

Cornish construction company fined after dangerous demolition

Bodmin builder Thomas Sturgess, has been sentenced after concerns over an unsafe demolition site were raised.

Bodmin Magistrates' Court heard that during December 2017, concerns were raised by members of the public about potentially dangerous demolition taking place in Webber Street, Falmouth. HSE received a number of photographs from concerned members of the public showing extremely poor and unsafe working practices. Workers were observed standing on top of the building to demolish it with no control over working at height safely. The pictures suggested workers were at risk from falling through or from the buildings undergoing demolition and members of the public were very close to the site which was inadequately fenced off. An unannounced visit was made by the HSE whereby all further demolition work was prohibited.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that safety measures fell significantly below the expected standard. The buildings were being demolished in an unsafe manner with little or no planning with regard to their structural stability. There were no welfare facilities on site, no risk assessments and no demolition plans or asbestos survey available. Overall there were a number of health and safety concerns and there was apparent lack of skills, knowledge and experience on behalf of the defendant due to his lack of site management experience, knowledge of relevant health and safety legislation and safe working practices and completely ineffective skills, knowledge and experience to undertake such a project.

Thomas Sturgess of Lanviet, Bodmin pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 20(1) of Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015, he has been given a 180 hour Community Order and ordered to pay costs of £9428.84

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Georgina Symons said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in the safe system of working.

"Those working within the construction industry should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

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>

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