

Measures taken at 178A West Street - APP/23/00356

Before work was undertaken at 178A West Street Havant the land was overgrown and had not been maintained in many years. There was access via the alleyway that joins West Street and fly tipping was taking place on a regular basis.

Whilst our contractor was clearing the site he was disposing of beds, mattresses, sofas, fridges and lots of broken glass from old green houses as well as other general waste. The land was a health hazard and infested with rodents.

In addition to this there are three large sewage tanks on site that Southern Water require access to as they need pumping out every six months. Due to the overgrown nature of the land, access for Southern Water was simply not possible, this was confirmed by Southern Waters' contractor when they came to site in March 2023 to pump out the tanks for the first time in many years. These three tanks have large concrete lids for access these had completely collapsed in and the tanks were blocked with roots and other material. (Pictures of the old covers are attached in the inventory) Local residents also advised us that they had a raw sewage leak from these tanks on a couple of occasions causing the whole area to flood with waste.

All three tanks have now been repaired and have new lids and surrounds these have also been serviced twice in the last twelve months. The work that we have done has made it very easy for Southern Water to access and no flooding of raw sewage has occurred since.

We are keen to work with our neighbours and Havant Council and whilst undertaking the clearing of this site and creating a compound for vehicle storage we have taken time and effort to ensure everything we do has a limited impact on the adjoining houses and the environment. These extra measures are listed below with photographs in the inventory to demonstrate the lengths we have gone to.

- **Permeable / Porous Surface**

The surface of the land previously was mud / grass that, as mentioned above, had been contaminated with raw sewage.

When deciding what surface to use the cheapest, quickest, and easiest option would be to put a shallow sub-base down and then cover this with tarmac. We were aware that if we did this additional drainage would be required due to the slope from the houses on Staunton Road towards the river at the bottom of the compound.

We chose to dig down dispose of all the contaminated soil and use Drintex Geo Textile Fabric followed by 100 mm of type one MOT and 50mm limestone topping over (pictures attached). This material is Permeable and Porous allowing rainwater to soak away and not runaway to other properties. This has proven to be very effective over a number of recent storms and, even with the heavy rain, there is very little if no standing water.

Fortunately, due to the nature of the natural slope in the compound, if there is any surface water it would naturally run away from every property on Staunton Road except one, Number 26 which we have more details on later in the report.

- **Fencing**

As stated previously, the land had open access to West Street and a prime area for fly tipping. We are storing expensive cars in this area, so a secure perimeter fence was required to stop this access.

We chose to use Palisade fencing for its security attributes, but again consciously chose to spend more money and buy the fence in powder coated dark green to blend into the environment. Initially we erected a 10-foot fence but when we were contacted by Havant Council about the height of the fence, we cut it down to the agreed height immediately to comply with council regulations.

We also, at additional cost to us, installed a gate to give access to one of the neighbours, to store materials in his back garden. In addition to this, we listened to the owner of Number 26 and decided not to extend the fence along his boundary as this resident also has a gate with access to our land and wanted the ability for Southern Water to access the storm drain on his land via our property. On both cases we were happy to work with our neighbours and assist with their requests at additional cost to Richmond Motor Group.

It's also worth noting that when the fence was erected, we deliberately positioned the majority of it away from the north-eastern boundary giving the neighbours a buffer of up to 5 meters in some places. Spoil from the resurfacing work was banded in these areas and a natural green screen allowed to grow between the gardens and the vehicles that are being stored. This could also be considered as an additional safety measure in the unlikely event that any fire were to occur on our site.

- **Pest Control:**

When we cleared the site, it was infested with rats and mice. When we identified this back in April 2023, we immediately took additional measures and installed bait boxes along the fence line between us and the local residents to help dispose of the pests. At the moment there is no evidence of any rats or mice in the compound, but this is an ongoing measure that we will continue to provide and pay for going forward.

- **Storage of Vehicles:**

The intention for this site is to be additional storage for the Richmond Motor Group Business Centre. This department within Richmond Motor Group supply's new vehicles to businesses across the UK.

The process, at the moment, is for new vehicles to be delivered by transporters from the manufacturer and unloaded directly into this storage compound. They are stored here temporarily until delivery is required, at which point they are removed from the compound and taken to the workshop and a pre-delivery inspection is carried out, the car is valeted and then delivered to the end user.

The important piece to note here is when the new vehicles are delivered to Richmond Motor Group they are in "Shipping Mode" which effectively is a safe mode that is used for transporting vehicles.

In addition to this, petrol cars will arrive with a very small amount of fuel in and EV vehicles arrive with less than 10% charge in the battery. The combination of these vehicles being stored in “Shipping Mode” and that they have very little charge or fuel in make them less of a fire hazard. These are precautions that are taken deliberately by the manufacturer when these cars are being shipped around the world and these vehicles stay in this state of safety while they are in our storage compound until they are ready to be delivered.

As there are currently no official regulations in regard to the storing of electric vehicles in open spaces, we have taken steps, as required by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order and are in conversations with the local fire brigade about anything else we could do to make it even safer.

The storage compound is only used when we are open which is Monday – Friday 7.30am – 5.30pm and a few hours on Saturday morning so there is no activity at unsociable hours that would disturb the local residents.

- **Number 26 Staunton Road - Flooding**

We have been in constant contact with the local neighbours throughout the whole process, and in November 2023 we made the decision to go door to door and ask how the storage compound is affecting them and if they have any issues specifically with flooding.

The result of this was on the whole positive, the only house that is continuing to experience flooding issues is Number 26 Staunton Road. We visited the property, and the owner took us to the bottom of his garden where flooding was happening.

The flooding is only happening at the bottom of his garden which is a natural low point for the area. One side is our vehicle storage compound, the other side is the railway embankment and then the top half of his garden also slopes down to this low point. There is also a large concrete slab that the owner has built a workshop on at the bottom of his garden.

We have been monitoring this with the owner and, when it rains, the water comes from multiple directions stops and pools when it gets to the concrete slab. Whilst visiting Number 26, we also identified a blocked drainage ditch at the bottom of the railway embankment which is on Network Rail property. This is not being maintained by Network Rail, so rainwater is not draining away and instead overflowing into the garden of Number 26 and pooling at the bottom of the garden by the workshop.

Southern Water have been asked to investigate the drainage issues on the property and this blocked ditch is something that they have noted as a cause of the flooding. We are assisting the owner and talking to Network Rail about the drainage ditch and getting this cleared, even though it is not on our property or our responsibility to do so.

Number 26's garden also has a drainage pipe which services Staunton Road, the rainwater drains off the road into an underground pipe and then empty's the water into the ditch alongside Number 26's garden which is blocked and then this also overflows into the garden.

Furthermore, Number 26's garden is as vulnerable to flooding from the neighbouring (down) stream, as our own site is.

We sympathise with the owner of 26 Staunton Road; when we get heavy rain the bottom half of his garden does flood but as detailed above, this is more likely now down to other factors. We are working with the owner and Network Rail to get the blocked ditch cleared which we believe is the major cause of the flooding in his garden. A copy of the latest correspondence with Network Rail is included for reference.

RMG will be registering with the Government's Flood Alert Service and committing to providing temporary defences in the event of a potential flooding risk. With a monitoring station placed centrally within RMG's site(s), it is perfectly placed and visible to highlight any forthcoming risk whilst the site is occupied. The Alert will ensure this same level of protection can be deployed when the site is not occupied.

In summary, Richmond Motor Group have gone to great lengths to make this storage compound safe and to work with the local residents to cause them as little inconvenience as possible.

Richmond Motor Group employs over 500 staff of which the majority live in the Havant and Portsmouth area. This compound is essential for us to be able to run the Richmond Motor group Business Centre and we have spent additional money and considered the residents at every step.

We appreciate you re-advertising this application and welcome any further questions that you may have.

Clearing the site, multiple skips to dispose of rubbish from fly tipping.



Compound After completion with subtle fencing blending into the local environment:



Ditch Overflowing on Network Rail Property alongside 26 Staunton Rd Garden: :



3 Sewage Tanks being rebuilt and repaired with new steel lids:



Latest correspondence with Network Rail:

Service Request Number: 231205-000309



Network Rail <communications_crm_outreach@
To Steve Smith



12/01/2024

Filed by Newforma

You forwarded this message on 15/01/2024 08:43.
Click here to download pictures. To help protect your privacy, Outlook prevented automatic download of some pictures in this message.

Response By E-mail (Lorraine) (12/01/2024 06.40 PM)

Dear Steve,

Further to my email to you dated 2 January, our off track team attended this location and carried out some vegetation clearance work to a toe ditch. But they have a few questions which need to be answered by the local authority regarding the outfall pipe, flow of the river etc.

With this in mind, our maintenance manager will continue to investigate this issue with the local authority. It may take a little while to co-ordinate between the council and our off track maintenance team after some fact finding.

I do hope this information is helpful and reassuring that its with the relevant team for action. I will of course be back in touch with any updates once received.

In the meantime, i will close your enquiry with our helpline as its with the relevant team under investigation.

Thanks again for getting in touch Steve,
Lorraine
Community Relations, Wessex route

Response By E-mail (Lorraine) (02/01/2024 07.55 AM)

Dear Steve Smith, ref SR231205-000309

Thanks for getting in touch about - Flooding issues neighbouring railway line - 26 Staunton Road, Havant PO9 1NH

I'm sorry we haven't responded to your enquiry yet. Your enquiry is open with the relevant team and your request is being investigated.

We're grateful for your patience and as soon as I receive an update, I will of course be back in touch with you at the earliest.

I'm sorry for the delay,