

**UNDER**

THE COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ACT  
1908

**IN THE MATTER OF**

THE CANTERBURY EARTHQUAKES  
ROYAL COMMISSION

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**Brief of Evidence of Christopher Philip Chapman in respect of 246 High  
Street Christchurch**

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Counsel Acting: Philip R Rzepecky

Instructing Counsel:

Michael E Parker  
P O Box 1052  
**Queenstown 9348**  
Phone: (03) 44 6337  
[m@michaelparker.co.nz](mailto:m@michaelparker.co.nz)

**246 HIGH STREET, CHRISTCHURCH**

CHRISTOPHER PHILIP CHAPMAN states:

1. I am employed as a property manager for Grenadier Real Estate which trades in Christchurch as NAI Harcourts ("Harcourts"). I have previously given evidence before the Royal Commission in respect of 593 Colombo Street.
2. Harcourts managed the building at 242-246 High Street on behalf of the owners Shugborough Properties Ltd. The proprietor of that company is Mr Anthony Lee. I had been employed by Harcourts for approximately six years before the earthquake. During this time I was aware that Harcourts had entered into an agreement with the owner to provide full building management services.
3. I refer to the information sought by the Royal Commission in its letter to me of 22 September 2011. [BUI.HIG246.0006.1] I have tried to provide the information to the best of my ability and recollection. I have reviewed Harcourts' files and sought information directly from Mr Lee. I responded to the Royal commission by email dated 29 September 2011. [BUI.HIG246.0006.3]

**Structural Strengthening**

4. I understand that some strengthening work may have been carried out to the building by a previous owner. Apparently this was following a fire in the building. Mr Lee has confirmed that this involved the basement and the façade onto High Street and was carried out using concrete and steel. Harcourts does not have any documents such as plans and specifications for this work.

**Christchurch City Council Earthquake Prone Policy**

5. I am not aware of how the Christchurch City Council earthquake prone policy applied to this building. This would not normally be within the scope

of the work required of a building manager. Compliance with work directly required by the Council, or policy on timing for upgrade work would normally be the responsibility of any owner, who may in some cases receive direct communication from the Council. As far as I know the owner was never served with any notice by the Christchurch City Council, and the owner never carried out any earthquake strengthening work in the time that I was managing the building.

#### Post 4 September 2010 Structural Assessment

6. Following the September earthquake, we arranged for Holmes Consulting Group ("Holmes") to conduct an inspection of the building. Geoff Matthews of Holmes carried out a Level 2 Rapid Assessment on 10 September 2010. I refer to his site report of that date. [BUI.HIG246.0004.15]
7. Mr Matthews advised that the Council placard should change from green to yellow. This meant that there could only be limited entry.
8. Following Mr Matthews advice, I approved removal of the parapet on the southern side of the building. This was emergency work which I was authorised to approve after a discussion with Mr. Lee's insurance broker.
9. I believe that this also had the effect of changing the adjoining property at 240 High Street, from a green placard to red until the required make safe work to 246 High Street was completed.
10. Holmes supervised the make safe works on 242-246 High St, which were undertaken to its specification. Spotless Contractors carried out this work. This included work to secure the south eastern parapet wall (See photographs BUI.HIG246.0004.16 – 19). The details are set out in Spotless Contractors' invoice dated 20 October 2010, which show costs in excess of \$22,000. [ BUI.HIG246.0006.15]
11. Following those make safe works, Holmes carried out another inspection on 20 September 2010 recorded in their site report of that date [BUI.HIG246.0004.24].

12. At some stage prior to the emergency work, I recall that I was on the roof either with an engineer from Holmes and possibly representatives of Spotless Contractors. I cannot precisely recall who it was. I recall that the parapet on the north side of the building did not have chimneys like the south side. We walked around the whole of the roof looking at the sides.
13. Following the make safe works in September 2010, the building was able to be reoccupied. It still needed some internal plaster repair from damage caused by rubble from one of the chimney collapses on the south side falling through a skylight. Spotless carried out this work.

Post 26 December 2010

14. I do not believe that any independent rapid assessment inspection was undertaken by Holmes after the Boxing Day aftershock. There was more reliance on the Council's inspections at this time. The 22 February earthquake happened before we were able to have any further engineering inspections carried out by Holmes. There were limited engineering resources available over the summer holiday period.
15. I recall that Spotless Contractors who had undertaken the make safe works in September 2010 did undertake a check of their earlier works on the south eastern parapet wall, but this was not until around 31 January 2011. As far as I know this work remained in a good condition.
16. I was on annual leave for most of this time preparing for and then attending a national scout jamboree in Hamilton in my capacity as the troop leader. This was between 28 December 2010 and 7 January 2011. I was the leader of eight adults and twenty eight scouts. As a result I was not directly involved in this building immediately after the Boxing Day aftershock. My annual leave did not end until 14 January 2011, but I did return to deal with issues related to properties in Lichfield and Selwyn Streets.

17. I note that the outside of the northern parapet wall was covered in brown coloured long run iron [BUI.HIG246.0006.19]. While I cannot be certain, I believe that this wall and its brown cladding may have been undertaken at the time of construction of the Link Centre at 248 High St as a means of fire separation/protection. I am not aware of any concerns at any time expressed by Holmes or Spotless as to the condition of this wall following the 4 September 2010 earthquake.



CHRISTOPHER PHILIP CHAPMAN

14 February 2012