

Our Ref: DH/DC/S1029/A  
Date: 6th March 1996  
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**Clayton**  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSULTANTS

307

Mr. and Mrs. R.J. Fox  
337 Wokingham Road  
Farley  
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Berkshire RG6 2EB

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Oslands Lane  
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SO31 7EG  
Tel 01489 571 711  
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Dear Sirs,

**Contamination : 337 Wokingham Road, Reading**

Clayton Environmental Consultants Limited was requested by Mr. R.J. Fox of the above address to be present during the cleansing and inspection of drainage pipe running from property owned by Shell UK Limited (formerly an oil depot) and discharging into a mains drainage contained within the rear garden of Mr. Fox. This report details the on-site observations and sample analysis undertaken.

Mr. D. Hair of Clayton Environmental Consultants Limited attended the premises of Mr. Fox, 337 Wokingham Road to observe a drainage inspection and cleansing operation on the 15th December 1996.

A drain (225mm diameter glazed) from the oil interceptor installed within the former Shell UK Depot discharges into the rainwater drainage which runs through the rear of Mr. Fox's rear garden. The 225mm diameter glazed pipe was observed to be discharging oily material, the pipe was subsequently plugged and arrangements made to jet the drain and pump the arisings away for disposal.

The drain was then the subject of a CCTV inspection, access to CCTV pictures was made available and subsequently the CCTV video and associated report of the pipe run in question.

Samples of the drain sump and arisings of the washing process were obtained, given a unique reference number and submitted for analysis (pH, electrical conductivity, and total petroleum hydrocarbons) at the Clayton laboratories. Results of analysis are given in Appendix 1.

**Comments**

Clayton were informed that the site is bounded by a gravel drainage trench connected to the interceptor drain, any hydrocarbons entrapped by the gravel drain will migrate to the interceptor and the lowest part of the site i.e. land adjacent to Mr. Fox, however should the gravel be in direct contact with the drain pipe connected to the rainwater drain, then discharge to this system is also possible, along with migration onto adjacent properties.

The video of the CCTV survey indicated the pipe to be fractured/open jointed at two locations, immediately after the interceptor and prior to entry into the main rainwater drain allowing any hydrocarbon contained within the drain egress into the surrounding ground.

Water running through the main rainwater drain appeared free of hydrocarbons.

The vegetation to the rear of 337 Wokingham Road appears to have suffered stress in that little grass appears to be present nearest the common boundary of 337 Wokingham Road and the Shell Depot, similarly the hedge row also appears stressed, showing poor signs of growth whereas the same hedge further toward the house grows with greater vigour.

*'VAPOURS ALONG WITH CONTAMINATION'*

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Mr. and Mrs. R.J. Fox  
Reading

### Conclusions

The vegetation at the rear of the garden, the area bordering the drainage run appears under stress.

The drainage (225mm diameter glazed) pipe is fractured/open jointed allowing uncontrolled discharge of oil containing waters.

The arrangement of the drainage of the former oil depot gives rise to the potential for all contaminated water to accumulate in the corner of the site, immediately adjacent to that of 337 Wokingham Road. Furthermore, should the drainage (gravel trench) intercept, a sand/gravel lense or a drainage pipe run then contamination has a direct pathway beyond the former oil depot.

### Recommendations

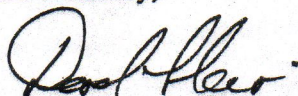
Repair fractured drainware.

Ensure drain interceptor/gravel trench does not provide a migration pathway for oil contaminated water to egress site.

Investigate area of stressed vegetation at rear of 337 Wokingham Road.

We trust the above meets with your requirements, however if you have any queries or require any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,



Derek Hair

Regional Office Manager

For: CLAYTON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS LTD.

# Shell U.K. Limited

Legal Division



206

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**Telephone** 0171 257 3883

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our ref UKLG/11/7594F

your ref RFO92

11 April 1996

**BY POST AND BY FAX: 01734 507259**

Dear Mr & Mrs Fox

**RE: 337 WOKINGHAM ROAD READING**

Thank you for your letter of 4 April.

I was not in the office last week, otherwise I would have replied to you then.

Dr Lethbridge would be available to visit on 16 or 26 April. He would if necessary be able to determine at that visit what would be required by way of sampling of the soil. If these dates are not appropriate would you come back to me with some suggestive alternatives.

In the event that they are could you please come back to me by fax to confirm a date and time.

I would not propose to go into the detail of Clayton's comments at this stage as it is clearly important to have the visit take place as soon as possible. I would say that tests were undertaken previously by ourselves and Thames Water which did not indicate the discharge was of an unacceptable quality.

The gravel drainage system was installed on the Company's site following our site clearance works and is a standard method of site drainage and the system passes drainage water through the Company's interceptor before it is discharged into the public sewer.

It would be our intention to repair the joints referred to in our drainage report by the appropriate method. Dr Lethbridge's visit and his appraisal of the site to an extent determines how we would practically deal with that.

I look forward to your fax.

As on previous occasions I have to indicate that the Company does not consider itself responsible for the problems that you have experienced with your garden and this letter and the proposal set out above including Dr Lethbridge's visit are without prejudice to that contention.

Yours sincerely

  
M H Files  
Solicitor

337 Wokingham Road  
Earley  
READING  
Berks

Shell UK  
Legal Division  
Shell Mex House  
LONDON  
WC2R 0DX

4th April 1996

**For the attention of Mr M M Files**  
**Your ref; UKLG/11/7594F**

Dear Mr Files

**Re; Contamination 337 Wokingham Road , Reading**

Please find enclosed as requested, the invoice from Clayton Environmental Consultants. We assume that your company will settle this invoice directly.

We are rather keen to have Dr Lethbridge visit our garden, which has been unusable for some time now and we are eager for its reinstatement now that the summer is approaching. To have to live with the garden in its present condition is causing stress to my family and myself. Surely a caring company like Shell should make all attempts to rectify this problem? Claytons' report clearly states where and how the contamination has seeped onto our land. We consider your request to have Dr Lethbridge visit to be another delaying tactic to avoid admitting the real truth.

We are also concerned that no action has been taken for the oil in the drain pipe from your interceptor, which was discharging into the rainwater system, which discharge into the River Loddon. We of course will be taking this matter up with John Redwood, our MP, for a satisfactory answer from Thames Water.

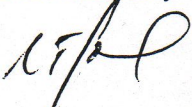
Surely Mr Files, is it not time for your company to do something positive to sort out what is clearly your companys' failure to ensure that the contamination was dealt with from the start?. Shell have made a great deal of money from this site and now choose to play around making constant denials and letter writing. This cannot be doing your companys' reputation any good or is it your company policy to deny all and hope everything will go away?

We would once again confirm that we merely want to regain our land for the purpose it was purchased for, free of contamination and safe for our children to play on. We consider we have been patient to date, but patience is now running very thin.

Continued...

Please confirm that you will rectify the damaged drain run and the french drain, which is clearly at fault. ( Or is Dr Lethbridge the person to deny this on behalf of your company?). We look forward to your further correspondence in due course.

Yours sincerely



Mr & Mrs R J Fox

Ref: RF092