

OTFORD 3194.

THE CASTLE HOUSE,
OTFORD,
KENT.

TN14 5PB

Mr. S.J. Stephens
Ancient Monuments Division (South)
English Heritage
Fortress House
23 Savile Row
London W1X 2HE

AA 50950/2

ADM/MJB

Dear Mr. Stephens,

18th July 1989

SAINT THOMAS 'A' BECKET'S WELL, OTFORD, KENT : COUNTY MONUMENT NO. 137

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 7th July. I'm sorry that I was not present when your Mr. Stuart visited the site on 22nd June which as you know had been planned for the previous day when I was available. A meeting and discussion would have avoided your letter which I find somewhat annoying in view of the many visits that I have had from different people from your office and previously the Department of Environment, all of whom have been fully aware of any work that I have undertaken to the Well.

Your paragraph No. 2 infers that work has been carried out since my letter of September 1986. No work has taken place to the monument since 1979/80 (except for cleaning and grass cutting) and my above letter was in reply to your Mr. Sykes' letter of 29th August 1986 which understandably he wrote as he had been notified by a local resident that I had applied for planning consent to build houses on the adjoining field. Planning consent was subsequently refused.

With reference to your paragraph No. 3. The North wall collapsed completely during the mid seventies, and I personally rebuilt the wall to its present level during 1979. (copies of letters 11/5/77 5/7/77 13/7/77 16/10/79 and 23/11/79 enclosed for ease of reference). This work was carried out under the supervision of Mr. Latham who was most helpful.

I agree with your comments regarding the East and to a lesser extent the South Wall both of which require attention.

I am retiring from full time employment this September and one of my priorities is to complete the rebuilding of the North Wall and carry out remedial work to the other two walls. I will of course notify you before this work commences.

The items referred to in paragraph 2 are all of a temporary nature and do not affect the structure of the monument. Items (11) & (111) are for aerating the water and can be removed at any time but are essential for the farm and were not objected to by the Inspectors of the D of E who made several visits between 1976-79 when the fish farm was being developed.

The concrete sluice (item 1) is temporary and constructed so that the water could pass through pipes to enable the North Wall to be built without the interference of water. This can and will be removed, as it is not tied/fixed to the monument, when all the remedial work is complete.

The covering of the water channel is to avoid further erosion of the banks in the open area West of the Well. This was considered a wise precaution by the Inspectors as slippages of the banks and stone work were occurring due to the continual erosion by the running water.

I hope these comments satisfactorily answer your letter and you have my assurance that no work which affects the monument will take place without prior notification to your office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew McDowall". The signature is written in dark ink and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

A.D.McDowall

