

# case studies

## Case Study 1



### Potential Fuel oil contamination could affect house prices in Treelands, North Holmwood, Surrey

#### Lessons of history

Fearful residents of houses on land potentially contaminated with fuel oil in North Holmwood, Surrey are concerned about the impact of past industrial land use on their property prices.

The extent of contamination has varied from one house to another but clearly demonstrates the importance of knowing what activities were carried out before the development was constructed back in 1985.

Mole Valley Environmental Health Department has reassured residents not to worry while further tests are carried out through the rest of 2005, as part of their requirements to inspect potentially contaminated sites under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

In the meantime, residents attempting to sell their houses before the results become known next Spring are facing a difficult time while the uncertainty continues.

A Landmark environmental report clearly shows that the land had been subject to a long and varied history of industrial land use, including clay brick and tile manufacture from 1897 to 1934, quarrying of sand and clay and an

associated factory until 1963.

The report also identifies the presence of three oil tanks up to at least 1974, which supports local knowledge that the brickworks had been converted to hold fuel oil. It is not clear whether the tanks were fit for purpose and that this, combined with excavation of the ground over time, had caused seepage of the fuel oil.

One Treelands resident said she felt like she had been living under a cloud for more than a year and worried that her children had grown up playing on the possibly contaminated land.



#### Ensuring due diligence

The story underlines the need for you and your client to get the clearest picture of past land use and possible contamination. Even in cases where the outcome is not yet known, this will have a significant impact on your client's view on whether to proceed and must be flagged up as part of your due diligence.

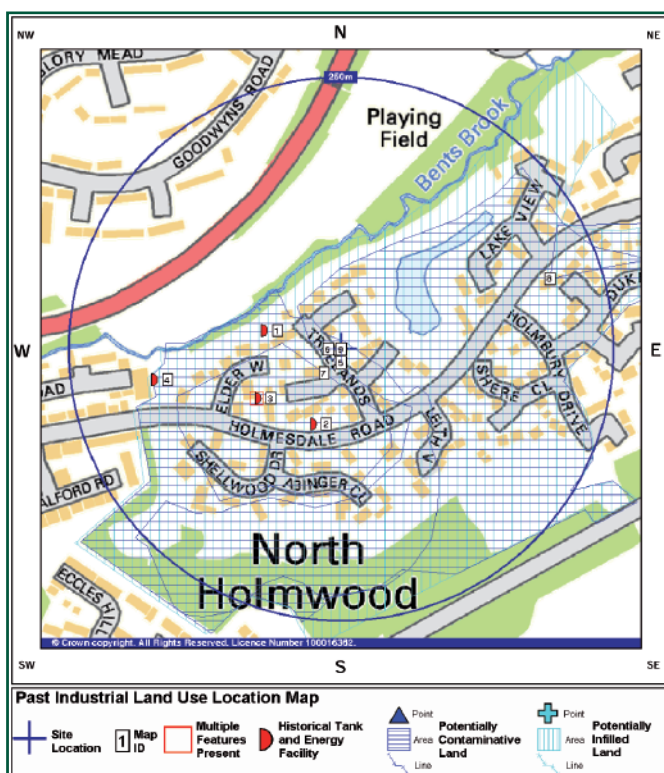
Standard local authority searches may not pick up these issues, especially for developments that were completed years ago. More comprehensive Environmental Protection legislation was introduced in 2000, which now requires councils to inspect potentially contaminated land, on which they must report and make available, but this process has only really just begun nationwide.

#### Get the clearest picture

Landmark environmental reports include comprehensive historic land use information, including what sort of industry was active over the last 150 years. Every Landmark environmental residential report comes with a professional risk assessment which, in this case, highlighted that the site cannot be declared as free from contamination, requiring further investigation and caution for your client before proceeding.

Ensure that you order a Landmark environmental report to get the clearest picture on possible risks and protection against Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 before you complete for your client.

**For more information about Landmark Environmental reports call 0870 606 1700 or email [info@landmark.co.uk](mailto:info@landmark.co.uk)**



< The map on the left is an extract from a Landmark Environmental Report clearly showing the presence of potentially contaminative land and four oil tank facilities in the vicinity.