

## **Evesham – Semi Detached**

We purchased our house in the Vale of Evesham in 1970, overlooking the River Avon 40 metres away and a little over 3.5 metres above normal river level. We are one in a row of twelve semi-detached houses. In April 1998 we were flooded for the first time when an exceptional flood caused the river to rise 5.3 metres above normal. The highest level since 1900.



**View of flood wall along the frontage of the properties**

Following extensive flooding in other parts of the country in 2000 (we were not affected), one of our neighbours, decided to investigate the possibilities of installing some form of flood defence. She first made contact with the Environment Agency in January 2001 and then called a joint meeting with the Agency and other owners in the row. This was followed by a series of meetings when various options were considered.



**Flood defence as seen from the road gateway cover deployed as necessary.**

We finally settled on a 300 metre long reinforced concrete wall with removable barriers at gateways built inside our existing dry stone wall (and a 20 metre long section of clay bund in the rear garden of one of the houses). The height was set in agreement with the Agency at 23.940 metres above datum (normal river summer level is 19.500 metres AOD). This level would provide protection against all previously recorded floods since the year 1900 except 1998 which was considered to be exceptional.

The Agency made it clear that whilst they were happy to give advice they were unable to publicly fund such a project as it did not meet their 'value for money' criteria. The residents then considered self funding. Initial estimates indicated a cost in the order of £7000 per house. Following more discussions we were able to get everyone on board and went ahead. We prepared a Trust Deed binding all twelve properties together and opened a Trust bank account.



**Flood defence as seen from the front of the house - gate blocked off during a flood**

We were fortunate in having three Chartered Engineers, one retired construction company director and Quantity Surveyor and one Solicitor living in the row. We drew up specifications and contract documents, obtained a quotation against our documents to design and build a flood defence to our specification. We explored the flood barrier market and selected Flood Control Limited as our supplier for the gateway barriers and have been well satisfied with our choice.

Work started in November 2001 and was completed in June 2002. The final cost including making good the dry stone wall and refurbishing the gardens after completion of the construction works, was about £9000 per house.

In July 2007 the wall had its first live test, when we had another exceptional flood, this time reaching a height of 5.51 metres above normal. The highest level since records began in 1848. Our defence system proved to be entirely adequate to the task and held back the flood for over seven hours until it eventually went over the top. The allowed plenty of time to move what we could upstairs to a place of safety.

We are advised by the Environment Agency following a recent survey that the wall provides a 1-150 year standard of protection when the portable barriers are in place.



**Earth bund to the side of the properties**