

# Tree Preservation on Proposed Development - Report

To: The Falaise Community Association  
From: Ron Carter, Dip. Tech, ISA Cert. Arborist,  
Ron Carter Consulting\*

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Subject: Subdivision, Rezoning and Development Variance Permit Application

File: SUB00819; REZ00614; DVP00407: 855 Falaise Crescent

Attention: Bob Lucy, President, Falaise Community Association

Stuart Macpherson, Director, Falaise Community Association

Stewart Vinnels, Director, Falaise Community Association

On Monday, September 9, Ron Carter met 3 members of the Falaise Community Association at the subject property, 855 Falaise Drive, to review the Subdivision (2 lots) and Rezoning (A1 to RS10) application for this property. Permission to enter the property for the purpose of reviewing the development proposal was obtained from the current residents.

In hand were copies of:

- Saanich Planning Supplemental Report dated August 14 (5 pages)
- Tree Management Plan dated December 22, 2017 (2 pages) drawn on the proposed lots A and B with proposed house footprints.

- Copies of 2 versions of house footprints for the two lots by Outline Home Design

#### Objective:

To review supporting information on site with the Falaise Association members and analyze if there was any way to preserve more trees and specifically the 88 cm. Garry Oak tree tag #1986.

#### Observations:

Without measuring, it was assumed the tree locations, trunk diameters, tree canopies and root zone areas on the Gye and Associates report are correct most importantly pertaining to their Tree Preservation bylaw protection status. The tree health conditions of “good” were also accepted. The exception is Garry Oak tag #1992 which is showing early leaf loss and a general thinned canopy. This tree may have not declined until after the Arborist’s ratings dated December, 2017.

The existing house, driveway, rockeries and other alterations to the property are all original and show no signs of being altered from their construction and therefore present no impacts or constraints to the existing trees and shrubbery. What has changed, going on information from the members present, was that there was past watering of at least the shrubbery and all watering has ceased. This is very apparent with the Rhododendrons and other shrubs, all of which have collapsed from drought with some now actually dead.

This property is located SSW of and adjacent to Falaise Park, a mainly natural District of Saanich park predominantly left as a Garry Oak/Coastal Douglas-fir woodland with rocky outcrops. The property is very much an extension of this woodland save the aforementioned improvements. Rock outcrops are showing throughout and by both the dryness of the lawn and the numerous raised rock planters, rock would be assumed to be near the surface without probing to be certain.

No native understorey of significance was observed. However, that would be part of the property review by Saanich Environment Services at the appropriate time of year and that time is not early September.

The property is zoned A1 but within the Saanich Urban Containment Boundary and potentially sub-dividable if rezoned. Instead of being labeled A1 Urban, land in this state was in the past considered “Urban Land” or “Holding Property” and if so, for the purpose of tree preservation, all trees of bylaw protected size and species are protected trees regardless of their location on the Urban Land. This should be clarified by Saanich Planning as it would become important in the event the application, previously declined by Saanich Council, does not pass.

The 88 cm diameter Garry Oak tag #1986, recommended for removal, is the largest of the trees on this property and a very dominant centerpiece. Since it has been recommended for removal due to anticipated impacts from the proposed development, it is the tree most focused on in the conclusions and recommendations to follow.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations:

Reports from Saanich Parks and Gye and Associates were not available to me at the time of this property review. However, the Tree Management Plan and Tree Preservation Measures to follow during construction are thorough and if adhered to closely, all the important trees shown to be retained will be successfully retained during construction. That same confidence cannot be extended to post-construction activities as there are no post-construction notes. Additional services such as gas and irrigation and grade changes due to landscaping and stormwater retention are also potentially damaging to trees and need to be addressed by the applicant and/or Saanich’s Arborist in the form of written guidelines and instructions.

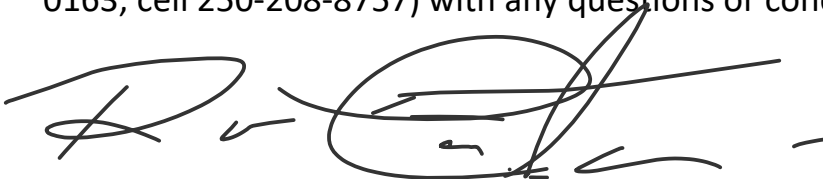
On page 4 of the Saanich Planning Report, there is expressed some expectation that the site Rhododendrons may be donated and transplanted rather than be destroyed. This is a noble gesture since Rhododendrons are one of the easiest shrubs to transplant if done during the dormant season (October-February). Due to the current collapsed conditions of these shrubs, there is little hope of them

surviving at all. As sad as they look, some thorough watering immediately may bring most of them back. Otherwise, they are lost.

Retaining Garry Oak tag #1986 given the proposed footprints, driveway and servicing construction and anticipated blasting of rock will be challenging but possible. This important Oak tree must be given serious reconsideration. Fill is one of the reported reasons for not retaining this tree. In this situation, fill cannot be a reason for removal. Fill, with the proper materials which allows loads without compacting the critical roots of a mature tree, is quite compatible with the goals of tree preservation. If driveway and garage locations are issues with retaining this tree, my recommendation is to redesign the shallow crawl space foundations using grade beams or consider flipping the footprint and perhaps not lose any of the square footage. These techniques are employed regularly to save valuable trees and I'm confident the applicant's designer, engineer and arborist are fully capable to come up with a redesign. Careful pruning of the tree canopies closest to the proposed buildings can also be done without serious impacts to the health of Oak #1986 or other oaks being shown to be retained.

I trust Saanich Council, who, through the adoption of the Urban Forest Strategy and specifically from their concerns expressed in preserving as many trees as possible on this parcel adjacent to Falaise Park, will find this additional information useful for their deliberation. Garry Oak tag #1986 is a centerpiece tree worthy of preservation

Please do not hesitate to contact Ron Carter ( [rondcarter@shaw.ca](mailto:rondcarter@shaw.ca) ph.250-595-0163; cell 250-208-8757) with any questions or concerns.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Carter', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Ron Carter, Dip. Tech., ISA Cert. Arborist PN0553A

\*resume' attached.

## **RESUME**

### **Ron Carter , Dip. Tech, ISA Certified Arborist**

Ron Carter is recently retired after over 40 years in the landscape/horticultural and arboriculture profession, 36 years in local governments of Oak Bay and Saanich. His formal training was in Landscape Design at BCIT but Ron found Urban Forestry occupied most of his career, administering the Saanich Tree Preservation Bylaw, teaching at Camosun College and advising on the development of Oak Bay's current Tree Preservation Bylaw.

Ron's retirement activities include consulting, educating and lecturing and he is active in the care and maintenance of residential trees and landscapes through his consulting business, Ron Carter Consulting.