

Case Study 5

Enfield Island Village, North London - negligent developers fail to highlight environmental dangers



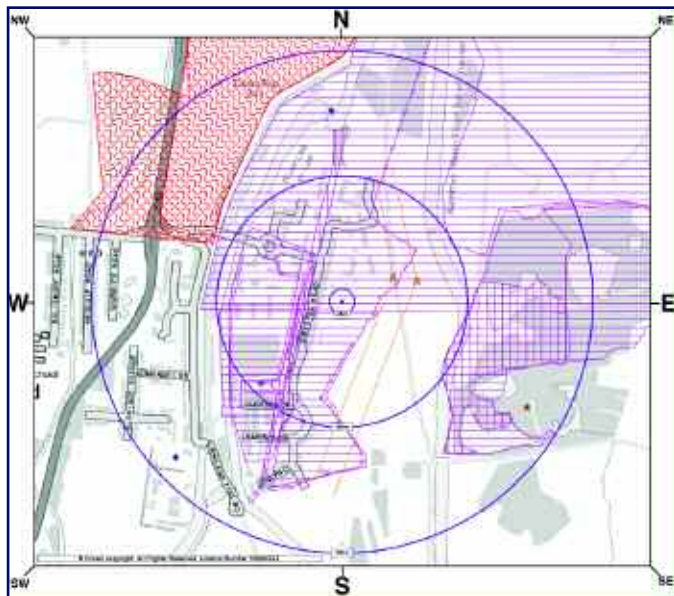
The footprint of an industrial past

Enfield Island Village lies on the site of the former Royal Small Arms Factory, which was responsible for the production of millions of bayonets, rifles and munitions between 1804 and its closure in 1987. It left a legacy of comprehensive contamination, including heavy metals, tars, oils, asbestos, cyanide and ordnance contained in various mills, manufacturing facilities, gas works and a foundry which occupied the site.

Questions over remediation techniques

Between 1997 and 2002, the site was redeveloped by Fairview Homes to include 1300 new homes, public open spaces, renovated canals and refurbished commercial buildings. However, a local action group has repeatedly warned that the remediation strategy used to protect the site was flawed and did not make the site safe. Rather than the traditional "dig and dump" remediation processes that removes contaminated topsoils, the developer capped the site with a one metre thick layer of clay and subsequently declared it safe. Campaigners questioned whether this was deep enough to stop toxins leaking through the cap, especially as there were additional concerns about radioactivity, which were subsequently denied by the Environment Agency.

The residents declared that the developers hadn't provided them with all the facts pertaining to the area's history. Each resident was meant to be given more details of the installed clay cap on which their development had been built, but it became very clear that many were ignorant of the work that had been completed.



This map is an extract from a Homecheck Environmental Report which clearly identifies Enfield Island Village within an extensive area of potentially contaminative land, as well as other adjacent landfill sites.

Children at risk

Concerns were heightened after children that were digging in their back garden managed to pierce the cap before other neighbours warned them what it was. The Environment Agency commented that they would like to see a more robust cap installed, but the issue rumbles on, leaving many in the lurch.

The case demonstrates that many developments, especially those built before the Environmental Protection Act delivered more stringent requirements from 2000, will have variable or poorer remediation standards.

A clear risk assessment

Environmental reports from Homecheck Information Group clearly identified the presence of ammunitions manufacture, when it occurred, and the extent of in-filled land in close proximity. As a consequence, Homecheck's panel of environmental consultants and Chartered Environmental Surveyors are unable to declare the site free from potential contamination under part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act. This is provided in a clear risk assessment, which, when obtained before completion, provides reliance for any legal professional as part of their due diligence in the search process.

Don't let your client fall into the same trap as the residents of Enfield Island Village and protect the reputation of your advice and practice.

Residential reports from Homecheck are available within 48 hours of receipt of order from just £32 plus VAT.

Reports are available from a nationwide network of resellers or direct from www.homecheck.co.uk. For more information about the range of environmental and planning data reports from Homecheck Professional Group, visit www.homecheckpro.co.uk or call 0870 606 1700 today.