HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Tesla Engineering Ltd, Water Lane, Storrington
DESCRIPTION:	Demolition of existing storage buildings (Unit 5 and Unit 6), telecom communication mast and compound. Erection of a replacement storage building and creation of associated parking
REFERENCE:	DC-24-1512
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / Objection / Modification / Withdrawal / Refusal

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

The development fails to take due account of the position and importance of the veteran oak tree situated on the W boundary of the site.

The proposed development would foreseeably have direct impacts on the roots and key rooting areas of the tree.

I recommend that the application be withdrawn and that re-siting of the proposed building is undertaken. There would appear to be ample space available to achieve a re-configured site layout in this respect.

A revised design should include a detailed Arboricultural Impact Assessment that broaches all of the pertinent considerations within the design standard BS5837 including draft tree protection measures. In this instance, I also recommend that an Arboricultural Method Statement be submitted in conjunction with the submission.

MAIN COMMENTS:

The revised build footprint proposed is partially within existing foundation footprints of buildings and partially within areas of other disturbed ground some of which is covered with hardstanding.

All of the existing development on the site is likely to have been undertaken within the latter part of the veteran oak trees lifespan to date. Foundations for the buildings and construction of hardstandings will foreseeably have involved root disturbance and to some extent, loss of viable rooting medium.

However, it is likely that the tree will be exploiting all available rooting options within the site, including continuing to root beneath existing hardstandings or having put on some new root growth in response to historic rooting damage.

A new building on the footprint proposed would need to be built on foundations commensurate with modern building regulation requirements for development on the prevailing soil type and require new hardstanding and services installations around the perimeter. This will foreseeably require deeper foundations than currently in existence, and of a significantly greater depth of excavation within areas of existing hardstanding.

The minimum recommended root protection area (RPA) for the tree as defined with the relevant design standard (BS5837:2012 – Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations) is capped at 707m2. However, within that document it is recognised that veteran trees should be dealt with on an individual basis in this respect. This recommendation is backed up by the standing advice that accompanies the NPPF which recommends that the tree has an additional minimum buffer or extended RPA of 15 times the stem diameter of the tree. In this instance that equates to 27.5m distance from the tree stem. This area of precautionary exclusion from potentially damaging development operations extends to include the entire area adjacent to the two existing build footprints.

Whilst it may be considered reasonable to re-build on the existing footprints of buildings within the minimum recommended buffer with a foundation depth that would foreseeably preclude the presence of larger diameter roots beneath them, this is not the case for the entire footprint proposed which is significantly within the minimum recommended precautionary buffer for the tree.

Therefore, the proposed building footprint will foreseeably invoke a detrimental impact on the roots and rooting area of the veteran oak tree contrary to standing advice for planning considerations of avoiding damage to recognised irreplaceable landscape habitats.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

N/A

NAME:	ANDY CLOUT – ASST. ARBORICULTURAL OFFICER
DEPARTMENT:	STRATEGIC PLANNING - SPECIALISTS
DATE:	29/01/25