



FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE THE IMPORTANCE OF SITE INVESTIGATION

Leonard Threadgold
Geotechnics Limited

The land on which development takes place has a fundamental influence on the behaviour of the structure which it supports and the risks to which the future owners, users and occupiers will be exposed. The adequate investigation of any site is essential to the design of safe and economic foundations and to the detection of any contamination which may be present, with the associated responsibilities for control, protection or removal.

Site Investigation should be undertaken by professional specialists and in a phased manner. Initially, a desk study to reveal data which may already exist concerning the site, its geology and history, together with a site reconnaissance, is invaluable and can be done prior to purchase at minimal cost. This may be followed by trial pitting, probing or boring as appropriate to the conditions revealed by the preceding studies and in the light of development proposals. This work is designed to identify the characteristics of soils or fill materials which underlie the site, the groundwater conditions and the existence and extent of other physical features or contaminants which may be present. It is a process which should continue on an iterative basis throughout the design and construction phases. Post-construction monitoring can also be of importance in many instances as part of a validation process.

Bodies such as the NHBC, Local Authority and Warranty Providers, Banks, Insurers and Investors recognise that by these means risks are controlled to acceptable levels. IPPC regulations require a statement on ground conditions prior to development for comparison with the situation after use when the site is vacated or sold on. This is to ensure that the owner developer is not subsequently held responsible for the clean up of earlier pollution for which he is not responsible.

The current planning emphasis on the need to develop Brownfield sites brings to

the fore the need to undertake adequate geotechnical and geoenvironmental investigations and thus lead to sound economic investment and a healthy future.

If you would like any more information on this or any other geotechnical matter, please write to mail@geotechnics.co.uk

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