



CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS PLACARD

for Raleigh Historic Resources

Project Description:

Remove dangerous tree; plant replacement tree

520 Polk St

Address

Oakwood

Historic District

Historic Property

COA-0167-2025

Certificate Number

12/16/2025

Date of Issue

6/16/2026

Expiration Date

This card must be kept posted in a location within public view until all phases of the described project are complete. The work must conform with the code of the City of Raleigh and laws of the state of North Carolina. When your project is complete, you are required to ask for a final zoning inspection in a historic district area. Telephone the RHDC office at 832-7238 and commission staff will coordinate the inspection with the inspections Department. If you do not call for this final inspection, your Certificate of Appropriateness is null and void.

Signature, _____

Collette K

Raleigh Historic Development Commission

Pending the resolution of appeals, commencement of work is at your own risk.

Type or print the following:

Applicant name:

Mailing address:

City:

State:

Zip code:

Date:

Daytime phone #:

Email address:

Applicant signature:



Minor work (staff review) – one copy

Major work (COA committee review) – ten
copies

Additions > 25% of building sq. footage

New buildings

Demolition of building or structure

All other

Post approval re-review of conditions of
approval

Office Use Only

Transaction #: _____

File #: **COA-0167-2025**

Fee: _____

Amount paid: _____

Received date: _____

Received by:

Property street address:

Historic district:

Historic property/Landmark name (if applicable):

Owner name:

Owner mailing address:

For applications that require review by the COA Committee (major work), provide addressed and stamped envelopes for owners for all properties with 100 feet on all sides of the property, as well as the property owner.

Property Owner Name & Address

Property Owner Name & Address

I understand that all major work applications that require review by the Raleigh Historic Development Commission's COA Committee must be submitted by 4 p.m. on the date of the application deadline; otherwise, consideration will be delayed until the following committee meeting. An incomplete application will not be accepted.

Will you be applying for rehabilitation tax credits for this project? <u>Yes</u> <u>No</u>	Office Use Only
Did you consult with staff prior to filing the application? <u>Yes</u> <u>No</u>	Type of work: <u>76</u>

Design Guidelines: please cite the applicable sections of the design guidelines (www.rhdc.org).		
Section/Page	Topic	Brief description of work (attach additional sheets as needed).
1.3	Trees	Removal of dangerous tree

<p align="center">Minor Work Approval (office use only)</p> <p>Upon being signed and dated below by the Planning Director or designee, this application becomes the Minor Work Certificate of Appropriateness. It is valid until <u>06/16/2026</u>.</p> <p>Please post the enclosed placard form of the certificate as indicated at the bottom of the card. Issuance of a Minor Work Certificate shall not relieve the applicant, contractor, tenant, or property owner from obtaining any other permit required by City Code or any law. Minor Works are subject to an appeals period of 30 days from the date of approval.</p> <p>Signature (City of Raleigh) <u>Collette K</u> Date <u>12/16/2025</u></p>
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Minor COA Description

520 Polk St. Minor COA

Submitted by Arik & Annie Abel

Nov 17, 2025

Overview

520 Polk St has a large oak tree in the backyard that is five feet from the deck and 12 feet from the house. When we purchased the house in February there were two 10-20 ft tree limbs that had fallen on the roof and dozens of what our contractor referred to as “widowmakers” in the backyard.

Before beginning construction in March we contracted an arborist to evaluate the health of the tree and work to prevent future damage to property or harm to people - especially our three young children.

The arborist crew spent a full day thinning dead limbs from the tree in March and deemed the tree to be safe at the time, but in the past six months the tree has continued to shed dozens of widowmaker-sized branches on the deck and in the yard - raising safety concerns for our family and guests.

After consulting again in November with the arborist he is recommending removing the tree, citing that despite the healthy appearance it has continued dropping sizable, hazardous branches after a significant pruning just 8 months prior.

Proposed minor COA project

1. Removal of dangerous Oak tree in the backyard

The specifications of the tree to be removed are:

- ~38” diameter trunk at 4 ft from the ground
- ~7k sq ft critical root zone (1.25 ft radius per inch of diameter of tree)

2. Planting of a new tree in the backyard

We plan to plant a Willow Oak eighteen feet south of the current Oak tree and six feet west from the current tree to ensure adequate distance from the fence and trunk of the existing tree.

Closing comments

It's with a heavy heart that we submit this proposal to remove this beautiful tree.

After the initial recommendation to remove the tree we consulted with another arborist who outlined a costly ongoing maintenance plan, but could not say with confidence that it would be safe.

Since the tree is located pretty centrally in our yard and surrounded by other large trees of similar size in any direction, we believe the removal minimally alters the character of the neighborhood or day-to-day experience of our neighbors.

Given the impact to the neighborhood would be small compared to the potential safety risk, and considering the cost and disruption to maintain the tree indefinitely with no safety guarantee, we feel it is our only option to remove it and replant a new one on the property.

With the frequency that it drops dangerous limbs that would seriously injure one of our three kids and their friends, or even us adults, we don't believe we can leave the situation to chance.

[illegible]

Appendix B: Photos

1. Twenty foot branch from the tree to the top of the house

The branch connects to the tree at the top left corner of the photo and fell centrally on the roof, spanning over the deck and first floor sunroom roof.



2. A 'widowmaker' falls while kids are doing yardwork

This seven foot branch fell while our 5 yo son and a neighborhood friend were raking up leaves.



3. A fifteen footer falls on a gusty day



4. Other recent dangerous limbs







Maintaining the character and experience of the neighborhood

1. Looking at the front of the house from across the street

Two large oak trees on either side of the house and two crepe myrtles dominate the view of the front of the house and shade cover. The tree behind the house is barely distinguishable from the canopy cover of the other trees.



2. Looking southwest from the base of our deck

You can see the tree to be removed in the foreground only minimally overhangs the neighbor's yard, while the two large trees in the back of their yard and the large oak that hangs over the front of their house provide the shade. Our tree doesn't provide any significant shade over their yard and the positioning relative to their side windows means their view is primarily of trees that sit between our yard and the Oakwood Cemetery.



3. Looking southeast from the back of the house

You can see the tree only provides shade on our yard; neighbors southeast and south do not have a view of our tree currently, as it is behind other large trees or obscured by the carriage house in the back.



4. Looking north from the backyard

You can see the tree canopy is primarily over our yard and three large similar oak trees sit within 60 feet to NNW, NNE and NE of the tree - providing the large majority of the 'character' of the environment that exists beyond the confines of our backyard.



Appendix C: Arborist letter



11/12/25

To whom it may concern,

I am writing you today regarding a potentially hazardous Oak tree located at the back right corner of the house at 520 Polk Street, Raleigh, NC 27603. After a visual assessment of the tree in question, as a Certified Arborist, here are my findings. The tree seems to be healthy, however it is shedding large branches, which pose a potential hazard to both life and property. I recommend removal of this tree to mitigate these potential hazards.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thanks,

Pete Baley
Certified Arborist
SO-6429A
919-338-6653