

**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**

---

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF STEPHEN MALCOLM GILL  
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

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

---

**STATEMENT OF STEPHEN MALCOLM GILL  
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

1. My name is Stephen Malcolm Gill and I live in Christchurch. I am currently employed with Les Mills World of Fitness (Les Mills) as a Maintenance Manager.
2. My role involves management of the maintenance of the complex, including damage repairs and services. I have worked for Les Mills since 2002.
3. Les Mills is situated at 203 Cashel Street in Christchurch Central. I was standing on the roof of the Les Mills building facing the CTV Building (the Building) when I saw it collapse on 22 February.
4. I have prepared a plan showing the Les Mills building in relation to the CTV building (the plan) at the time of the February earthquake. This is attached and marked "A". The Les Mills building, IRD building, demolition sites and CTV car park have not been drawn to scale and their placement is approximate only. The issues that I refer to in my evidence are marked on this plan.

**Demolition**

5. Les Mills was originally in a building right next door to the CTV Building. The space where this building once stood is marked on the plan. Staff in the CTV Building used to complain because they could hear the music at Les Mills. Sometimes the frequencies of our microphones would interfere with the microphones at CTV; that's how close they were. There was probably a gap of about 6 inches between the east wall of the Les Mills building and the west wall of the CTV Building.
6. The Les Mills building was old and needed renovation and was demolished to create space for a car park. The demolition was not connected to the 4 September earthquake. The demolition was completed in about October or November 2010.
7. Also demolished was an administration block on the corner of Woolsack Lane and Cashel Street which had sustained damage in the Boxing Day earthquake.

They finished the demolition of this building on the Friday before the 22 February earthquake.

8. We used to watch the demolition from the roof top of the present day Les Mills building. The walls of the demolished buildings were all very thick. They were made out of brick and were approximately 2.5 feet wide. The machines they used included a wrecking ball and giant claws. They had to nibble pieces at a time. There were a lot of big machines.

#### **Les Mills after 4 September 2010**

9. I can't remember when the present day Les Mills building was built but it was definitely open by the 4 September 2010 earthquake. I do a lot of work on the roof of the building, which is four storeys high, checking the machinery and making sure the air filters are clean and things like that. I really enjoy going up there. I have 360 degree views of the whole city.
10. It was open space between Les Mills and the CTV Building. I couldn't see the roof of the CTV Building, but I did have a view of the whole western side. I was approximately in line with its fifth level. When I was on the roof there was nothing at all to restrict my view.

#### **22 February 2011**

11. Earlier in the week engineers had come to do some maintenance on the air conditioning units, which are on the roof. I went up afterwards to check the work had been completed and noticed some rubbish on the roof. Keeping the roof clean is important because the rubbish can get sucked into the air conditioning units causing damage. I went up on 22 February 2011 to pick this up.
12. I noticed men working on a really big cherry picker that was right up against the wall of the CTV Building. They were working on the south-western corner.
13. I was standing on the roof and in between the air conditioning units when the earthquake hit. I have marked my approximate position as "1" on the plan.

14. I was bounced between the units and thrown up and down and sideways. I saw one of the air con units get lifted and ripped off the roof. The air conditioning unit could be anything between 3.5 – 4 tonnes. It is very heavy and is the size of a medium-sized car.
15. There were a number of aftershocks and I can't be sure whether it was during the initial one or a subsequent earthquake but I turned around as I was steadying myself on the corners at the end of the units and it was then that I saw the CTV Building collapse.
16. It looked to me like the southwest corner lifted before it gave way. It was as if someone had kicked the corner really viciously and the whole corner just caved in. When the corner went there was nothing to support the floors. The first floor folded in and milliseconds later the second floor followed it before all the floors came down.
17. The fire escape along the southern wall remained standing for about five seconds longer. I asked myself how it could physically be possible for it to stand there on its own. It looked like it was dragged down by the falling floors and it eventually toppled over too. It crumpled down and there was just one big cloud of dust. It was very bizarre.
18. This all happened within about 30 seconds. It happened very quickly. It was very surreal and I didn't believe what I was seeing.
19. I could see all of the floors were still attached at an angle to the North Core. There was something holding up the north end of the floors but I'm not sure what it was. Even the top floor wasn't lying flat.
20. I knew I had to get off the roof. The building was still rolling and I had to walk across it to get back to the hatch to get back down. It was very difficult to walk with the building moving under my feet. I think these were aftershocks. I then made my way quickly through the building and helped usher people out. I wanted to be the last person out to make sure the building was clear.

21. I made my way to the CTV Building down Cashel Street. There was liquefaction everywhere. When I arrived at the Building I was surprised to see it was just a mountain of rubble.
22. I noticed there was a small amount of smoke coming up in the northwest corner of the Building. I have marked this position as "2" on the plan. I thought it may have been paper that had caught on fire. This would have been about 5 minutes after the earthquake.
23. I could see more clearly the floors attached to the North Core and think they were on about a 30 degree angle. There was nothing attached to the lift shaft above about the third floor. They had just ripped away. You could see the lift shaft, the lift doors, everything. I could see the top of the tower, before the smoke got worse.
24. I was amazed to see that there were cars parked in the CTV car park without a scratch on them. The cars would have been only about 1.5 metres in front of the south wall of the Building. Some people say the floors came down on top of each other but in my mind this could not have happened. If it had then the rubble would have been everywhere. The Building looked like it came straight down. People were able to crawl underneath slabs and get between concrete and rubble to get people out.
25. The fire started to get hold. I drove a cherry picker with two fire men on the end to see if they could get closer to the fire on the north-eastern end. It smelt and looked like burning carpet or tires.

Signed  .....

**STEPHEN MALCOLM GILL**

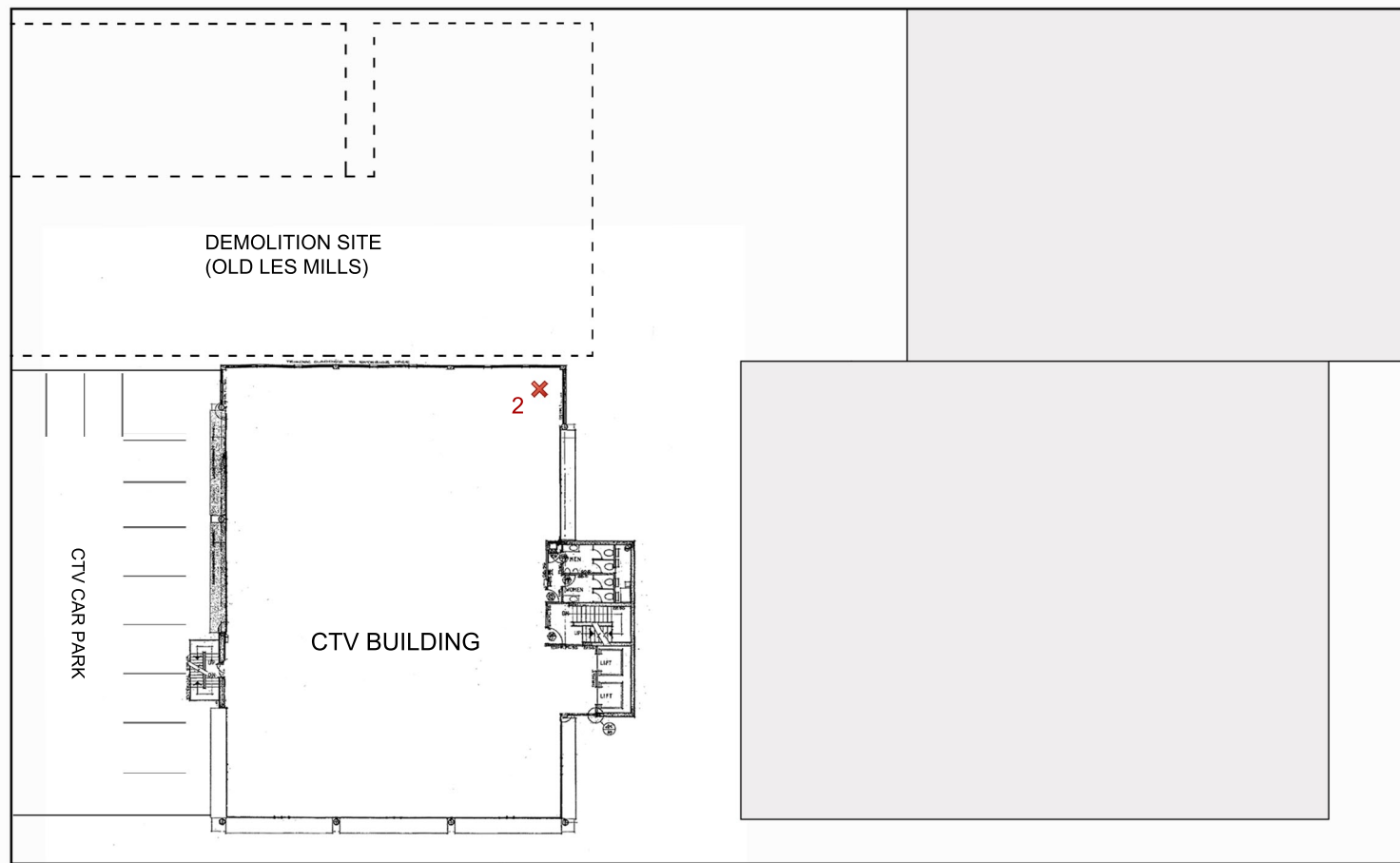
Date:  .....

"A"





CASHEL STREET

WOOLSACK LANE



KEY

- 1. Location of Stephen Gill
- 2. Smoke
-  Air conditioning units
-  Stair hatch from stairwell

MADRAS STREET

PLAN NOT TO SCALE  
→ N