

Manchester Hostel owners sentenced over asbestos failings

Two family run companies have been fined after admitting health and safety failings at a site in Manchester, where they were carrying out a basement conversion.

Manchester Crown Court heard how Hatters Taverns Limited had appointed sister company Hatters Hostel Limited as the main contractor for the basement conversion beneath a hostel at 50 Newton Street, Manchester.

The project involved the full strip out and refurbishment of the basement, a former restaurant unit, into a bar venue.

An unannounced visit by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was conducted to inspect the ongoing refurbishment works. During the visit it was discovered there had been no asbestos survey carried out before tradesmen started stripping out the majority of the space.

Hatters Taverns Limited of 50 Newton Street Manchester pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(3) of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and was fined £10,000.

Hatters Hostel Limited of 56-60 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 5(a) of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and was fined £24,000 and ordered to pay the combined costs for both defendants of £10,232.50.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Matt Greenly said after the case: "Both Hatters Hostel and Hatters Taverns have failed in their duty to protect their workers, subcontractors and visitors to his site from harm. Asbestos related diseases are currently untreatable and claim the lives of an estimated 4000 people per year in the UK.

"The requirement to have a suitable asbestos survey is clear and well known throughout the construction industry. Only by knowing if asbestos is present in any building before works commence can a contractor ensure that people working on their site are not exposed to these deadly fibres.

"The cost of an asbestos survey is not great but the potential legacy facing anyone who worked on this site is immeasurable. Exposure to asbestos fibres can potentially cause life shortening diseases in the long term and Hatters Hostel Limited and Hatters Taverns Limited should have taken more care to protect workers from a totally preventable exposure. This case sends a clear message to any company that it does not pay to ignore well known risks on site."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator

for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. 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>

4. More information about asbestos can be found at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/index.htm>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.