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Your Reference:- 08/00505/ENUDEV

By e-mail only

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2010

Dear Mr Watts

**Raising of levels to the rear of 63-69 Botany Bay Road**

I apologise for not having responded earlier, but, as mentioned, I am afraid that I had some personal matters, which have taken some time to resolve.

Following our e-mail correspondence during November through to January, I have now considered the various options that could be considered to correct the situation and make comments in relation to each one.

Obviously, these are my initial thoughts as a opening discussion document and I will leave you to consider them, following which it may be worth meeting up again to discuss which are realistic and potentially acceptable both to you as the City Council and Mr James.

In the meantime, following your telephone message, I have notified Mr James of your concerns about continued importation of material and requested that this stops.

For clarity, I think it is worth mentioning the background to the site. Material has been used to construct a bank and raise levels to protect the properties at the site from slippage. This has been going on for some 60 years, as I understand the situation, without previous complaint. It might be helpful if you could inform me when the Council first became aware of the works? Also, as far as I am aware, the majority of neighbours have not made any complaint. I would be grateful if you could also let me know, how many complaints have been received? Obviously, I am aware, through you that the local MP has become involved.

At the moment, continued slippage endangers the safety of the properties and the inhabitants of those properties, which includes young children.

In relation to the site, you mentioned that the area is designated as a SINC. It has a stream running along the base of the valley and an operational sewer line runs through the property. Both of these elements will need to be taken into account in any agreed option.

**The Possible Solutions.**

It is essential that the ground is made safe to protect the properties from further damage. This could be undertaken in a number of ways, but, unfortunately, these not only have to be acceptable in engineering and landscaping terms, but also affordable.

**Option 1. Vertical piling to secure the integrity of material already placed.**

This would comprise vertical piling from the base level (the level of the stream) to sufficient height to secure the existing placed material.

There are two reasons why I do not consider this option to be practical.

Firstly, a vertical pile would consist of a manmade feature (steel or concrete), which would be totally out of keeping with the surrounding landscape and would have a substantial and negative impact on the SINC.

Secondly, the cost would be totally prohibitive; Mr James would not be able to afford any such structure.

**Option 2. Stepped piling to secure the integrity of material already placed.**

This would comprise a series of terraced piles. Whilst it would be better in the sense that the piles could be visually screened by planting on the terraces, it again would not be possible due to its financial cost.

In addition, it would involve piling within the existing unsound placed material, so would require substantial investigations to confirm that it would stabilise the material.

**Option 3. Planting the existing material.**

This would probably provide the most visually acceptable solution, without either major engineering works or further importation of material.

However, this solution would rely on the planting to stabilise the material and is most unlikely to do so. Even if, in the long term, the planting would bind the material if at all, it would not do so until planting becomes well established, which would be some years in the future.

**Option 4. Further material importation and landscaping.**

Mr James owns the land to the raised bank on the other side of the stream, over which there is no public access.

By importing selected material and piping the stream along that stretch, it would be possible to gently grade material between the existing fill material

and that bank. In that way, the fill material will be made secure as it will be abutting the raised natural bank on the other side of the stream.

If a comprehensive and sensitive landscaping and planting scheme is produced and worked to, the final landform (whilst it is appreciated will include a short length of the stream being piped) will compliment the area and tie in with the mature trees on the other side of the stream. In this way the SINC can be protected and potentially enhanced.

**Conclusion.**

Obviously, any solution will need to be agreed with both yourselves, the Environment Agency and, presumably, Southern Water.

At the present time, to ensure the properties are protected, I believe option 4 provides the best and only realistic solution.

However, I would appreciate your thoughts and any alternative options you may consider feasible.

I appreciate that any proposal would be subject to a planning application and, following agreement on the way forward with you, I would recommend to Mr James that the preparation and submission of a planning application should be pursued to regularise the situation, whilst ensuring the safety of the properties.

I look forward to hearing from you and, if required, would be very willing to meet to discuss the possible alternatives in more detail.

Yours sincerely

Peter Coe