

3. Contaminated Land

Contaminated sites where asbestos goods were manufactured and waste was dumped endure as reminders of the UK's asbestos past. An interesting publication by the Department of Environment asserts that: "the main manufacturing period for asbestos products in the United Kingdom was prior to the earliest effective waste legislation in the 1970s (the Control of Pollution Act 1974). Disposal of wastes, handling of materials and housekeeping on site before this time would generally have been haphazard and uncontrolled." A map pinpointing thirty sites at which asbestos products were manufactured in the 1970s is included in this eighteen page booklet: Asbestos Manufacturing Works (1995). Many of these sites belonged to the Turner and Newall group, Cape Asbestos and British Belting and Asbestos.

A review of local newspapers shows that the level of public concern over the development of potential sites is high. Plans by Rackwood Mining for a major open cast pit in Hindley Green are being objected to by residents who are members of the Scowcroft Action Group Committee. They allege that: "Turners (Brothers Asbestos) buried asbestos waste on it (the site) and we want the Environment Agency to carry out a technical study on site before there's any talk of mining which could release this type of deadly dust into the atmosphere." One hundred and thirty miles north, a former Cape Asbestos employee told a coroner's inquest that forty tons of asbestos had been buried twelve feet beneath a former Cape Asbestos works. Prior to his testimony, the company which currently occupies this site had been unaware of the magnitude of the problem. In the Barking area of London, another former Cape facility is causing anxiety to council tenants who have discovered that some of the houses on the Hart Lane estate are situated on land formerly occupied by a Cape factory. Previously, Barking and Dagenham Council had earmarked £700,000 for renovations on this estate; it now seems likely that the bulk of this money will be spent on soil decontamination. Over the last three years, a Devon firm has been building up a database which

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