

**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**

**AND IN THE MATTER OF**

**THE CTV BUILDING COLLAPSE**

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MICHAEL TREVOR WILLIAMS  
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

**DATE OF HEARING: COMMENCING 25 JUNE 2012**

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**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL TREVOR WILLIAMS  
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

**Personal Background**

1. My name is Michael Trevor Williams. I reside in Christchurch. I am currently employed as a Manager for Immigration New Zealand.
2. I was employed by Inland Revenue Department (IRD) at the time of the 22 February earthquake. I was a team leader and my role involved managing a child support debt team. The IRD offices took up 7 floors of the building at 224 Cashel Street. The main entrance to IRD was in line with the southern wall of the CTV building. I was standing on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the IRD building facing the CTV Building (the Building) when I saw it collapse on 22 February.

**After 4 September 2010**

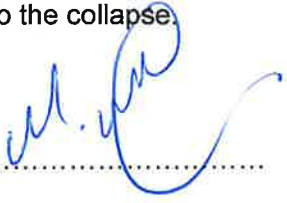
3. I did not see any construction work on the CTV Building. I did see some paint work that was being carried out on the 5th floor but that was all.
4. I noticed that they were bringing down the building next to the CTV building. I assumed this was because it had been damaged in the 4 September earthquake. There was a lot of heavy drilling and a lot of work being done. There were wrecking balls, things smashing into the building, things cutting into the building.
5. We soon realised the tremors we could feel in the IRD Building were just the construction work going on across the road. I can only imagine what it must have felt like in the CTV building and other surrounding buildings. It felt like the ground was shaking with the work that was going on.
6. I am not sure what was planned for the land. I had heard rumours they were going to turn it into a car park. I guessed that this was why they were making it so flat.

**22 February**

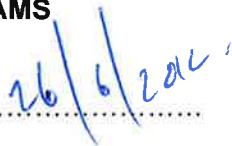
7. I have prepared a plan of the corner of Madras and Cashel Streets (the plan). This is attached and marked "A". The IRD Building and CTV car park have not been drawn

8. I was sitting at my desk on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor (Level 5) of the IRD building when the earthquake hit. My desk was against a window above the entrance to the IRD building on Cashel Street. I have marked my position as “1” on the attached plan. I had been in the IRD building plenty of times during aftershocks and had never felt the need to get under my desk. This time it was different and I got under my desk immediately. It wasn't just a shake; it got more and more violent. It just kept on increasing in intensity and I was being bounced out of my desk and back in again. It was very violent.
9. I am not sure how long it went on for but suddenly it stopped.
10. I stood up and started to call my team together. It was at this point that I heard a rumbling sound which made me look outside. This was when I saw the CTV building collapse. I had an unobstructed view of the building from my position and was able to see the south wall of the building, top to bottom, side to side.
11. The earthquake had stopped shaking when I saw the building came down. It didn't come down immediately; it was after the earthquake had stopped.
12. It looked like it was sinking into a hole. It was intact as it fell. Looking back there were a few moments when it felt like our building was going upwards.
13. It was exactly like seeing the collapse of the World Trade Centre buildings. The top floated down and was engulfed by dust.
14. A minute or so later, once the dust had settled, I could see the building was gone. The lift well was the only thing I could see that remained standing.
15. The next thing I knew I was out of the IRD building and at the CTV site. I am not sure of the details and think I may have lost some moments of time. I had an expectation that the building would be all over the show so I was very surprised to see that it had fallen in a complete square. I didn't think that it was normal for a building to fall like that. It looked like it had come straight down. I could see cars parked up against the front of the building that were relatively undamaged.

- 16. I helped a number of people out of the building who had been on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor (Level 6). Some had no idea the building had collapsed and were surprised when they realised what had happened.
- 17. The next thing I remember is being on the western side of the building fighting a fire. There was a pile of debris between us and where it looked like the fire was coming from. Everything was very compact and it appeared to be coming up from underneath the rubble. I have marked this as “2” on the plan. It appeared too dangerous to attempt to climb over it so we got as close as we could and emptied the contents of the extinguishers into that area.
- 18. The aftershocks were actually scarier than the initial earthquake. There were a lot of them just as we were climbing up onto the rubble. Each aftershock made me fall over, in-between the rubble. I was fearful for the police and a colleague who had climbed a lot higher than I had. The lift well was still standing and if it were to fall these brave people would certainly not be able to get away in time.
- 19. After the first hour or so I stopped noticing the aftershocks. I was too busy to notice them. There was just so much to do.
- 20. I sent five photographs to the Royal Commission; these are attached and marked “B” (BUI.MAD249.0133B). The photographs marked “1 – 4” were taken by me on my phone. Photograph “5” was taken by The Press and shows me at the scene. Each photograph notes what it shows and the approximate time it was taken in relation to the collapse.

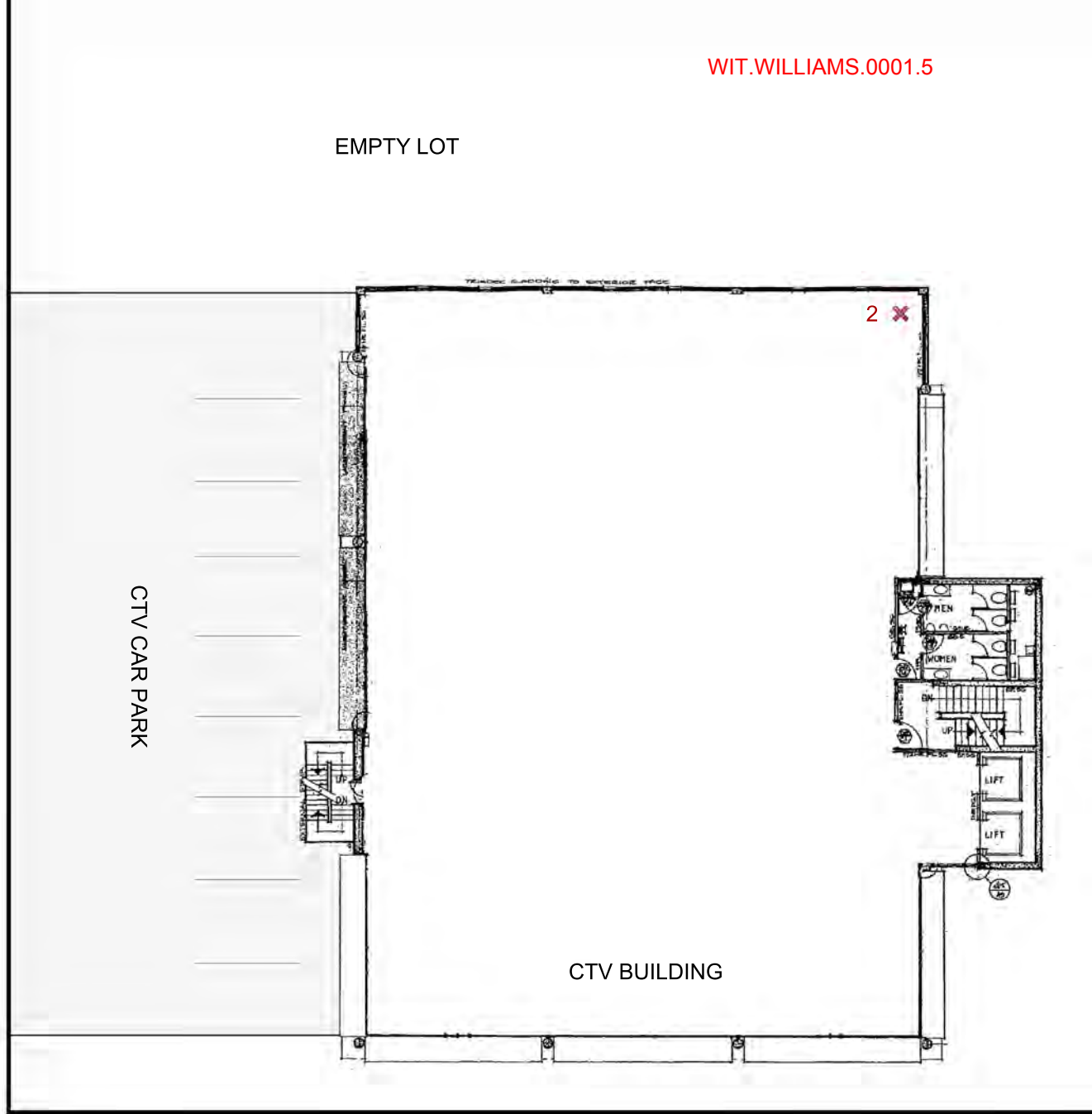
Signed: 

**MIKE WILLIAMS**

Date: 

"A"

WIT.WILLIAMS.0001.5



KEY

- 1. Location of Michael Williams
- 2. Fire

PLAN NOT TO SCALE



MADRAS STREET



1. Unpacking their gear after USAR arrived.  
Taken within 90 minutes of the collapse.



2. The building has landed directly in front of the cars parked in the CTV car park.  
Taken within 90 minutes of the collapse.



3. The rescue.

Taken about 3-4 hours after the collapse about 4 or 5 o'clock





4. The liftwell.

Taken within 60 minutes of the collapse.



5. I am wearing a blue shirt standing behind a police officer.

This would have been taken within 30 minutes of the collapse.