday April 8, 2008 and considered the nomination for Landmark Status of the *Arctostaphylos* (*Arctostaphylos sp.*) in the rear property of 115 Parker Street.

The committee did not make a recommendation for this tree. The vote was 2-2.

The presence of this plant before the UFC for consideration of Landmark Status challenges standards and assumptions at the core of the Landmark Tree Ordinance, including the basic understanding of what is a tree, what does large mean, and what is the intent of the Ordinance.

The definition of a tree as defined by City Code is vague and after preliminary discussion and consideration, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that there is no precise definition that could, or possibly even should, be applied to the term "tree". Specifically, what is it that separates a tree from a shrub? This is a topic, in the view of the Committee Chair, that the Landmark Tree Committee and the UFC should consider at a future time. Aside from any technical definition of a tree, there are other considerations: What was the Board of Supervisors intent when they drafted the ordinance? What do the people of SF generally consider a tree to be? What would be the ramifications (to the work of the Council and of the City in general,) of a broad vs. a narrow definition of a tree?

The plant specimen under question, the *Arctostaphylos* at 115 Parker, is of unknown geneology, and its species is as of yet undetermined. It is, botanically, an extremely important plant and is the subject of scientific study by experts in the genus *Arctostaphylos*. It is, quite possibly, the only one of its kind in San Francisco, if not the world, and quite possibly a new species or a unique hybrid. As such, it is of the rarest category of plant possible. Under typical circumstances, this criterion alone would be meritorious enough to warrant Landmark Status.

But this is not a typical circumstance, as it is debatable about whether this is a tree at all. If this is a tree, clearly we should recommend landmarking. If it is not a tree, it is not properly before us.

The specimen satisfies the following landmark criteria:

- It is extremely rare
- It has historical association
- It has neighborhood appreciation
- There are plans to publish this individual in the scientific literature
- It is part of a group of plants (manzanitas) that have ethnic appreciation, and that has wildlife value
- The tree was nominated by and has the support of the property owner

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Boss

Chair, Landmark Tree Committee of the Urban Forestry Council