

Contractor prosecuted due to partial collapse of building



A building contractor was prosecuted after carrying out unsafe excavation works, which resulted in the partial collapse of a residential building.

Manchester Crown Court heard how on 14 August 2019, Iproject Cheshire Limited had been carrying out refurbishment works on a building in Old Lansdowne Road, Didsbury, Manchester. Employees of the company undermined the foundations while digging out the ground around the building causing a partial collapse. There were no injuries or fatalities, but the collapse presented a risk to life.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company failed to properly plan or carry out the work safely. A risk assessment into the excavations had not been carried out. There was no safe system of work in place and the work had not been sufficiently supervised.

Iproject Cheshire Limited of Park Lane, Poynton, Stockport pleaded guilty to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £31,500 and ordered to pay costs of £13,500.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector David Argument said: "This was a very serious incident, and it is fortunate that nobody was injured as a result of it.

"This incident could have been prevented if the company had carried out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment prior to commencing work on the excavations and by properly supervising the work."

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. More information about working safely during excavations can be found at

https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safety_topics/excavations.htm

4. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>