Planning Statement Addendum

Site: Tesla Engineering Ltd, Water Lane, Storrington, West Sussex, RH20 3EA

Client: Tesla Engineering Ltd

Prepared by: DHA Planning Ltd

Date: 14 March 2025

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Planning Statement Addendum has been prepared on behalf of Tesla Engineering Ltd in relation to an amended full planning application ('DC/24/1512') for the demolition of the existing storage buildings, communication mast and compound and the erection of a replacement storage building and parking at Tesla Engineering, Water Lane, Storrington, RH20 3EA.

1.1.2 This Statement addresses arboricultural matters which have come to light during the determination of the application. For completeness, this planning application was submitted to address the highways and water neutrality reasons for refusal associated with previous application ref: ('DC/23/1981'). No concerns in relation to arboricultural impact were raised during the original application.

1.1.3 Since the amended application was submitted, comments received from Horsham District Council's Tree Officer have highlighted the proximity of the proposed development to a Veteran Oak tree. In response, the design has twice been amended to increase the distance between the footprint of the proposed building and the Oak by a total of 4m. In addition, detailed arboricultural evidence in the form of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and subsequent Addendum has been submitted to the Council, confirming that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the live root system of the tree.

1.1.4 Without prejudice to the submitted evidence, paragraph 193(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework 'NPPF' (2024) makes provision for the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as veteran trees) where there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation exists. This Planning Statement Addendum undertakes an application of paragraph 193(c) and concludes that exceptional reasons exist sufficient to outweigh any minor perceived deterioration of the Oak's root structure.

1.1.5 This Addendum forms part of the application and should be made available for inspection with the other application details

1.2 Paragraph 193(c) Assessment

1.2.1 For ease of reference, paragraph 193(c) of the Framework states that:

"development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists;"

1.2.2 It is acknowledged that the Veteran Oak status of the tree (referred to as 'T7' within the applicant's arboricultural evidence) constitutes an irreplaceable habitat. However, the proposed development site comprises a previously developed parcel of land with two existing 1970s storage buildings constructed upon a deep concrete base. The site also contains a telecommunications mast with associated infrastructure, foundations and concrete retaining wall, all located within the root protection area of T7.

1.2.3 It is entirely reasonable to consider that the extensive hardstanding, concrete base and deep foundations associated with the mast represent adverse conditions within the root protection area and have likely resulted in damage during construction and inhibited the root spread of the tree since.

1.2.4 Following surveys of the site and the Oak, the applicant's arboriculturist concluded that impacts on the Veteran tree T7 will be nominal due to the site circumstances and health of the tree, with minimal live rooting in the area of proposed works due to extensive basal decay/dead bark. To the contrary, the arboriculturist's professional judgement is that "with open field conditions to the west the majority of the live rooting capacity of the tree is anticipated to be occupying these more favourable conditions".

1.2.5 Notably, this conclusion was reached prior to the re-location of the proposed building 2m east, bringing the proposed development entirely upon the existing built footprint. A subsequent Arboricultural Addendum concluded that:

"The revised positioning of the proposed replacement building ensures its footprint within the theoretical rooting zone of T7 is entirely located within areas of past excavation and foundations which will have severed all roots emanating from T7 to depth. As such, and given the identified physical issues with the root system of T7, the revised building footprint will not have an adverse impact on the live root system of T7, provided the areas around the footprint of the building are suitably protected during the demolition and construction works."

1.2.6 Following further discussions with Horsham District Council, the building was moved a further 2m east (4m in total from the original submission). The proposed footprint is now more than 20m from the base of the tree and the majority of development now takes place outside of the root protection area and entirely upon existing built footprint. Notwithstanding the previous conclusions, the additional re-location can only reasonably further reduce the potential for adverse impact on the minimal root structure of T7 in this location.

1.2.7 On account of the above evidence and design amendments, it is our view that all reasonable measures have been taken to minimise the potential for deterioration of the Veteran Oak and clear professional evidence exists which concludes that there would not be adverse impact on the live root system of T7.

1.2.8 Should the Council disagree, it is our firm view that exceptional reasons exist which when considered together, would clearly outweigh any limited deterioration of the Veteran Oak.

<u>Shallow Foundations</u>

1.2.9 The lightweight construction of the proposed metal storage building is conducive to a shallow reinforced concrete foundation. Similar foundations are used

elsewhere on site and depths as shallow as 600mm have been sufficient. A condition securing the use of shallow foundations can be imposed, with details to be submitted to the Council prior to commencement of development.

Location of Proposed Development

1.2.10 The proposed building has been moved 4m further east and is now sited entirely upon existing built footprint and hardstanding in excess of 20m from the base of tree T7. For the avoidance of doubt, evidence has been submitted concluding that the initial re-location of the building 2m east 'would not have an adverse impact on the live root system of T7'. The building has been moved a further 2m since.

1.2.11 The applicant's submitted evidence suggests that it is unlikely that live root structure exist below the existing footprint and in any event, it has been confirmed that shallow foundations which would not breach the existing concrete base may be conditioned.

Improvement of Existing Ground Conditions

1.2.12 As existing, the root protection area of T7 comprises hardstanding and the extensive foundations and infrastructure associated with the aforementioned telecommunications mast located approximately 8m from the base of the tree at its closest point. The mast and associated infrastructure will be removed to facilitate the proposed development. The removal of surplus hardstanding and restoration of the soil may be secured via a suitably worded condition and would result in a net benefit to the condition of the root protection area.

Minimal Live Root Structure

1.2.13 Detailed evidence has been submitted by the applicant's arboriculturist which confirms that there is minimal live rooting within the footprint of the proposed development. Whilst we acknowledge the opposing views of the Council's Tree Officer, no evidence has been provided which objectively suggests to the contrary.

Further Re-location

1.2.14 The proposed development was re-located 2m further from the base of the tree following submission which brought development entirely upon the existing built footprint. The applicant's arboriculturist concluded that the revised building footprint would not have an adverse impact on the live root system of T7. Notwithstanding this conclusion, the applicant has remained committed to working positively with the Council and following discussions, agreed to move the building a further 2m east (4m from the original location) to further minimise the potential for adverse impact. The building is now 20m from the base of the tree at its closest point and comfortably within the footprint of existing built footprint and the foundations of the telecommunications mast.

Summary

1.2.15 Considering all of the above, it is considered that wholly exceptional reasons exist sufficient to outweigh any minor deterioration of the live root structure associated with the Veteran Oak.

1.3 Planning Balance & Summary

1.3.1 This Planning Statement Addendum has been prepared on behalf of Tesla Engineering Ltd and addresses arboricultural matters which have come to light during the determination of the application.

1.3.2 This Statement has undertaken an application of paragraph 193(c) and concludes that exceptional reasons exist sufficient to outweigh any minor perceived deterioration of the Veteran Oak root structure.

1.3.3 To assist the Council, a summary of the relative merits and harm arising from the proposal is set out below:

Issue	Weight to be afforded
Benefits	
Economic benefits associated the additional storage floorspace by facilitating the continued growth and expansion of Tesla Engineering.	Significant
Social benefits associated with the additional employment generated from the continued expansion of Tesla Engineering.	Significant
Re-development of under-utilised brownfield land and buildings to provide additional high-quality floorspace.	Significant
Removal of existing hardstanding and mast foundations within the root protection area of a veteran oak.	Moderate
Harm	
In the unlikely event that live root systems are present beneath the existing built footprint, the potential for minor deterioration to a Veteran Oak.	Limited

1.3.4 Taking the contents of the above and the original Planning Statement into consideration, circumstances clearly weigh in favour of the grant of consent and the proposed development is considered to accord with the key policies contained within the development plan.

We therefore respectfully request that planning permission be granted.