

Two major companies sentenced over death of man killed by window falling from luxury penthouse

- Mick Ferris, a coach driver on his break, was killed by a falling window pane from the 26th floor of the luxury Corniche development in London
- The Companies failed to effectively act after a near-miss one year earlier, when a window fell from the same penthouses and just missed workers.
- HSE investigation found the companies failed to properly consider the risk if the bespoke windows were left open.

Two companies have been fined a combined £1.3 million after a window unit fell from the 26th floor of a luxury development in London, killing a coach driver on his break as he walked below.

Two of the companies involved in the design of the bespoke windows in the Corniche development on the capital's Albert Embankment – with one weighing 130kg falling 300 feet to the ground below, killing the 53-year-old father and grandfather instantly.

The incident happened at around 10.30am on 2 October 2018 – Mick had been on a break and was just returning to his coach, which was parked up nearby.



Mick Ferris was killed by the falling window

Mick's wife Rachel described his death as being 'so sudden' and 'out of the blue'

"It has made it so much worse to get used to," she said.

"Mick was just minding his own business. One minute there, one minute gone."

"The thought this could have happened to anybody is always with me. It could have been a child.

"The fact this could have been prevented, I just can't explain. If somebody had done something differently – anything – it would have changed our lives.

"I know it wasn't just one person, but one person could have changed this. One person could have asked 'can't we do this better?'.

"What those companies did killed my husband.

"This has changed our lives. It has changed my whole outlook on everything. My life has changed forever.

"We were due to fly to the Maldives the Saturday after Mick died to celebrate our anniversary. We had half-packed suitcases in our house. It was a bucket list place for Mick and he never got to go there. We never got to go there.

"He was also a great dad and grandad – when his kids needed him, he was there.

"He loved driving coaches, having followed in his own Dad's footsteps as a professional driver.

"Four hundred people attended his funeral – there was even a coach with his name on it. He is missed by so many it is unbelievable."

St James Group Limited, part of the Berkeley Group, had been the developer of the Corniche, a three tower luxury development near Vauxhall Bridge, as well as the Principal Contractor and Principal Designer. Lindner Prater Limited was a specialist company engaged by St James to design the penthouse windows.



HSE photo taken at scene – showing window pane on ground

A series of failures

At an early stage of the design process, the windows had been changed from opening inwards to opening outwards, meaning if they detached, they would fall onto a pedestrian area. However, they were never effectively risk assessed.

The safety of the windows relied on the performance of a single restrictor, held in by a single screw, and none of the fittings had been confirmed by their manufacturers to be suitable for the bespoke curved penthouse windows.



Close up of window frame and bracket taken by police in Oct 2018

In August 2017, more than a year before the fatal incident, a window left open in windy conditions fell from the same penthouses during construction, nearly hitting two workers. St James Limited led an internal review into the 2017 near miss, but records obtained by the HSE showed key noted areas of concern were not followed up effectively.

It was only after the second incident in 2018 and Mr Ferris' death, that the windows were redesigned to open inward and the public walking below the penthouses were no longer at risk if a window was left open.

Sentence handed down

After a five week trial, both St James Limited, of Berkeley House, 19 Portsmouth Road, Cobham and Lindner Prater Limited of 45 London Road, Reigate, were found guilty found guilty to contravening Section 3(1) of The Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974.

At sentencing on 24 September 2026 at the Inner London Crown Court, St James was fined £1million and ordered to pay costs of £125,000 and Lindner Prater Limited was fined £300,000 and ordered to pay costs of £125,000.



Another taken by HSE showing height of penthouse

HSE lead inspector Andrew Verrall-Withers said:

“Two companies – widely seen as leaders in their fields failed to respond to an obvious risk, and tragically this cost the life of a man simply going about his day.

“Both times a window fell, the wind speeds were not unusually high.”

“Even after a window had fallen in 2017, luckily just missing workers below, sufficient attention was not given to assessing the risk of the windows detaching and falling if left open in windy conditions. Too much reliance was placed on adding a small sign to the windows, in effect hoping the residents would not forget to close windows.”

“The construction industry should pay attention to this tragic case. Principal designers need to pay careful attention to clarifying exactly what services architects, designers, and consultants will provide, and then effectively monitor their performance to ensure related risks are identified and coordinate necessary improvements.

“The investigation assessed the involvement of multiple companies, thousands of documents, and highly complex technical evidence. This was followed by the wait for a Trial.

“We are grateful for Mr Ferris’ family’s understanding throughout and hope this outcome brings them some closure.”

The HSE’s investigation was carried out by HM Inspector Andrew Verrall-Withers and HM Principal Inspector James Goldfinch, and the prosecution brought by Counsel Gordon Menzies and Doug Scott, HSE Senior Enforcement Lawyer James Towey, and paralegal officer Gabrielle O’Sullivan.

Further information:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences in England and Wales can be found [here](#),