



River Restoration: Butter Hill weir modification and river naturalisation project.

Background

Chalk streams are an incredibly rare habitat on a global scale, and owing to their international importance, they have been identified by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group as key habitats to preserve and protect. The London Borough of Sutton is privileged enough to have a chalk stream within its boundary and the Wandle Trust is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the river for the benefit of all.

Funding

The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) states that all inland waterbodies should achieve good ecological status/potential. Currently the River Wandle is classed as failing to meet this status and so through the Catchment Restoration Fund the Wandle Trust has secured funding to carry out a number of projects, including this project at Butter Hill/Mill Lane, to improve the river's ecological status.

Issues at Butter Hill/Mill Lane

Currently the fish pass on the weir is not effective and does not pass fish effectively. Also the weir causes the river to become slow flowing resulting in sediment to drop out of suspension and smother the gravel river bed. This clogs the gravels and destroys fish spawning habitat as well as habitat for invertebrates and plants associated with chalk streams. The water quality is reduced due to the warming effect and loss of oxygen caused by the slow moving shallow water and the silt can reduce water quality further if it becomes anoxic.

Project plan

The proposed work will modify the weir by lowering the 2 smaller sluices and removal, modification and replacement of a shortened fish pass. A new narrower, sinuous bank line will be created upstream of the weir with bioengineering techniques for ~100 metres. Behind this the silt from the channel will be placed and fresh new gravels added to the channel. The new marginal areas will then be planted with native marginal aquatic plant species. The rehabilitated river will have clean gravels for fish to spawn in and invertebrate

species to live in. The faster water will be more oxygenated and plant species such as water crowfoot will take root. The marginal wetland will contain a variety of native species that will be important for insects and birdlife.

What will it achieve?

The work will improve the river habitat, geomorphology and aesthetics, make the fish pass more effective and also lower flood risk for nearby properties

An example of how the stretch above the weir will look after the work has been carried out is shown below. This site is the one alongside Mill Pond Place immediately downstream of Butter Hill Road Bridge.



Timings

The work will start 8th Sept 2014 and continue for up to one month.

Parking restrictions and footpath diversion

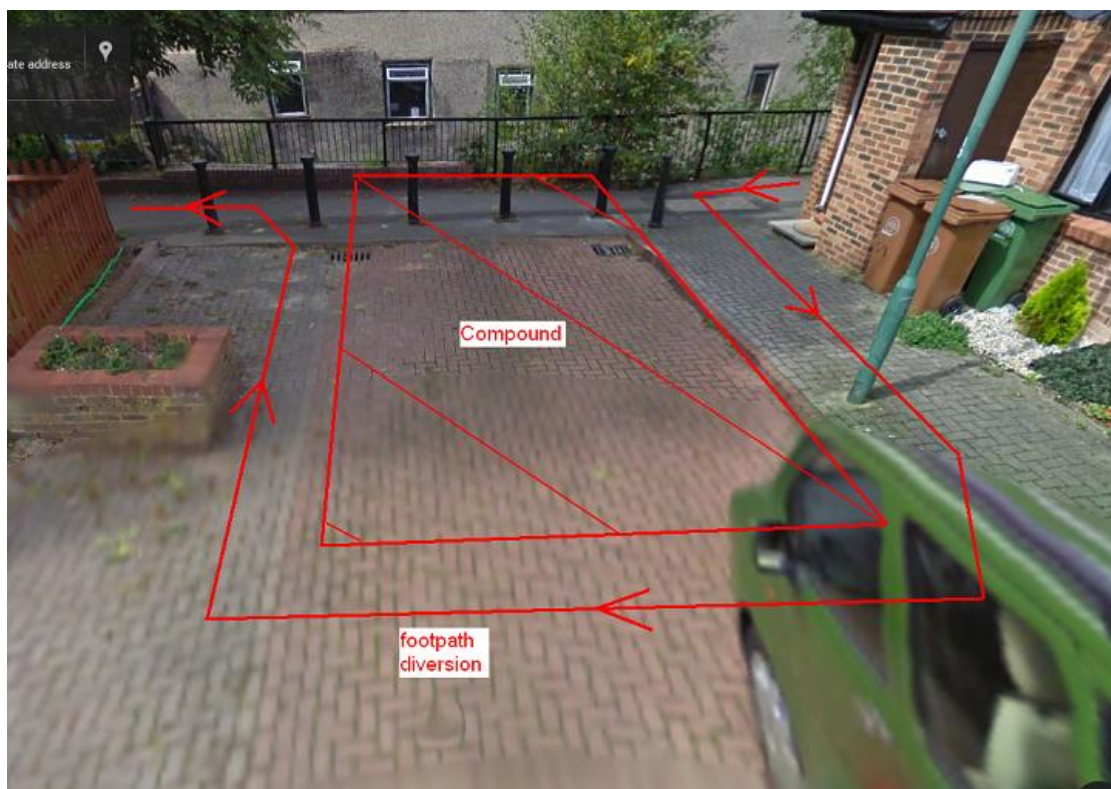
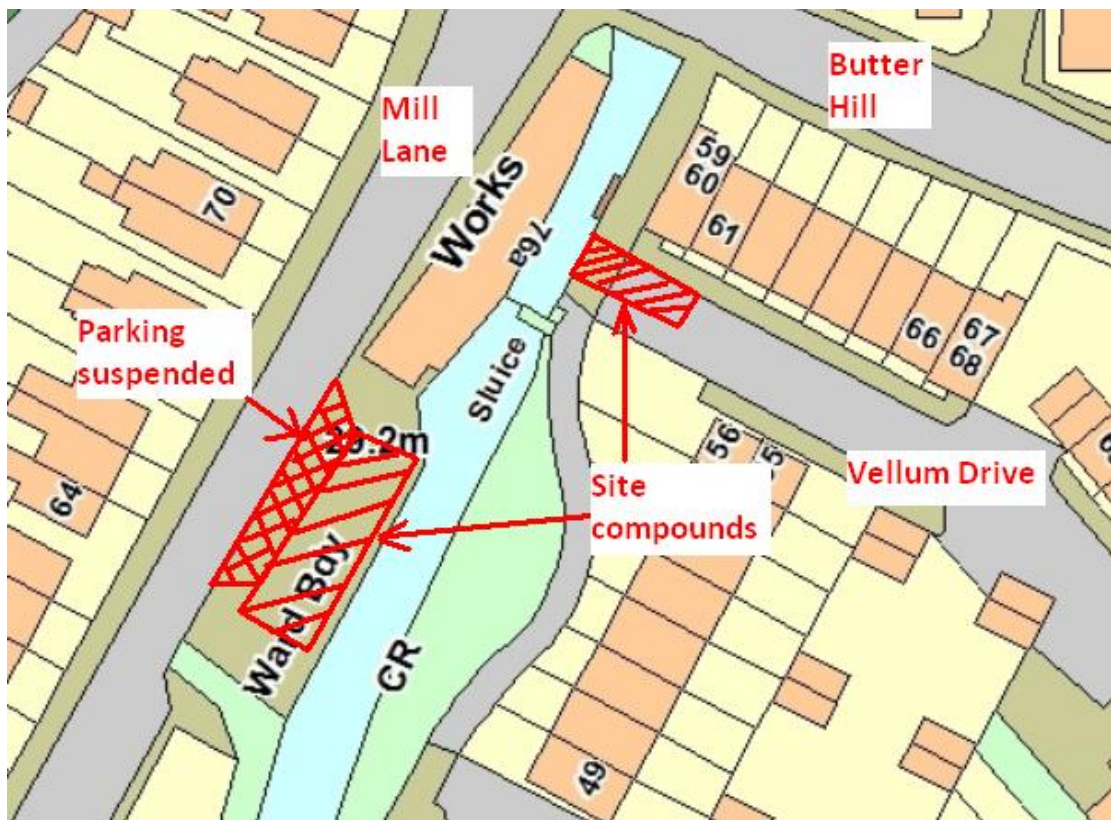
Vellum Drive

From 14th September for ~3 weeks there will be a small compound set up at the end of Vellum drive ~3m x 9m and a slight diversion will be required around the compound. The restrictions are necessary to provide public safety while allowing safe river access for machinery, delivery of materials and setting up of a site compound.

Mill Lane

From 8th September for ~1 month there will be a further site compound set up on the green area upstream of the STR print works on Mill lane and the three parking bays will be temporarily suspended while the works are ongoing.

The Wandle Trust apologise for any inconvenience that may result due to the river works and temporary diversions. We have planned the works to minimise disruption but still ensure public safety.



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