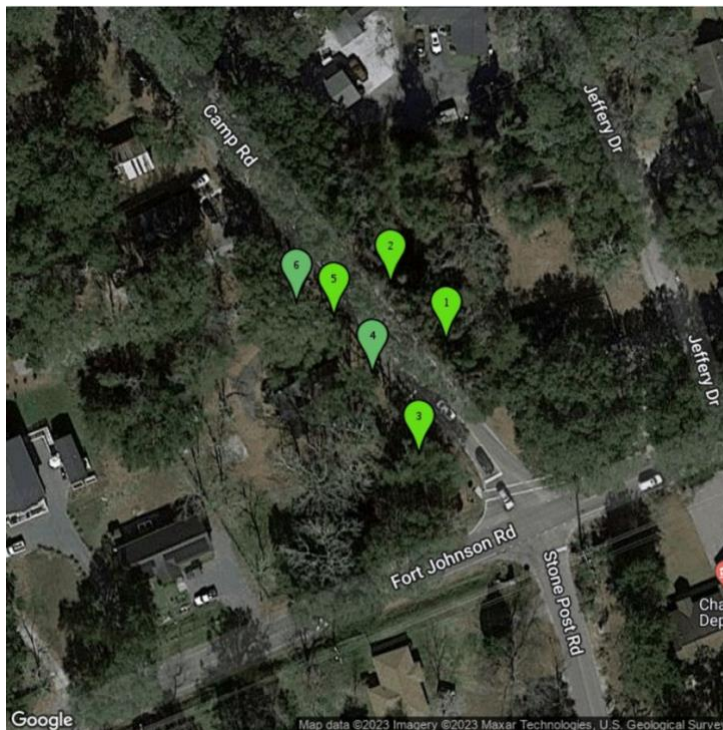


## Chris CM Gerards

ISA Board Certified Master Arborist # SO-1165BM  
204 East Oglethorpe Ave, Apt B Savannah GA 31401  
843.816.0317 [chriscmgerards@gmail.com](mailto:chriscmgerards@gmail.com)

2/20/2023

Kristen A. Crane  
Planning Director  
Town of James Island  
1122 Dills Bluff Road  
James Island, SC 29412  
tel: 843.795.4141  
[kcrane@jamesislandsc.us](mailto:kcrane@jamesislandsc.us)



Hi Kristen,  
I inspected the trees shown on the above photograph and here are my findings:

Tree number one is a 36-in live oak. Tree with a small basal wound. Intense vine infestation. There is a cavity about 16 ft up the trunk that looks like it's occupied by an animal for nesting,

indicating a hollow. Tree has an old pruning wound that is heavily calloused about 10 ft up the trunk. Tree is an aged specimen. Tree is in fair condition.

Tree number two is a 44-inch live oak. She has a 12x12-in basil wound. Wound doesn't show extensive decay. Tree is an aged specimen. Tree is infested by vines. Tree shows decay and a cavity in the canopy of the right limb that could represent significant weakness. This needs to be inspected via aerial inspection. Tree is in fair condition.

Tree number three is a 30-in live oak in good condition. Tree has significant dead wood in the canopy. Tree has a superficial trunk wound. Tree has some vine infestation. Tree shows growth pattern typical of hurricane recuperation approximately 15 to 20 years ago.

Tree number four is a 32-inch Laurel oak. (In the Charleston arborist report it is noted as a 23-inch tree which might be a typo.) Tree has severe asymmetrical crown due to power line pruning. Tree has a significant decay pocket about 8 ft up the trunk. Tree has major broken stub about 15 ft up that shows a hollow. Remaining part of the tree as a greater than 15° angle from the trunk with a full crown and represents a hazard to the house. This tree is in poor condition and should be removed immediately.

Tree number five is a 31-in live oak with asymmetrical crown. Shows a large pruning cut about 15 ft up the trunk with signs of decay fungi next to it. There is a cavity that shows a hollow in the trunk that is leaning over the roadway. Tree also shows typical recuperation growth from hurricane damage. Tree is in poor condition. Because of the trees severe V-shape and decay at the v and the heavy lean of the leaders, recommend weight reduction, pruning, or removal of this tree.

Tree number six is a 44-inch Laurel oak. Tree shows a significant recess in the trunk in the first 6 ft. This could signify decay or non-viable cambium. Tree has a small cavity on the same side. It looks to be a nesting cavity signifying a significant hollow. Tree is overly mature for its species. Tree shows included bark on the first leader and a stress crack. Tree shows declining canopy. Tree shows another cavity and hollow right past the second fork. Because of its age and its location, tree would be very susceptible to any kind of trauma to the roots. Tree has massive wind load potential. Tree is in poor condition and recommend removal of this tree.

Notes on decay and explanation of grading system.

White fungi are a decay organism that afflicts live oaks (and other trees), and undoubtedly these live oaks also. It enters susceptible wood (dead and support wood, not sapwood) and starts the decay process. It is damaging to the affected wood and results in its decay. This is part of a host of natural processes that eventually lead to the decline, failure, and death of trees. It's ever present and universal.

The question the arborist must ask is, "how extensive is the decay?"

In the case of these live oaks, I did not see soft or spongy wood and suspect the decay poses a manageable risk.

The grading system consists of *excellent, good, fair, poor and dead*.

Trees in excellent condition do not need any remedial work and can expect to live double its current life.

Trees in good condition need some remedial work, can expect to live for another decade or more.

Trees in fair condition need some work, should be inspected yearly, and should live for up to a decade.

Trees in poor condition need extensive work, be inspected yearly, and have a life expectancy of 5 to ten years or less.

Conclusion:

Trees 4,5, and 6 of the trees are not only incompatible to new road construction but are in such bad shape that trees 4 and 6 should be removed immediately and tree # 5 is borderline. Tree #3 (the 30-in live oak) is in good shape and can be preserved. The two live oaks on the left side of the road (#1 and #2) are not in great shape but can be restored to decent specimens. This would depend on canopy inspection of tree number two.

So, the best tree is tree #3, the 31-in live oak. It's in good shape and in the right location where it can possibly be protected from construction damage. Tree #1 and # 2 have issues but could possibly be restored. However, these trees are so close to the proposed construction, I don't see them surviving the process in any of the configurations.

Sincerely Yours,

Chris CM Gerards

BCMA #SO-1165BM