

246 HIGH STREET, CHRISTCHURCH.**LINDA JOYCE EDWARDS states:**

I operated a business – Communicative Language Training International that was situated on the 1st floor in the Link Centre, High Street (248 High Street, 152 Hereford Street). Our offices were above Coffee Culture which was on the ground floor on the left as you came in the High Street entrance.

I had been in that office for about 3 years.

Before the September 2010 earthquake I did not experience any problems with the structure of the building. After the September earthquake to my observation there was minimal damage. The only damage people noticed were some cracks in the ceiling and wall linings. There was one crack in the floor on the 1st floor level of the Link Centre, approximately 50mm wide which a number of people expressed concern about. Following the September earthquake this crack was filled and covered over. But generally I felt safe in the building.

After the Boxing Day earthquake I noticed further damage in the form of existing cracks appearing to be bigger. I don't recall seeing new cracks.

I recall an engineer inspecting the building on behalf of the owner, Rapaki Property Group, sometime between September and December 2010.

I recall the building was green stickered after the September earthquake as I recall the sticker on the front door. I thought that this meant the building was safe.

After the Boxing Day earthquake we weren't allowed to use the alleyway that led to the car park at the rear of the Link Centre. That alleyway ran behind 246 High Street and the buildings to the south of it. We were told this by the Link Centre owner, Rapaki, We were told that this was because the owner's of those buildings had to make the buildings stable. I recall workmen working on the buildings. They appeared to be working on parapets at the back of the buildings. I noticed that some

bricks had come down after the Boxing Day earthquake. I do not recall anything like this occurring after the September earthquake.

In the February 2011 earthquake I was sitting in my office when the ceiling started to cave in. My first thought was for the students who were in a room further into the building. However they were ok although the ceiling in that area had collapsed as well.

We were eventually rescued by passers-by who got ladders and smashed a window so that we could get out. When we got out I saw two people lying on the ground outside the Link Centre. They were being attended to by passers-by. One of those people was the man that later died. At that point there was no rubble on the footpath as can be seen on the photograph I have supplied.

I later met two of the passers-by who helped. Murray Straight was one of the passers-by who got the ladders and who got me out. He told me that he had seen the Link Centre collapse. The other man (who performed CPR on the deceased man) was Louis Brown.

I have supplied another photograph which shows the wall of 246 High St which collapsed onto the Link Centre.

11 January 2012

Date

L J Edwards
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