



Mr Scott Iremonger
39 Galsworthy Drive,
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Reading
Berkshire
RG4 6PR

Frances Martin
Executive Director for
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Your Ref:

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8th June 2022

Your contact
is: Sarah Hanson, Planning

Dear Mr. Iremonger,

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO A SYCAMORE TREE, PROTECTED AS T3 OF TREE
PRESERVATION ORDER 56/01 AT 37 GALSWORTHY DRIVE, CAVERSHAM, READING RG4
6PR**

Thank you for your application of 9th May 2022 regarding the above.

You have applied to cut back the branches of a mature Sycamore which is in the next-door neighbour's property where it is encroaching over your property (39 Galsworthy Drive). You have advised that you wish to cut the tree back so that 'none of the tree encroaches over the garden of 39 Galsworthy Drive'. The reasons given for the work is that the tree blocks sunlight and creates a lot of mess with falling seeds and leaves. You consider that because some of the branches break off in high winds the tree is dangerous.

Your form indicates alleged damage to your property, however as you have not provided any supporting evidence from an appropriate expert, (as required if this is alleged) your application has been assessed only on the basis of the nuisance factors you state from the encroachment of branches only.

In response to your application, the Council's Arboricultural Consultant visited the property to view the tree on Thursday 26th May 2022 from the garden of 39 Galsworthy Drive and has found the tree to be a high amenity tree growing in a prominent location adjacent to the public footpath.

The tree has a broad canopy which extends over the public footpath and the gardens of 37 and 39 Galsworthy Drive and the adjacent public highway. The tree appears to have been cut back slightly over the garden of 37 Galsworthy Drive. In terms of leaf density, the tree appears to

be a healthy specimen which contributes to the amenity provided by mature trees in the local area.

The proposed work to cut back the canopy in line with the boundary would remove approximately one third of the tree's canopy and create an asymmetrical and unnatural-looking canopy shape causing permanent harm to the amenity of the tree. The reduction would significantly disrupt the flow of plant hormones created in the branch tips and would reduce the overall health and vigour of tree by removing the energy stored in the severed branches. Following the work, the multiple large pruning cuts would be vulnerable to decay pathogens which can weaken the structure of the tree.

You have advised that the branches break off in high winds. All trees have the potential to shed branches in high winds and many trees did across the country in the February storms of Dudley, Eunice and Franklin. However, allowing trees to be heavily reduced or cut back in order to remove all risk of branch breakage would be disproportionate to the risk and would create future hazards in the longer term by allowing decay into the structural framework of a pruned tree.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to supply adequate proof, with the tree works application, regarding the specification and reasons for the proposed works. The application form requires that if the condition of the tree is of concern, then proof of this is required. I note that the 'no' box has been ticked with regard to concern about the condition of the tree and no technical or no arboricultural evidence has been submitted in support of your application to demonstrate the tree is dangerous at this time.

As the tree is growing on the southern boundary of 39 Galsworthy drive it will inevitably cast shade which will track around the garden during the course of a day. The issues of shade / leaf drop / seed dispersal etc that you have raised are an unfortunate but inevitable consequence when living close to mature trees. These are natural to the presence and lifecycle of all mature trees and would not be sufficient to support an application to carry out inappropriate works contrary to accepted good tree management practices. Allowing a healthy tree to be cut back for the reasons given would set an unwelcome precedent for dealing with similar applications in the future and would threaten the retention of many mature trees in residential areas throughout the Borough.

There are many benefits to trees and particular trees in the urban landscape. Trees absorb carbon dioxide, improve air quality, reduce water runoff and flooding, provide shade and shelter to reduce urban temperatures, create wildlife habitats and reduce noise. There are also aesthetic benefits from trees which make our environment more enjoyable as trees contribute to local character, enhance privacy and add greenery and colour which collectively help to contribute to better mental and physical health.

The benefits from trees increase correspondingly with the size of the tree. Fuller canopied specimens which grow large will have a far greater environmental and urban landscape value than a smaller tree, or a potentially large-growing tree which is maintained in a smaller size. For this reason, urban trees in the Borough will be protected from inappropriate pruning works and allowed to grow their full potential size where it is practical and reasonable for them to do so.

Reading Borough Council has concluded that the proposed cutting back of the Sycamore to your property boundary would be harmful to the health and amenity of a protected tree contrary to good arboricultural practices. For the reasons given in this correspondence, your application is refused.

Lesser works have been consented to in the second half of this letter, to prune back the canopy and create reasonable clearance to the adjacent outbuilding whilst preserving the health and natural form of the tree.

The following works are approved subject to the conditions below and with reference to the photograph provided at the end of this letter:

T3- Sycamore

- Crown lift reducing small low branch back to source and reducing higher secondary and tertiary branches back to suitable reduction points to create 2m canopy clearance above the outbuilding within the garden of 39 Galsworthy Drive.
- Reduce north side of canopy by 2-3m and grade reduction into the surrounding canopy over the garden of 39 Galsworthy drive to create a smaller but natural looking canopy shape.
- In all cases, pruning cuts should not exceed 100mm diameter

Conditions relating to the approved works

1. All tree surgery shall be in accordance with BS 3998: (2010) Tree Work - Recommendations. Pruning cuts shall not exceed 100mm diameter.
Reason: To ensure that all works are carried out in an acceptable arboricultural manner
2. The approved canopy reduction shall be undertaken in mid-late Summer (July - September) when the tree's energy reserves are at their height or during the Winter months of December - January during the period of dormancy.
Reason: Taking into account the tree's phenological cycle and in order to avoid any unnecessary detriment to the tree as a result of the pruning work.
3. Climbing spikes shall not be used whilst undertaking any form of works on living trees, except on trees to be felled.

Informatives

1. You are advised that, in accordance with Part 4, 17 (4) of The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012, this decision is valid for one pruning operation (as per the approved specifications) to be undertaken within two years from the date of this notice, after which the consent lapses and a new application will be required.

2. Removal of dead or dangerous wood: This does not require the formal consent of the Council. However written notice must be given 5 working days in advance of removing dead wood. Where a branch is deemed to be 'dangerous', i.e. where works are 'urgently necessary to remove an immediate risk of serious harm', you are required to give notice to the Council 'as soon as practicable after the works become necessary'.

3. Disturbance of wildlife: It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to disturb roosting bats or nesting birds. It is advisable to consult your tree surgeon/consultant to agree an acceptable time for carrying out any work. Wildlife and habitat controls are administered by Natural England who can be contacted on 0300 030 6000

If you are aggrieved by the refusal of consent to cut back the canopy of the Sycamore to your boundary or against any of the conditions attached to the approved works, you may appeal to The Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Because of coronavirus (COVID-19), you currently can only make a planning appeal online. You cannot currently apply by post. For more information go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tree-preservation-order-appeal-form>

Telephone: 0303 444 5570 or e-mail it to:
treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Your appeal should be received within one month of receipt of this decision or any such longer period as the Planning Inspectorate may allow.

If you suffer any loss or damage as a result of this refusal of consent, you may be entitled to recover compensation from the Council. If you wish to make a claim you must do so within 12 months from the date of this decision (or, if you appeal to the Secretary of State, within 12 months from the date of his decision). Claims should be made in writing to the Insurance Section, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU.

If you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Hanson

Sarah Hanson
Natural Environment Officer

cc. The Owner / Occupier, 37 Galsworthy Drive, Reading, Berkshire RG4 6PR



Indicative line of approved canopy reduction and branch to be removed