

UNDER

THE COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ACT 1908

IN THE MATTER OF

**ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO
BUILDING FAILURE CAUSED BY CANTERBURY
EARTHQUAKES
KOMIHANA A TE KARAUNA HEI TIROTIRO I
NGA WHARE I HORO I NGA RUWHENUA O
WAITAHA**

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF KENDYLL MITCHELL
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

DATE OF HEARING: COMMENCING 25 JUNE 2012

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF KENDYLL MITCHELL
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

1. My full name is Kendyll Joy Mitchell. I live in Timaru.
2. I was on the top level, Level 6, of the CTV building (**the building**) with my children when the earthquake hit on 22 February 2011. I have been asked to give evidence about what happened.
3. I am a full time mother. Before the February earthquake I lived in Spreydon with my partner, Hayden Lamont, and 2 children- my son, Jett, who was then aged 3, and my daughter Dita, then aged 10 months. We had lived in Christchurch for 5 ½ years.
4. Jett was having counselling to address trauma he had suffered as a result of the 4 September 2010 earthquake and aftershocks. He had not been coping, he was petrified of his bedroom and would not sleep in his own bed.

Before 22 February 2011

5. I used to go into the CTV Building regularly about 2 years before February 2011 and I cannot recall having any concerns about the building then.
6. 22 February 2011 was my second visit to the building since the September earthquake. Jett's first counselling session had been two weeks earlier. During that session the counsellor, Betty Inglewood, told Jett that if he felt the room vibrating it was just the digger on the empty section next door.
7. During that visit I felt the building rock as the digger worked, but I wasn't too worried about it. There was also vibration at one point and Betty said it would have been a truck going past. Hayden was with us at the time and he didn't like it. After we had left the appointment Hayden said the building should not be rocking like that just because a digger was moving next door.

22 February 2011

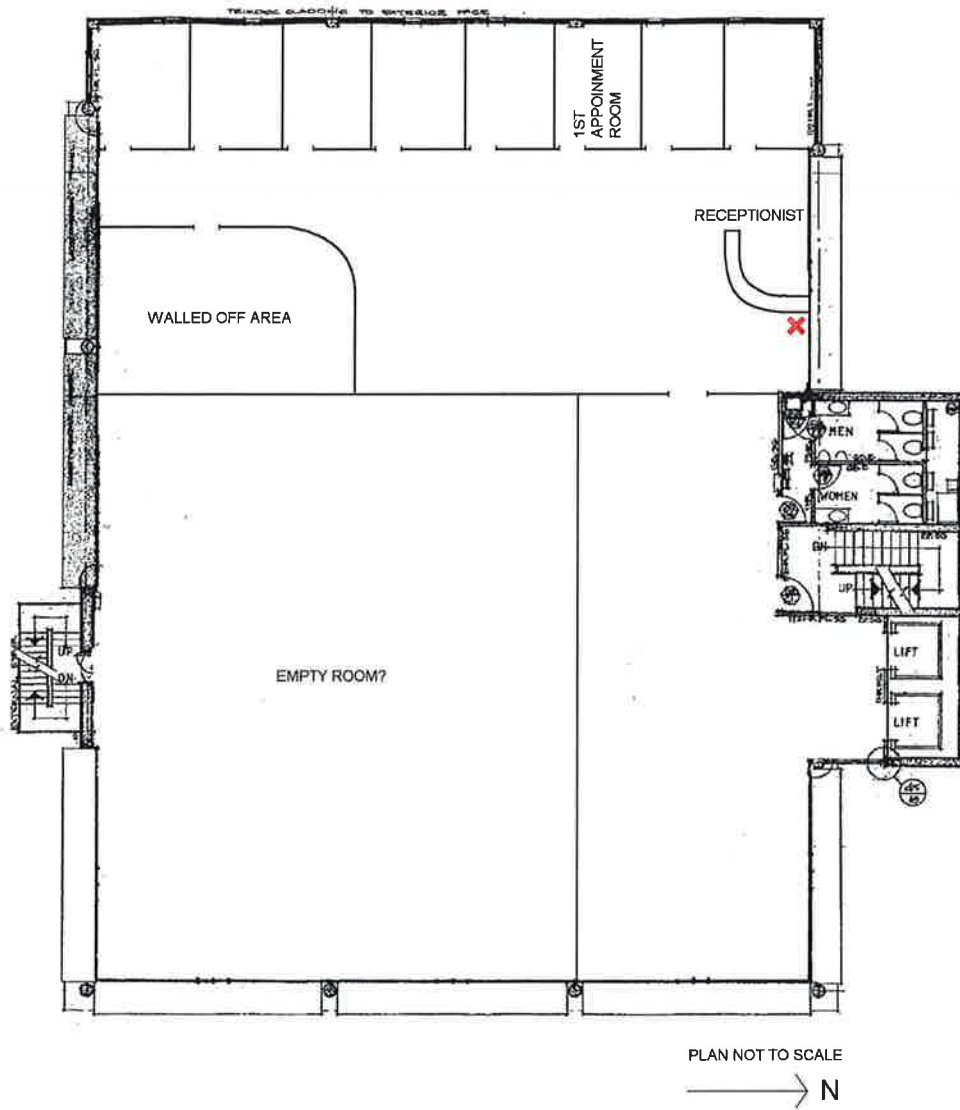
8. On 22 February 2011 at about 12.45 pm I arrived in the waiting room of Relationship Services, on the fifth floor of the Building (Level 6). I had the children with me and was early for a 1.00pm appointment for Jett.
 9. Just before the earthquake, I was sitting in the waiting room. I sat facing south with my back to the northern wall. I have drawn a Floor Plan of my location in the waiting area on Level 6. Annexed hereto and marked with the letter "A" is a copy of this Floor Plan. Where I am sitting is marked with an "x". The Floor Plan also shows the counselling rooms were along the west wall to my right. The reception desk was on my immediate right. An internal wall was about 4 metres in front of me. I think this internal wall was curved. Jett was to my right and Dita was in front of me strapped in her stroller. There was another girl waiting in the waiting room also and there were 2 receptionists. The counsellors were in a meeting room about 10 to 15 metres away from us.
 10. When the earthquake started I grabbed Jett and tucked him under my arm because I knew he would be petrified. I grabbed the front of Dita's stroller. I quickly realised this was a big earthquake.
 11. After about 10 seconds of shaking the Building started to collapse. It was very, very fast. What remains most vivid in my mind is seeing the internal wall that was in front of me crumble and disintegrate, separating from the ceiling as it did so. I could see light through a gap between the ceiling of Level 6 and the curved internal wall I was facing. That was when I realised the building was going down.
 12. I remember feeling like I was being sucked downwards because the floor was going down, fast. It was like the building stayed in place and we were sucked down in a vacuum. The ceiling came down also, but the ceiling didn't cave in on me. It was definitely the first earthquake (not an aftershock) that caused the building to collapse.
 13. I was knocked out on the way down but don't remember hitting anything. My ankle was pinned by a piece of concrete so I couldn't move. Jett can remember all of the fall and says he landed on his bottom. Jett tells me I was asleep in the building and that he had to look after Dita while I was asleep.
-

14. I think I was unconscious for about 10 minutes, working on the time of a photo that was taken of me as I was being rescued. When I came to, both children were looking at me. We were trapped in a sort of cubbyhole, about 1 metre by 1 metre. A steel beam was over our heads and it caused everything to A-frame around us. There was concrete, glass, pink batts, window frames and beams around us. I had trouble moving the rubble from me and the children. I managed to wriggle and pull my foot to free it. Dita had landed at my feet in her stroller. She was embedded in the rubble right up to her back. I removed the concrete and glass from the stroller and got Dita out. I put the children on my knee. I also tried to move the stuff over the top of us but it was just too heavy.
15. I had to stay in a crouch position because there was not enough room to stand. I was in so much pain. My leg was cut and bleeding and my blood was over me and the children. I could see the sky through the rubble and the stairwell. I could also see thick black smoke starting to rise from the rubble. I thought, "Oh my God, we have survived and now this".
16. I could hear muffled cries for help. The girl who was next to us in the waiting room was to the east of us about 3 metres across and 1 metre down. I could see her through a gap in the rubble. She was severely pinned and could only move one forearm. She was trapped facedown. I asked her if she could reach her cell-phone as I was unable to get mine but she couldn't. We were completely helpless. I heard people calling out for help.
17. I heard footsteps on the corrugated iron above me. I called out for help and a man lifted the corrugated iron sheets away and was then able to lift out the children and then me. The man who rescued us is called Evan. He was on his lunch break from working on the Church on Madras Street. I handed Dita out first. Jett got quite upset because he thought he was not going to get out. Evan put Dita under his arm and pulled Jett out by the hood of his jacket. He then carried the children to a line of people. I was then carried to the line of people who passed me down the chain. Everyone got quite upset when they pulled the children out.
18. Photographs were taken of us being rescued. Some of these photographs are annexed hereto and marked with the letter "B".

19. I am eternally grateful to the people who assisted in my and the childrens rescue. A
"Thank you" does not seem enough.

Signed: 
Kendyll Mitchell

Date: 25/6/12



249 MADRAS ST - LEVEL 6

"B"



