

## 116 LICHFIELD STREET

Hearing: Monday 23 January 2012; 10am

### Summary

The building that was situated at 116 Lichfield Street was an unreinforced masonry building on the southwest corner of Lichfield and Manchester Streets. It was adjacent to unreinforced masonry buildings on either side. It was classified as a heritage building.

A Council Seismic Risk Buildings survey in December 1991 gave the building a rating of 15 and classification A which meant that immediate remedial action was recommended under the then S301A Municipal Corporations Act. There is no record of such remedial work having been carried out.

Following the September 2010 earthquake there was a Level 1 Rapid Assessment on 7 September 2010 with the result that the building was green placarded.

On 20 September 2010 the building was inspected by R D Sullivan/Structex, structural engineer on behalf of the owner, who found that parapets around an internal central area of the roof had been damaged. Repair work was recommended.

On 7 December 2010 Sean Gardiner from Structex completed an earthquake damage assessment and concluded that the building had suffered moderate damage. He was of the view that the parapets to the fire-escape remained a fall hazard to the area below but that there was no apparent structural hazards to the remaining areas of building.

In relation to the building strength he concluded that it was possible that the building was earthquake prone (ie. it had a strength less than 33% current code) and that if requested a detailed engineer strength assessment could be completed.

A Level 1 Rapid Assessment on 27 December 2010, following the Boxing Day aftershock, noted minor damage (rear parapet wall damage to 110) and the building was green placarded. However, a USAR report of the same date noted severe damage to the parapet at 114 Lichfield St and that a cordon was required on the street.

On 29 December 2010 the Council wrote to the owner enclosing a Building Act notice which noted structural defects including damage to parapets. The owner was given until 31 January 2011 to complete make-safe work.

Further inspections by Structex noted additional damage from the Boxing Day aftershock and make-safe works were directed by Structex.

This work was completed by Glen McConnell, then with Fortis, on 2 February 2011 and the Council provided with sign-off certification by Structex on that date.

The next day, 3 February 2011, the contractor, Glen McConnell noticed on inspecting 116 Lichfield St that the parapet and corbel on the Manchester St frontage was dislodged and that the south east corner on Manchester St was fractured from floor to ceiling. He also noted that the parapet over the south wall was cracked, broken and dislodged and would fall on the building next door from 2 storeys above. He indicated that there should be a cordon on Manchester St.

The next day, 4 February 2011, Structex prepared an engineer's instruction in relation to the additional damage advised by the contractor and indicated on that instruction that the high level bricks and stone blocks were a potential fall hazard to areas directly adjacent and should be secured as soon as possible (or the fall areas cordoned off).

Structex forwarded the same to the insurers for approval of the works required and also sent a copy to the Council.

Despite numerous follow-ups with the insurer, authorisation was not received prior to 22 February 2011.

In the 22 February 2011 earthquake the building suffered complete collapse of the Manchester St façade onto the footpath and road.

Kelsey Moore was carrying her 5 week old daughter, Teneysa Pratley, and was walking with her partner, Glenn Pratley, near the intersection of Lichfield and Manchester Streets outside Rueben Blades Hair Academy (116 Lichfield St) and the Honey Pot Café (114 Lichfield St).

She was last seen by Glenn Pratley on the footpath. When the earthquake struck and the building at 116 Lichfield Street collapsed Ms Moore and their daughter were

trapped under rubble. Their bodies were located by USAR on 26 February 2011 beneath collapsed building rubble.

Owen McKenna was in his vehicle which was stationary, the middle one of three vehicles, at the traffic lights in the northbound lane of Manchester at the intersection of Lichfield Street.

A large amount of building debris fell from the building at 116 Lichfield Street onto the 3 cars, trapping the occupants.

Rescuers moved rubble and found Mr McKenna, in the driver's seat of his vehicle, deceased.

Lisa Willems was in her motor vehicle, stationary, the third of the three vehicles referred to above.

Following the earthquake she was rescued from her vehicle and carried across the road but did not respond to first aid and died at the scene.

#### **Proposed Witnesses**

1. Eelco Wiersma, owner
2. Glen McConnell, contractor
3. Sean Gardiner, Structex, structural engineer
4. Paul Campbell, Opus, structural engineer
5. Peter Smith, Spencer Holmes Ltd, structural engineer
6. Christchurch City Council
7. Jason Lavington (written statement)

#### **Likely Issues:**

1. Application of the Council's earthquake prone policy to the building.
2. The assessment of the building following the September earthquake and Boxing Day aftershock.
3. Assessment of the building and the cordons required following the Boxing Day aftershock and the make-safe works in early February 2011.
4. Cordon on Manchester frontage.