Richard A. Barocas
ISA** Certified **Arborist, FL6342A
7565 SW 135 St.
Pinecrest, FL 33156
*305.518.8350 * barocasr@bellsouth.net*

Arborist Tree Survey/Level-2. Basic visual assessment

Violation of Section 82-29 (d) "Pruning of limbs 10" diameter or greater"

Prepared for: The City of Coral Gables

To: Michael Lohman
C/O: Grove Tree Service
Via: info@grovetreeservice.com

Property location: 740 Tibidabo Avenue

Folio: 03-4132-005-1060

Ticket: #25-10-21653, issued 10/22/25

5-Pages total

This assessment is being provided for the purpose of determining if any permanent damage was done to the specimen oak tree referenced in the above violation notice, as a result of recent pruning, including but not limited to the removal of a 13" diameter, first order vertical stem and if so, to offer recommended remediation options to correct and/or improve the tree's condition.

Tree size is listed in diameter at breast height (**dbh**) measurement, taken at or as close to 54" above grade, rounded to the nearest inch, measured with a forestry tape. Height is expressed in an estimated number of feet per visual observation and recorded in 2' to 5' increments dependent upon overall tree height. Canopy area/spread is most often measured in two perpendicular directions (north/south & east west if available) with a ground wheel device and recorded in the two dimensions. Or, expressed as an estimated average diameter of spread. Where important or applicable, canopy spread will also be expressed in square feet.

<u>Tree conditions</u> consider tree vigor, form, structure, volume and appearance of foliage and species impact if a known invasive, controlled or prohibited species:

Good: No obvious signs of current health or structural defects with all indications of long-term viability.

Fair: Some evidence of health and/or structural defects are present which are or may compromise the long-term viability but are able to be improved and/or corrected, reducing or eliminating their effects.

Poor: Some evidence of health and/or structural defects are present and are not correctable through commonly acceptable arboriculture practices, therefore the decline of its condition is likely, presenting an increase in risk of failure and/or premature death is likely. Or, a Prohibited/Invasive species. Trees rated **Poor** are recommended for removal!

- **Specimen Live oak/*Quercus virginiana*: 57" dbh (2x; 31"+26") X 50'-54' H X 51' N/S X 55' E/W. Fair condition.**

Initial impressions

The tree in question is circled in yellow in the image above. It is a 2x, specimen Live oak (with the west codominant trunk stem being obscured in the image by the east trunk, at the angle provided). It is growing extremely close to a sister tree to its north. Both trees offer sparse canopies along with an appearance of questionable health status. The north tree is underdeveloped, over pruned and barely sustaining. I have a suspicion that both trees were adversely affected by past driveway construction whereby a high likelihood of aggressive root cutting would have been required to accommodate the driveway. This process would explain the start of an accelerated decline in their condition

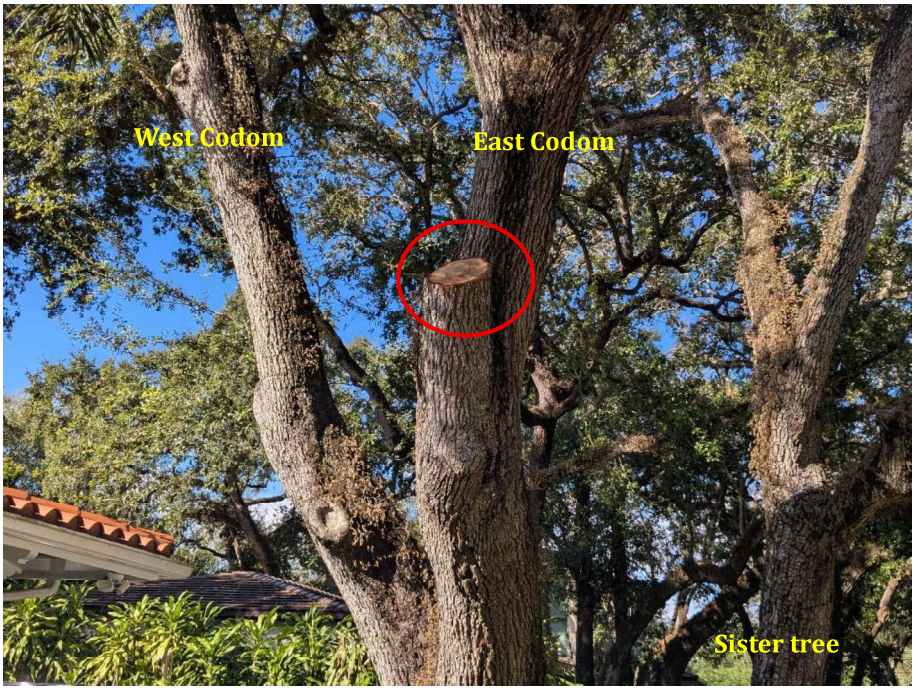
Post pruning assessment and comments

The tree in question is currently in "Fair" condition and appears to have been for quite some time (5-years+) due to what is most likely a variety of past traumatic effects, including but not limited to, past exposure to storms and Hurricanes without post professional attention, probable substandard over lifting and pruning of the canopy and suspected root cutting within 1x the trunk dbh to accommodate driveway construction.

The removal of the 13" diameter first order stem, that was emerging from the primary union of the east growing codominant trunk stem (circled in red), along with the maintenance pruning recently conducted did not negatively impact the tree or change its condition. Although done in violation of City code because a permit was not secured in advance of the work, I suggest the decision to remove the seriously decaying 13" diameter branch (following its partial failure) was a prudent and safety minded arboricultural decision.

The tree appears to be surviving in an advanced state of decline, again, not exacerbated by the large diameter branch removal. The tree is not thriving as a healthy, good condition oak would reflect. The tree exhibits a sparse canopy as expected from a tree in stress, including a large volume of old branch removal wounds (some decaying, some hardened) throughout the lower half of the crown and is also contending with a *Fomitiporia dryophila* fungal infection as evidenced by 4 active fungal basidiocarps (a.k.a., conks) located along the lower, north face of the east trunk stem. This fungi is known to cause white rot in the heartwood of Live oaks (image below).

After questioning the tree contractor who performed the removal of the 13" diameter branch I was explained that the end of the branch had already failed prior to their arrival and after an assessment of the remaining portion of the branch it was decided that based on its location and recent history of branch failures, the safest solution was to reduce the remaining portion of the branch to healthy, solid, wood and then secure an after-the-fact permit. As documented in the images below, the branch had an unacceptable degree of internal decay throughout its length that appropriately resulted in a branch removal, as opposed to a reduction. The option allowing any of the branch to remain attached would have required a heading cut and only a few feet of healthy, lateral wood (a stub) protruding.



Close-up of branch removal wound

Close-up of 4 wood rot producing fungal pathogens on the north trunk face supporting survival in a stressed mode with a concern of advancing decline in overall condition

Fortunately, the tree contractor saved and stacked the cut wood sections (image below) from the 13” diameter branch they removed. The extent of the internal decay throughout sections of the branch is apparent and supports and justifies the decision to remove the entire branch.

Post pruning follow-up

I see no need for any additional, corrective or restorative to be done at this time.

R A Barocas

November 2, 2025

Richard A. Barocas, ISA, FL6342A
TRAQ /PPQ