194 Gloucester Street

Hearing: Wednesday 15 February 2012 at 9.30am

Summary

The three storey unreinforced masonry building that was situated at 194 Gloucester Street (known as Wave House) had heritage and historic places classification.

The building housed a pizzeria, Winnie Bagoes.

The building was constructed in 1906 as the Trades & Labour Hall, two floors to the front and a single storey hall to the rear. In 1916 a second floor was added to the hall at the rear. Third floor offices were added to the front section in 1924.

A reinforced concrete lift shaft was added to the front side of the internal masonry wall in 1960.

In 1975/76 it appears that a structural assessment by Holmes Wood Poole & Johnstone, led to structural strengthening being undertaken to meet a seismic load level of 0.05g. Although a seismic report was prepared in 2002 by Holmes Consulting Group, it is unclear whether any structural updating was completed then.

Although structural work was completed when the fitout for Winnie Bagoes was carried out in 2003, it would appear that because it was not considered a change of use of the building no seismic upgrade was required.

After the September 2010 earthquake, the building was green stickered on 5 September 2010 after a Council Level 1 Rapid Assessment which noted that the parapet on the south side had fallen into a courtyard.

A Level 2 Rapid Assessment carried out by Beca on behalf of the owner the next day resulted in the building being yellow placarded. A Building Act notice was served on the owner by the Council as a result.

Following the Boxing Day aftershock the building was inspected by USAR on 27 December 2010. Severe parapet damage was noted and damage to the north and north west of the building. A Building Act notice was served on the owners, care of

their property management company, Devonia Realty Ltd, on 27 December 2010 requiring make-safe work to be completed by 31 January 2011.

The owner through Devonia Realty had already instructed, Beca, structural engineers, to complete a preliminary structural engineering evaluation and this was completed on 14 December 2010.

Following the Boxing Day aftershock Beca provided advice on the removal of a damaged brick wall on the upper level western elevation and developed temporary shoring to allow “The Clinic” in the adjacent building to be reoccupied.

Following correspondence with the Council, this being a heritage building, approval was given in early February to carry out the work.

On 3 February 2011 a Council engineer’s re-inspection of damaged buildings noted that this repair work was in progress and the protection fencing around the building was adequate.

On 14 February 2011 the make-safe work had been completed and Beca advised the owner (and the Council) that the building did not pose a threat to adjacent buildings or the public that was significantly greater than prior to the earthquake. But noted that the building was still potentially earthquake prone.

As a result of receiving that advice from Beca, the Council removed the barricades that had been in position in front of the building.

Eight days later in the 22 February earthquake the front and rear of the building collapsed.

Ofer Mizrahi, an Israeli tourist was inside a white Mitsubishi van parked outside the building. The van was crushed by falling rubble from the collapse of the façade of the building. Mr Mizrahi died as a result of the injuries he sustained.

Proposed Witnesses:

1. Peter Smith, Spencer Holmes Ltd, structural engineer
2. Christchurch City Council

3. Samir Govind, Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner, structural engineer
4. Raj Unka, Opus, structural engineer (written statement only)
5. David Wallace, Devonia Realty Ltd, property manager for the owner

Likely Issues:

1. Application of the Council's earthquake prone policy to the building.
2. The nature and extent of previous structural strengthening carried out on the building.
3. The stability and safety assessment of the building on 14 February 2011 by Beca and the resulting decision to remove the cordons in front of the building.
4. The adequacy of the cordons prior to their removal. .