

Exmouth building companies fined after disregarding health and safety regulations

Coast & Country Construction Limited and Paul Humphries Architects Ltd have both been sentenced today after serious breaches of their health and safety duties.

Exeter Magistrates' Court heard that, in early 2016, a concern was raised about the lack of health and safety controls at a large timber frame extension being built onto Manor Lodge Residential Home in Exmouth. On 1 March 2016, inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visited the site and found numerous health and safety breaches.

During the site inspection, uncontrolled high-risk activities were witnessed that put workers at risk of death, serious injuries or ill health. The risks included falls from height, fire, slips and trips and poorly controlled wood dust. The inspection found there was a total disregard for health and safety and site management. In particular, the risk of fire spread associated with the construction of a timber frame extension adjoining an existing building. 80 physically and/or mentally impaired residents of the home were put at risk of injury or death due to the possibility of fire spreading into the home.

The subsequent investigation by the HSE found that the work was not properly planned, nor appropriately supervised or carried out in a safe manner. Coast & Country Construction Limited (formerly known as Make a Loft a Home) as the principal contractor, had a duty to control how the work was carried out and to ensure that the work would be completed safely. The timber frame extension work was designed by Paul Humphries Architects Ltd who failed to perform their duties as the principal designer and failed to consider the risk of fire spread to the vulnerable residents.

Coast & Country Construction Limited of Concord Road, Exmouth did not attend court but were found guilty in their absence to breaching Section 2 (1) and 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and have been fined £150,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,039.

Paul Humphries Architects Ltd of Salterton Road, Exmouth pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11 (1) and 11 (3) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regs 2015, and have been fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,039.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Nicole Buchanan 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."

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take enforcement

action against those that fail to control workplace risks appropriately.”

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>