



EARTHWORKS AND RETAINING WALLS

When can earthworks be undertaken without approval?

Earthworks, like any other development, usually require Council approval. However, under certain circumstances earthworks could be classed as an Exempt Development (i.e. no approvals required) providing the earthworks:

- Are not higher or lower than 600mm from natural ground level;
- Are not within one metre of a property (lot) boundary;
- Do not redirect the flow of any surface water or ground water or cause sediment to be transported onto an adjoining property; and
- Comply with the provisions of the General Exempt Development Code relating to earthworks, retaining walls and structural support contained within *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008*. It is recommended that Council's Development Services staff be contacted to discuss and confirm any additional provisions that may apply to the proposed earthworks.

Figure 1 and **Figure 2** below are indicative diagrams of earthworks, either battered or retained, that may be undertaken as Exempt Development.

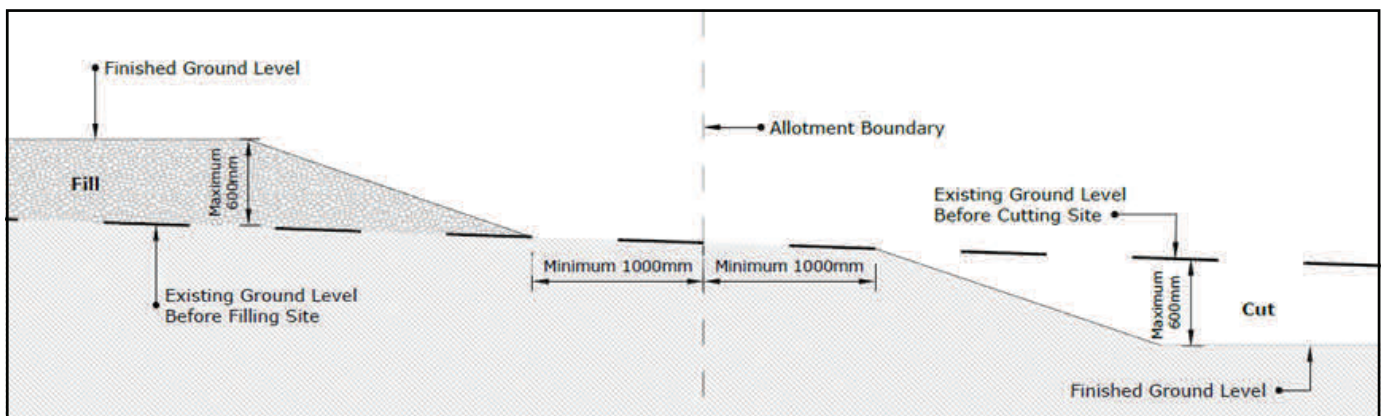


Figure 1 - Indicative diagram showing maximum height and minimum boundary setbacks for battered earthworks undertaken without Council approval.

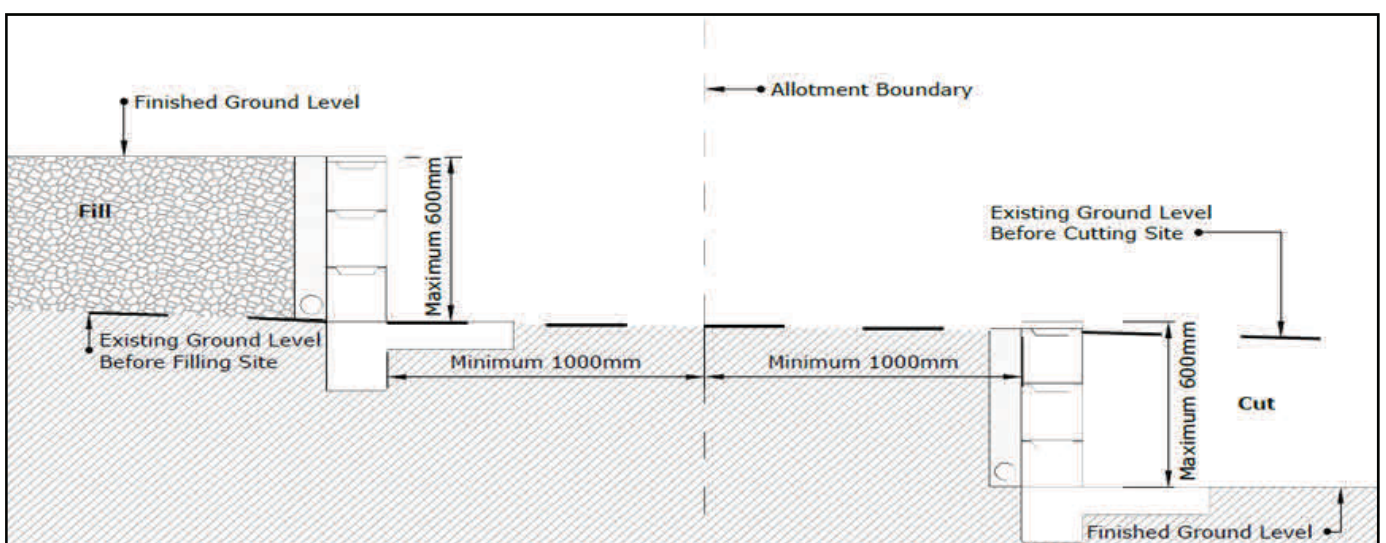


Figure 2 - Indicative diagram showing maximum height and minimum boundary setbacks for earthworks that are retained with a wall undertaken without Council approval.



Can a retaining wall be constructed on a boundary?

It is possible to construct a retaining wall on a boundary subject to obtaining Council approval.

Council recommends that retaining walls, including the associated drainage pipes and backfill are located entirely within the one allotment. Two indicative diagrams of this configuration are shown in **Figure 3**.

Where a retaining wall is located on one allotment, and the associated drainage pipes and backfill are located on another allotment, Council may require an easement to be created over the retaining wall and/or drainage. This is shown in **Figure 4**.

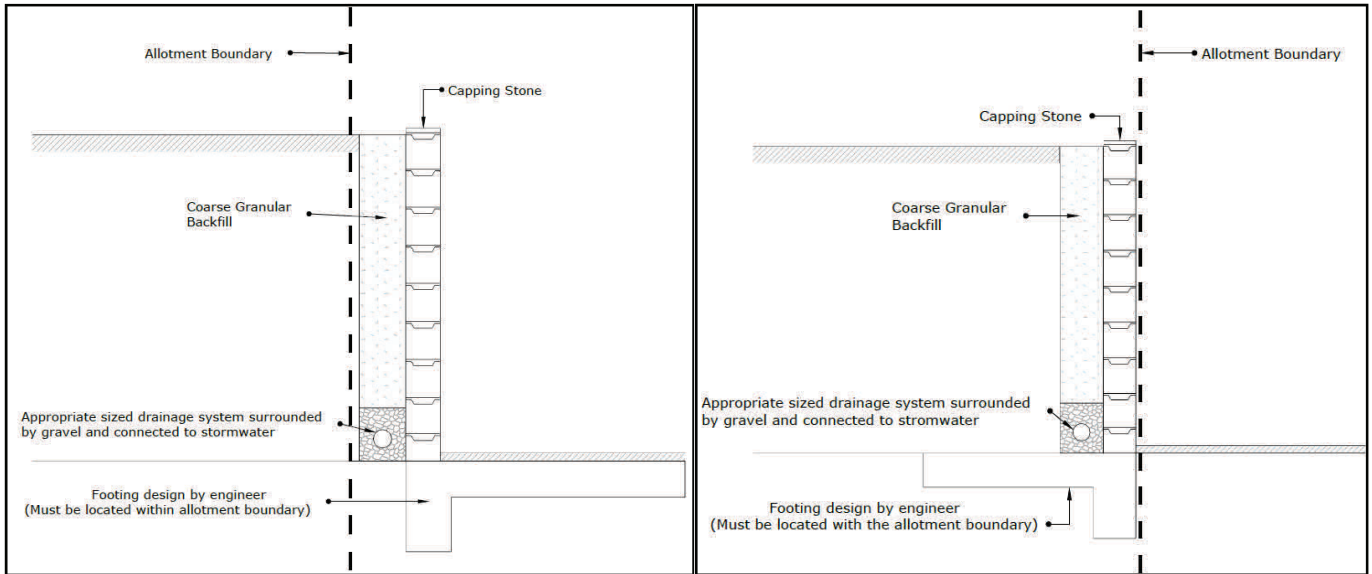


Figure 3 - Indicative diagrams showing example location of retaining wall, drainage pipes and backfill in relation to property boundary.

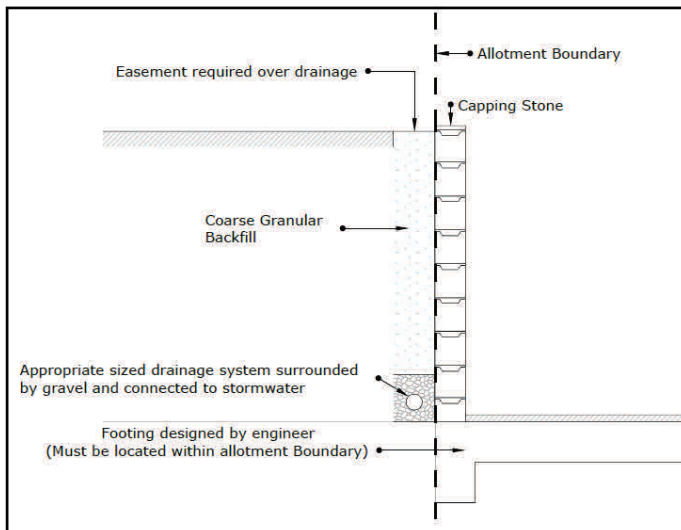


Figure 4 - Indicative diagram showing retaining wall on one allotment and an easement required for drainage on the other allotment.

Is a drain required behind a retaining wall?

When water builds up behind a retaining wall it can create pressure that can compromise the integrity of the retaining wall. To prevent this from happening, it is recommended that good drainage material be placed behind the retaining wall and a drain (e.g. 'ag' line) be placed at the back of the footing.

The drain should then be directed to discharge to the street gutter, an easement for drainage or roadside table drain.

Does a retaining wall require engineering certification?

Once a retaining wall exceeds 600mm in height, Council requires engineering certification. Some retaining wall systems can be purchased with engineering certification (in limited situations).

Further Information

For further information or assistance with a proposal to undertake earthworks and/or construct a retaining walls please contact a Council Building Surveyor on 67288200.