

JAPANESE KNOTWEED™ TO BE IGNORED

CASE STUDY: FULL EXCAVATION UNDER WATCHING BRIEF

Providing successful removal of Japanese knotweed from a challenging commercial site.



NATIONAL SPECIALIST CONTROL SERVICES

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MANAGEMENT PLAN | SURVEY | TREATMENT | REMOVAL | TRAINING RESOURCES

THE BRIEF

Japanese Knotweed Ltd (JKL) was contracted by a commercial client to provide a watching brief service for full excavation and removal of what we estimated would be over 963 tonnes of contaminated soils.

THE SITE

The land consisted of various plots north and south of a public footpath that were previously used for industrial purposes. The client's ecologist report had identified Japanese knotweed on the land which our surveyors then outlined as four stands of knotweed.

THE CHALLENGES

This was a site with several challenges and considerations. Precautions were needed to be included in the risk assessment regarding a public footpath running through the site which either it had to be temporarily closed off or fencing erected around the sites. The knotweed had previously been treated as well as disturbed, so it was difficult to estimate the extent of the underground rhizomes. Bonsai growth was notable evidence of the previous treatment.

This site already had some previously demolished structures but there was one old residential property remaining on site with a garden area that required careful consideration. If this was to be demolished, we would advise on timings of demolition and knotweed eradication to coordinate all works.

Additionally, our site assessment showed there were underground services running through the site, mainly gas pipes, and several trees in the knotweed areas that the client had felled, all of which required navigating.

Overall, the biggest challenge was the timescale provided to carefully excavate the knotweed which was, given the circumstances, underestimated.



THE WORKS

Before works could commence JKL delivered a toolbox talk to the site team to explain the process, procedures, health and safety aspects and biosecurity measures they should follow, and, they must all sign up to the specific RAMS provided.

Because of depth of excavation - due to the deep rhizome growth, a 4-metre root barrier was required. All underground services had to be capped off before we could carefully excavate around them to enable us to fit the root barrier.

Contaminated soils were removed from site and disposed of at a licensed landfill.

WHAT IS A WATCHING BRIEF?

1. A watching brief is a collaboration between JKL as experts in the field, and the client who may have the equipment for the project but not the qualified teams to carry it out. Before any watching brief contract begins the client will inform us of their requirements and expectations, and the team that will be carrying out the excavation. We equally require information on the type of machinery they plan to use to ensure it's fit for the job and in line with our recommendations.
2. After a site visit by one of our surveyors we create a site-specific RAMS, provided to the client for their team to follow under our guidance, plus we're on hands to answer any questions about the RAMS if necessary. It's normal for the client to have questions around their own health and safety criteria, if needed we will adjust our RAMS accordingly.
3. We book in the works and the client books in their team.
4. Our supervisor arrives on site to provide a pre-works toolbox talk. The benefits of a toolbox talk is to provide the client's dig team with information of how knotweed is spread, biosecurity when dealing with transportation of the material and essential do's and don'ts.
5. The client will brief the team as to how the project will go ahead, and which areas will be managed first.
6. We oversee all excavation works where the knotweed is growing into the boundary. Our team will then install a root barrier with assistance from the client's labour team.
7. When the job is complete we send confirmation to the client and compile a report that is passed over to our contracts team for issue to the client. Whilst rare, should any works not be undertaken to our specification we would halt the project to discuss with the client. Works would then continue ensuring all specification is met.
8. If we're happy that the job has been completed and if a guarantee has been issued we will plan a monitoring schedule of visits to be carried out over the next 10-12 years.