

Company fined after gable wall collapses

A building company has been fined £40,000 after the unsupported gable wall of a house collapsed on to a neighbouring property leaving a resident with a fractured sternum and collarbone.

The wall fell during a home refurbishment project in which the existing property had been reduced to a shell with its roof, internal walls, and structural support members for both gable ends removed.

Temporary supports to prevent the collapse of both gable ends were not in place and the correct sequencing of works and co-ordination with the scaffolding contractor failed to take place, resulting in the collapse.

An investigation by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) found that the incident at a house in Grange Road, Bushey, Hertfordshire, on 5 April 2021, could have been prevented by effective planning of the dismantling sequence of works.

Barote Construction Ltd of Clydesdale Avenue, Stanmore pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 19 (1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. The company was fined £40,000, ordered to pay costs of £686 and a victim surcharge of £190 at St Albans Magistrates Court on 6 July 2022.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Rauf Ahmed, said: "This serious incident could have been avoided if the company had implemented a safe system of structural support for the gable end walls to prevent collapse."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. www.hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at: <http://press.hse.gov.uk>