

# Property development company and director prosecuted after unsafe demolition work

A building development company and its director have been sentenced after unsafe demolition work took place at a former pub in Bexley.

Westminster Magistrates' Court heard that on 22 June 2016, the former Ye Olde Leather Bottle pub was completely demolished without appropriate action taken to ensure members of the public were not in danger of harm.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found no safe system of work existed at the time of the incident. There had been no asbestos survey done before the demolition work began, which meant any asbestos-containing materials present would, during the demolition, have caused asbestos fibres to be released and widely spread. The company had not arranged for gas and electricity supplies to be properly disconnected by the appropriate bodies, leading to a potential risk of explosion or of electrocution of people on site.

There were no measures, such as hoarding or fencing, of the site to prevent access to the dangerous activity, or to prevent the ejection of materials from site. The building was on a busy road and pedestrians passing by, including primary school aged children going to and from a school 200 metres away, and traffic were all at risk.

Balmonza Ltd of Woolwich Road, London pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and has been fined £20,000 with £1000 costs.

Mr Kulvinder Singh, also of Woolwich Road, London pleaded guilty to Section 37(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was sentenced to £5000. He was ordered to pay costs of £1000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE principal inspector Sue Parkyn said: "The work done in a haphazard way and ultimately unsafe manner. This was a very serious incident and it is fortunate nobody was injured as a result. It could so easily have been avoided by ensuring that someone competent was supervising the carrying out the demolition in a planned manner, in accordance with the law, relevant published guidance and British Standards.

"Companies 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.

2. Further information is available about [the legislation referred to](#) in this case.
3. [Latest HSE press releases](#).

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