



Mr C Boardman
Rosedale Clinic
48 Redlands Road
Reading
RG1 5HR

Frances Martin
**Executive Director for
Economic Growth and
Neighbourhood Services**

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Your Ref:

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13 February 2020

Your contact
is:

Sarah Hanson, Planning & Building Control

Dear Mr Boardman

**RE: PROPOSED WORKS TO 2 FALSE ACACIA TREES AT 48 REDLANDS ROAD, READING -
PART OF G1 OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER 57/05**

Thank you for your application of 21 December 2019, regarding the above, and accompanying, annotated photographs.

Your application sought permission for:

'Trimming the tree canopy to bring the foliage lower down. The trunks are bare and spindly'

My email of 8 January 2020 queried whether a height reduction was in fact proposed, based on the annotated photographs provided and you confirmed in your email of 13 January that this was the case.

My email of 8 January also pointed out that in Section 6 of the form, you have answered 'yes' to part 1, i.e. that you have concerns about the condition of the trees, e.g. that they are diseased or might break or fall, in order to support your application. As indicated on the form, if you answer 'yes', your application must be accompanied by the necessary support for your proposals. No such support, e.g. arboricultural evidence, has been provided. I therefore requested clarification of the reasons for the proposed work and supporting evidence for this. In response, your email of 13 January advised that your

'main concern is to make the place as pleasing to look at as possible' and that the problem with the trees is that they 'have grown into long trunks with little foliage except at the very top. They have had no real care or attention for years' and that you wished to 'reduce the height so that they grow with more horizontal foliage and not just vertically'.

Following my visit of 21 January 2020, I provided the following thoughts in my email of 23 January:

'I note that only two of the three trees have their trunk within the curtilage of 48 Redlands Road, hence your application is taken to relate to two of the three trees (two eastern-most) unless you advise me otherwise; the third tree has in any case been reduced in the past and is of smaller stature.

As you have acknowledged, there is Ivy present on eastern-most tree which is prudent to remove so that any defects in the tree can be identified.

The proposed reduction of the two trees indicated on your application photos equates to an approximate one third height reduction. This degree of reduction is significant and, in line with good arboricultural practice, would only normally be allowed if there were sound arboricultural reasons to justify it. As you have indicated, the majority of the tree's foliage, albeit there is lower growth, is in the top portion of the tree, which you are proposing to remove. This will then remove a significant portion of the leaf bearing crown, i.e. the part which produces food for the tree, hence its removal is likely to have a detrimental impact on the trees' future health. At the same time, multiple wounds will be created, each an entry point for pathogens and decay. The extensive reduction will therefore cause stress to the tree and could result in increased occurrence of dead wood and branch loss, which you have raised as a concern.

Given the above, I am currently minded to refuse the application. However, before a formal decision is made I wanted to advise you of the above and give you an opportunity to seek further arboricultural advice to either justify the proposed reduction or which may result in an alternative pruning specification, focusing on your concerns whilst being less harmful to the trees' long-term health'.

Following my email of 21 January, you requested that your tree surgeon contact me to discuss the proposed work. On speaking with him, he advised that his recommendation had been that no works were required, hence the conversation did not support your application. Following this, your email of 27 January confirmed that the work was proposed for aesthetic reasons and you questioned whether the trees should be allowed to grow 'unfettered' and you advised of your concerns about the high winds in that location. My response to those queries was as follows, in my email of 27 January:

'Trees are genetically predisposed to be a particular height and shape. The species in question reach approx. 12-17m at maturity so I would not expect them to get much taller, if at all. 'Husbandry' is often justified in the urban environment to address, e.g. branches touching a building, branches being too low for appropriate clearance or to address identified health and safety issues.

In relation to the high winds, without evidence of historic and repeated failures to demonstrate that it is an issue, I hope you can appreciate that it is difficult for us to accept this is a reason for a substantial reduction'.

In conclusion, the proposed height reduction to two False acacia trees within G1 is refused as there is no arboricultural justification for the work which would harm the future health and amenity value of the trees. If you wish to appeal against the Council's decision on this matter, please contact the Planning Inspectorate within 28 days of receipt of this letter to obtain the relevant forms:

The Environment Appeals Team
Trees and Hedges
The Planning Inspectorate
Room 3/25, Hawk Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Email: environment.appeals@pins.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 0303 444 5584

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