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Explanatory Notes and description of the events and reasons surrounding the re-construction of the shed

We purchased the greenbelt land in 2002 and twelve months later decided to attend to the retaining wall in front of the narrow garden area and fence to the rear of the house and garage which was starting to lean, but the worst end of the retaining wall at the far end of the house which formed the existing shed and onto which the timber and plastic sheeting of the roof rested had quite large cracks appearing in several places. The result, we assume, would appear to have been caused by the following:-

We do not know when the retaining wall to the shed was constructed but in view of the fact the property is old, continual water running down the land from higher levels into the layered sandstone together with yearly frosts had caused fissures to form and as soon as I started to remove the retaining wall, layers of sandstone broke away. At the lower part of the retaining wall the size of the sandstone was small and very eroded and resulted in a beautiful natural layered stone effect wall being left behind. As the work progressed it was noticed that a large gap could be seen between the retaining wall of the shed and a solid sandstone face which projects out away from the field. As soon as the shed retaining wall was being removed, large pieces of sandstone broke away from the fissures and for safety reasons the wall was cleared of any remaining loose pieces of sandstone. We have not attempted to cover any of the exposed sandstone once it was excavated because of its natural appearance. Unfortunately due to the condition of the ground we were not aware of what lay behind the retaining wall, but the retaining wall of the shed gave us considerable cause for concern.

The existing shed roof was supported on retaining walls, the one above mentioned and one to the rear abutting next door's land. This latter wall appeared alright but was re-pointed. The third side of the shed roof was spanned off the house wall. The front elevation of the shed was constructed of timber posts and timber cladding with a large 5 ft wide timber door. As the roof has had to be repaired on several occasions due to high winds etc. and with the existing shed having been removed to carry out the works required to the retaining walls, this presented an ideal opportunity to construct a shed totally independent of the two ground retaining walls and also able to withstand the high winds experienced in this area.

The sub-base of the concrete floor to the new shed is very thick natural sandstone and a concrete raft slab was placed over this with a dpc and floor insulation. The walls are constructed of concrete block work which has been rendered and painted to match the house. The roof is constructed of timber spars and tie joists, felted/battened and concrete roof tiles. The double doors have been made from timber and roof water is collected into a water butt.

At the time this work was done we were unaware that planning permission was required and it is only now that I have realised that the shed actually impinges into the greenbelt land by approx. 300mm.