

Latest News
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Aquobex makes bespoke barriers for conservation area properties

After fluvial and surface water flooding to residences in the Essex area, Aquobex was commissioned by Essex County Council to carry out detailed surveys of the properties, including structural elements of listed and historic buildings.

It was determined that only 300mm of each building's height could be safely defended due to the wattle and daub construction in some of the properties. Only slot-in type barriers would fit the bill, but they did not meet the conservation issues.

Aquobex came up with a solution to protect a total of 22 properties using:

- Demountable flood barriers
- Anti-flood (SMART) airbricks
- Backflow sewer and appliance valves
- Numerous sealing and waterproofing works
- Minor civil works.

The project commenced with customer awareness days in the two villages, allowing Aquobex to demonstrate the range of products on offer and discuss the flooding issues directly with the homeowners. These discussions revolved around flood type, property build type and people issues (mobility, age and occupancy periods). Aquobex engaged the services of Mary Dhonau in these sessions as she could empathise with the homeowners, having been a victim of flooding herself. Mary was able to explain the solutions from the perspective of a homeowner.



Appointments were made with the owner of each property to survey the individual buildings and discuss the solutions recommended by our surveyor. Once agreed, the solutions were presented to the local conservation officer for approval and/or adjustment, an example being the need to blend in the new airbricks and match current colour schemes.

The most important issue was the engagement, by Aquobex, of a specialist structural engineer once the buildings' age and construction type was discovered. The decision of the structural engineer meant the flood barriers had to be restricted to a height of 300mm to avoid structural damage to the wattle and daub houses in each village.

As standard, 300mm panel type barriers were not available in the market at that time, so Aquobex decided to make them in-house after failing to persuade other manufacturers to do so. Aquobex dealt with all of the planning consents and engineering on the project, developing a bespoke solution that required a minimum of permanent fixtures to satisfy the conservation officer.

In total, three different types of flood barriers requiring different manufacture were needed to provide the optimum solutions to each of the properties. Training on the use of all products supplied was given to the homeowner at the end of each installation and final sign-off was achieved including extensive follow up on any snags.

Ends

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