

31 July 2026

FAO: Kate Turner
Senior Planning Officer
Horsham District Council

By email only

SLR Project No.: 433.066607.00001

**RE: The Copse Phase 2 – Application Reference DC/26/0355
Response to Tree Officer's Comments**

Construction of up to 23 residential dwellings, (including 9 affordable homes), including access, parking, landscaping, and other associated infrastructure works.

On behalf of our client, Starbuild Ltd., we would like to respond to the following comments received from the Tree Officer.

Point 1. The section drawing and proposed method of construction does not accord with the BS5837 design standard. Steel road edgings as shown to a depth of circa 250mm will sever all roots at this upper level within the soil horizon and act as a constraint on future rooting within the oak trees minimum recommended root protection areas (RPA's). The reference to "Abweb" and submission of generic "Geoweb" information is not synchronised. The 100mm depth of web shown is highly unlikely IME to be adequate for purpose. An engineered design for both construction purpose (reference is made to a sacrificial web layer in this respect -no detail of depth or acceptability of approach with submitted "Geoweb" information is made) and latter finished surface, should be prepared by an engineer with knowledge of the existing soil bearing characteristics.

I would imagine existing/proposed levels and ground quality may not enable a 'no-dig' web formation to be laid over it and provide a suitable access road for 20 tonne plus vehicle movements as the development requires. The applicant should be given the opportunity to respond on this point as it is fundamental to understanding the foreseeable impact of the access road on the adjacent protected oak trees to the North.

Point 2. Additional comment is made on the acceptability of tree/amenity area relationships, presumably in response to my pre-app comments? I disagree in respect of the future resident pressures that the relationships of the new rear gardens to trees creates.

Response from Tree Consultant.

We note the concerns raised regarding the proposed no-dig roadway construction within the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of the retained trees and would like to provide the following clarification.

The submitted detail does not propose the use of steel road edgings. Drawing 31276-SK6071 demonstrates that the edge restraint comprises of a 250mm wide x 430mm deep gabion wall. The design has been developed collaboratively by our highways engineer, Price & Myers, and specialist contractor Greenfix, with input from our arboricultural consultant, to minimise disturbance within the RPAs whilst maintaining a

load-distributing no-dig construction. The gabion edge restraint is an above-ground solution and does not require the installation of steel edging within the upper rooting level.

We acknowledge the comment regarding the reference to "Abweb". The proposed system is the Greenfix Geoweb TRP cellular confinement system, as identified within both the Arboricultural Method Statement and Drawing SK6071. The submitted methodology, design details and supporting information all relate specifically to the Geoweb TRP system.

The Arboricultural Method Statement confirms that the specification has been developed collaboratively to provide a site-specific no-dig roadway solution. The cellular confinement system is designed to distribute imposed loads across the surface structure and reduce pressure on the underlying soil profile and rooting environment. Drawing No. 31276-SK6071 and the accompanying Geoweb specification clearly illustrate the proposed build-up, the depth of each construction layer, the existing ground levels and the extent of the RPA.

Concerns regarding the impact of construction traffic have also been addressed. The methodology has been specifically designed to avoid repeated trafficking of unprotected ground within the RPAs and to ensure that all vehicle movements are restricted to the completed load-spreading surface. The works will be undertaken under arboricultural supervision, with the no-dig roadway installed progressively from the completed Phase 1 access road, thereby preventing construction traffic from operating directly on root-bearing soils.

Our Arboricultural Consultant has reviewed the proposed design and methodology and concludes that, taking account of the age, size and location of the retained trees, the access road can be installed without adverse effects on their health, stability or long-term retention.

In summary, the proposed no-dig roadway has been developed through close collaboration between the project engineer, specialist Geoweb supplier and arboricultural consultant. The design follows the principles of BS5837 by avoiding excavation within the RPAs, distributing loads above existing ground levels and preventing construction traffic from compacting root-bearing soils. The submitted information demonstrates a robust and carefully considered approach to tree protection whilst enabling the access arrangements required to facilitate the development.

To address point 2, we have amended the private amenity spaces for plots 5, 11, 12, and 23 to pull them outside of the canopy areas. Please see drawing FL25-2301-055L - Proposed Site Layout.

We look forward to receiving confirmation that our responses above, along with the submitted report and drawings, address the comments raised by the Tree Officer and that no further information is required.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss any submitted report or plan, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,

SLR Consulting Limited

Debra Higginbotham

Associate Planner - Planning

