Report Sample: Written Report

Andy Arborist
270 Peachtree St NW
Suite 1900
Atlanta, GA 30303

Mytown Parks and Recreation
c/o Mytown Parks Supervisor

April 18, 2025

Re: Willow Oak Risk Assessment

Mr. Supervisor:

I am writing to summarize my findings from last week's assessment of the willow oak by the old historic farmhouse in Old Farm Park. I performed a Level 2 Basic Risk Assessment of the tree on April 11, 2025. In my professional opinion, the overall risk rating of the tree is moderate within a three-year time frame.

At your request, I assessed the risk posed by the large, dead branches and by whole-tree failure due to root decay. You were concerned that people near the farmhouse or the farmhouse itself could be impacted. No other trees, tree parts, or targets were assessed within the scope of this assignment. I performed this risk assessment using the ISA Best Management Practices—*Tree Risk Assessment* methodology.

Observations

The subject tree is a willow oak (*Quercus phellos*) measuring 72 inches (182 cm) in diameter at 4.5 feet (1.37 m) above grade and is about 100 feet (30 m) in height. Several large dead branches have failed from this tree over the past few years, and parts of the tree have continued to decline. At the time of my inspection, approximately 85 percent of the crown appeared normal, but 15 percent was declining. Near the top of the crown, I observed several dead branches about 10 to 16 inches (25 to 40 cm) in diameter. Overall, I assessed the tree's health as fair.

At the base of the tree, I observed a large fungal fruiting body that I identified as *Pseudoinonotus dryaedus.* This fungus is associated with root decay. Typically, fungal fruiting bodies appear when the fungus has colonized a sufficient amount of woody tissue. Based on this observation, it is my professional opinion that the tree has significant root decay.

Risk Assessment

Dead Branch Failure

In my professional opinion, the likelihood of one of the large dead branches failing within the next three-year time frame is probable. They may be expected to fail in normal weather conditions, which includes normal storms.

If one of the branches were to fail, there is a low likelihood of striking a person beneath the tree because people have an occasional occupancy rate. If a person were struck, the consequences would be severe. The risk posed by the dead branches to people within the next three-year time frame is low.

If one of the branches were to fail, there is a medium likelihood of striking the farmhouse because it only occupies a portion of the target zone. If the farmhouse were struck, the consequences would be significant. Thus, the risk posed by the dead branches to the farmhouse within the next three-year time frame is moderate.

Whole Tree Failure

In my professional opinion, the risk of whole tree failure within a three-year time frame due to root rot is possible. It may fail in extreme weather, but it is unlikely to fail in normal weather.

If the whole tree were to fail, there is a medium likelihood of striking the farmhouse due to its minor lean away from the farmhouse. There is a low likelihood of striking a person because of their occasional occupancy rate. If the whole tree were to strike either a person or the historic farmhouse, the consequences would be severe. The risk posed by whole tree failure onto either a person or the farmhouse is low.

Mitigation Options

I recommend pruning off the dead branches. If the dead branches are pruned, the residual risk posed by the tree will be reduced to low. However, pruning dead branches will not mitigate the risk associated with root decay.

Another mitigation option is tree removal. Tree removal would eliminate the risk associated with both the dead branches and the root decay. However, if the tree were removed, the benefits it provides would also be lost.

Conclusion

The highest risk assessed for this willow oak was the moderate risk of a dead branch striking the farmhouse, so the overall risk rating for the tree is moderate. I recommend pruning off the dead branches. If the dead branches are pruned, the residual risk posed by the tree will be reduced to low. Alternatively, if the tree were removed, the risk posed by the tree would be eliminated, but the benefits it provides would also be lost.

If the tree is not removed, I recommend reinspecting the tree annually.

If you would like to obtain additional information about the structural stability of the trunk, you might choose to obtain a Level 3 Advanced Assessment of either resistance drilling or sonic tomography.

Feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss an Advanced Assessment or if you have any questions.

Andy Arborist
Mytown Consulting Arborists
BCMA #ISA-12345
andy-arborist@isa-arbor.com
678-367-0981