



Additional Arboricultural information relating to trees VT1 & VT12

1. **Purpose:** To provide additional information relating to two veteran oaks (VT1 & VT12) in relation to their Root Protection Areas (RPAs) and buffer zones.
2. **Background references:** Arboricultural Impact Appraisal and Method Statement (Reference: 22054-AIA2-DC, dated 23rd September 2024) and tree protection plan 22054-03 were submitted as part of the planning application setting out the tree issues for the whole site. This included an assessment and methodology relating to VT1 & VT12 including trial trench investigation works, protection during construction and mitigation and rooting improvements to the RPAs. This briefing note should be read in conjunction with the submitted tree report and plan.
3. **Plans:** Plan 22054-04 (attached) is an extract from plan 22054-03 showing the two trees and adjusted RPAs including the segment of buffer zone affected by the proposed access.
4. **The trees:** This briefing note refers to the two veteran oak trees shown in the tree report and tree protection plan as VT1 & VT12. Both are mature trees in good general condition. They do not show any signs of decline and have clearly co habited with their existing environs for many decades, including the dwellings to the west, highway to the north, existing access road directly to the east and the open agricultural field to the east.
5. **RPA adjustment:** The notional RPAs for both trees are shown on plan 22054-03. This includes where the RPAs overlap the footprints of the two existing dwellings to the west. I have cropped the RPAs to exclude the building footprints and extended the RPAs east into the site to extend to the limit of the buffer zone. This far exceeds the required RPA volume and reflects more accurately the trees rooting availability.
6. **Buffer zone:** As set out within NPPF, the buffer zone is shown extending beyond the RPA. Clearly it overlaps the existing structures, but these have been in situ for many decades and the trees have co-existed with them with no obvious negative issues. The buffer zone extends east into the site and the proposed access is at the outer edge of the buffer zone. Previous trial excavations at the edge of the eastern buffer zone revealed no significant rooting from the two veteran oaks. A small section of notional buffer zone will be encroached by the proposed access where the hedge (H8) on the site frontage will be removed to facilitate the new access road. Having regard to the trial trenches already carried out it is unlikely that the construction works for the new access in this area will have any impact on the trees rooting zone. However, additional trial trenches could be undertaken in this locality if it is considered necessary.
7. **Proposals to improve the rooting environment for both trees:** As part of the planning application, the existing vehicular access close to both trees directly to the east will be closed up. The existing tarmac surface will be carefully removed and replaced with a cellular confinement footpath only. Details of this are set out within the tree report and supporting documentation. Photo 1 within the report shows this in more detail. This will provide an opportunity to improve the immediate environment close to the base of both trees. In addition, the existing soft area to the east of the trees will be landscaped with same species (oak) woodchip as a mulch layer to improve the rooting environment. This will be reflected in the landscape masterplan and will be maintained in perpetuity as part of the long term landscape management of the open spaces. Both the replacement of the existing vehicular access and mulching of the buffer zone to the east will significantly improve the rooting zone for both trees into the long term. I have balanced this



against the minor encroachment into the notional buffer zone and I believe the improvements far outweigh any negative impact from the minor encroachment of the access into a small segment of the buffer zone. I believe this balance is in line with the guidance set out within the NPPF regarding veteran trees.

8. **Ecology:** My understanding is that the project ecologist has considered the proposed scheme in light of the new access and buffer zone associated with the two trees and considers there to be no negative impact on either tree from an ecology perspective.
9. **Date and author:** David Cashman. 3rd December 2024

Enclosure: Plan 22054-04