

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 RONALD WILLIAM GODKIN
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

DATE OF HEARING: COMMENCING 25 JUNE 2012

STATEMENT OF RONALD WILLIAM GODKIN IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING

Personal Background

1. My full name is Ronald William Godkin. I was on the 3rd floor (Level 4) of the CTV Building (**the Building**) when it collapsed. I was a tutor in healthcare at Kings Education. Kings Education is an off-shoot of Ryman Healthcare and my role as a tutor was to prepare people to work in the retirement industry.
2. I started with Kings Education part time in May 2008 and became full time on 3 May 2010. Prior to that I was employed at Richmond NZ, which is the largest mental health provider in New Zealand, involved in transitioning people from mental health facilities into the community.
3. Kings Education had the whole 3rd floor. I was the Health & Safety Officer for the floor. 71 students and 9 staff died when the Building collapsed.

Pre-September 4

4. Prior to the September earthquake I thought the Building was fine. I had none of the concerns I understand others have mentioned about the Building feeling flimsy even before 4 September. I could feel floor movement from pedestrian traffic. This was the vibration of people walking around the corridor and it was very noticeable if people ran.

Post 4 September

5. Following the September earthquake there were a number of cracks that appeared on the 3rd floor. Attached is a floor plan of the Building I have prepared (marked "A"). The positions of the rooms and internal walls have not been drawn to scale and their placement is approximate only. The cracks and other issues of concern that I refer to in my evidence are marked on this plan.

6. There was a horizontal plaster crack under a window on the western side. I have marked the approximate position of this as “1” on the plan. It was only visible as a crack in the plaster. On the eastern wall of the student common room there was a big glass wall and a very large crack had developed about the middle. I have marked the approximate position of this as “2” on the plan. It had gone from the top to the bottom. I got black tape to tape it because I didn’t want it to break in another aftershock. There was also a big crack which ran from ceiling to floor in an internal partitioning wall between the Tutor’s Room and the Audio Visual room. I have marked the approximate position of this as “3” on the plan. This had a width of about 50 millimetres. Finally, there was a “hump” in the floor which I will refer to in more detail later in my evidence. I have marked the approximate position of this as “4” on the plan. I now realise that each of these areas of damage ran together, effectively in a straight line, between the east and west walls of the building, but I did not realise this at the time.

7. I am aware of two engineering inspections of the 3rd floor. The first was soon after the 4 September earthquake and the second was in late September. On both occasions John Drew went around the floor with the engineer who was carrying out the inspection. I cannot recall the name of the engineer.

(a) *The first Inspection*

8. I was on leave at the time the first Building inspection occurred. However, after I returned Brian Taylor, who was the Managing Director of Kings Education, took me around the floor and showed me the damage that had been identified. He told me the staff and students of Kings Education had not been allowed to go back into the Building until the inspection had occurred. Brian had gone around the floor with John Drew, the Building Manager and the engineer, when the inspection had taken place. The damage that Brian drew to my attention included a crack under the window on the western wall, marked “1” in the plan, and a crack in the Tutor’s Room that ran from the top right to the top left corner, from one pillar to another, this is marked “3” on the plan. Because there was some concern being expressed by the staff that some of the cracks were increasing. Brian asked me to do regular inspections in the future and I agreed to do this.

9. I brought the issue of floor movement to the attention of the Building Manager, John Drew. I understand he asked the building engineer about it when he did his first

inspection. The engineer told him that floor movement from pedestrian traffic was common with a concrete floor constructed building, and this message was passed to me.

(b) *The second inspection*

10. I was present for the second inspection that took place in late September. It took about one half to three quarters of an hour. I walked around the floor with John Drew and the engineer and pointed out the various cracks and the hump in the floor in reception. They also checked sewerage and water and said they would do some other things as well. I cannot recall what they were. I then had a class I needed to go to and I asked John Drew and the engineer how much longer they thought they would be. The engineer said they had a few more things to look at and then he wanted to re-check what he and John Drew had gone over with me. The engineer thought they would be another three quarters of an hour to an hour. I later saw the engineer and John Drew going past the classroom, but I cannot confirm the time they left.
11. The "hump" I have referred to ran east to west across the foyer of the Building at the point marked "4" on the plan. It first appeared following the September earthquake but as we experienced more earthquakes the hump appeared to get bigger and become more and more noticeable. It was a matter of particular concern to me and to other staff. The effect of this hump was sufficient to cause a pencil to roll across the receptionist's desk, which did not happen before the September earthquake. As far as I am aware the vinyl floor coverings in the foyer were not lifted during either of the two inspections in order to examine the "hump", although I pointed it out to John Drew and the engineer on their second inspection and expressed the concern both my colleagues and I had about it. The engineer said that all concrete buildings "hump" between the supporting beams that hold the floors up when the concrete dries over the support. The engineer told me the Building was doing what it was meant to do following an earthquake and it was not a problem.

Boxing Day

12. After Boxing Day there was more damage. This was on the western wall adjacent to where the Les Mills building was being demolished. It occurred about 2 to 3 weeks

before the 22 February earthquake and during the course of the demolition. Both of these areas of damage were at ground level and could be seen from the ground floor car park. They have been marked “5” and “6” on the attached plan. The damage noted as “5” involved a concrete non supporting wall at the end of the car park area that had completely collapsed eastwards. The wall marked “6” was between two supporting pillars. It had dropped and separated from the roof above it by about 20 millimetres or so, but did not collapse. Neither of these walls were load bearing. After this occurred I checked the whole of the western wall, but I saw no other movement or cracking.

Request for further inspection post Boxing Day

13. I wanted a further inspection of the Building after Boxing Day. This was because staff were concerned that the hump in the floor had become worse after the Boxing Day earthquake and I acted on that concern by asking Brian Taylor to arrange this. Brian said he would. Brian was killed in the collapse of the Building and I do not know whether he arranged for this to be done, but Brian was the kind of person who, if he said he would do something, would do it.

Water leaks post Boxing Day

14. In about early to mid January, and then again just before the 22 February earthquake, there were serious water leaks into the 3rd floor. I spoke to John Drew about this and I was advised that it was the result of work on the 4th floor with the heat pumps. The first leak was in the course of a fit out that was being done on the western side of the 4th floor to prepare for new tenants. The second water leak was in the same place as the first one but there was more water, approximately 1 centimetre depth in some areas. This part of the hallway was cordoned off.
15. There were also problems in the male toilets that appear to have involved blocked sewer lines. I am not sure what was causing this. The location of the male toilets is marked on the plan. The male urinal also blocked and a tradesperson was called to unblock this. This was arranged by the Building Manager, John Drew.

Demolition on adjoining site

16. The demolition of the Les Mills building began about mid October. The Les Mills building was about 3-4 floors in height. The gap between it and the western wall of the CTV Building was only about 150 millimetres. The demolition was largely done with a wrecking ball. Every time the ball swung and hit the Les Mills building the CTV Building shook to such an extent that staff, myself included, frequently asked each other during our breaks whether it was an earthquake or the demolition. We would then check the Geonet Website to confirm this.
17. Areas of cracked glass developed along the southern wall, these are marked “7” on the plan. The majority of damage occurred to the windows nearer to the eastern end. Some of this was post September, but before the demolition commenced. Some of it was after the demolition commenced. The repair work for the glass was done by Cranfield Glass. Following Boxing Day I did not observe any additional glass damage.
18. My observation was that because there was another newer Les Mills building further to the west of the building being demolished, which had a glass wall facing into the demolition site, every effort was being made to focus the demolition towards the CTV Building rather than towards the new Les Mills building. Once the building was down the rubble was pushed towards the CTV Building in order to keep the access way open that ran between Cashel and Hereford Streets. This ran the length of the new Les Mills building.
19. I was concerned about the shudders that the CTV Building suffered from the demolition work and with the stability of the CTV Building. This influenced my request to Brian Taylor for a further engineering report after Boxing Day.

The February 22nd Earthquake

20. At the time of the 22 February earthquake I was standing in the lift foyer with David Horsley, who was a tutor at Toyama School, in Japan. I was standing in the position marked “8a” on the plan. David Horsley had pushed the lift button and was standing closer to the lift than I was. He is marked “8b” on the plan. I was standing behind him, probably about 2 metres from the lift doors.

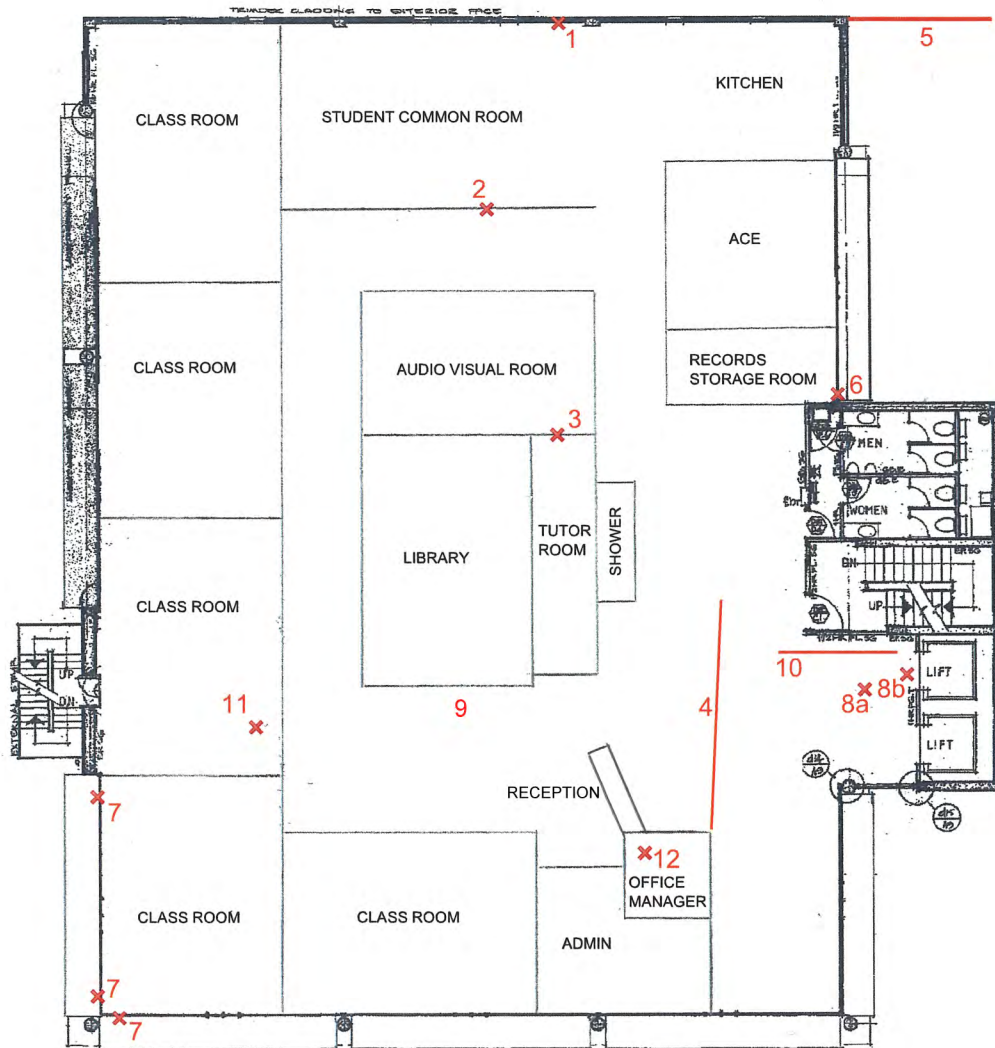
21. As I stood there I had a chocolate bar in my hand and I was about to eat it. My hand was extended in front of my body, holding the chocolate bar. Suddenly a large piece of concrete, about the size of a rugby ball, dropped from the ceiling and broke the top of the chocolate bar off and it dropped to the floor. I think that the concrete that dropped was part of the 4th floor (the roof of the 3rd floor). I thought the chocolate bar could be picked up and would still be edible so I stepped forward to recover it. At that point another slab of concrete fell behind me, exactly where I had been standing before. This second slab also appeared to be part of the floor above and about the size of an adult human body.
22. The sensation I experienced in the Building was like the vibration of a clothes dryer, or the final sequence of a dishwasher. I watched four-draw cabinets, which were filled with current and past student files, jumping about 6 inches off the ground, along with heavy fax machines doing the same thing. The original position of the cabinets has been marked "9" on the plan. I also noted a very large paper stapler flying across the corridor and shattering the large glass partition of the Tutor's Room. It felt like a wave, the floor was moving up and down. I stepped forward to balance myself against the lift wall, at which point the lift wall moved about 45° towards me, knocking me off balance.
23. A very large section of concrete crashed to the floor next to me, which I thought was a supporting beam from the floor above. This was about 4.5 to 5 metres long and was approximately the width of my body, from shoulder to shoulder. It stretched across the full width of the foyer on a north/south axis in the location marked "10" on the floor plan. I then dropped to the floor and put my back up against it in the hope that, given its size, it would give me some protection from any other falling material.
24. As I dropped to the floor I looked to the south. I recall seeing somebody with their arms outstretched above their head disappearing from view as the floor they were standing on dropped away. I have marked their position "11" on the plan. I could see the fire escape so I knew the south wall remained standing. At this time the eastern rooms were still intact but by the time the earthquake had finished all of the floors had come away. I had time to protect myself when I saw the south floor dropping before it reached me.

25. As I lay next to the supporting beam another lump of concrete slide down my arm and then another fell on my foot, also the size of an adult body. I think these were all parts of the floor above. I recall looking up towards the ceiling and seeing sky up above me.
26. I then crawled across the foyer with David Horsley, to the eastern side of the Building. I saw that the south and east sides of the Building were all gone, however there was an area of the foyer near the lift still standing.
27. I think the only other survivor from the 3rd floor to walk immediately out of the Building was our Office Manager, Margaret Aydon. She was in the Office Manager's room, which was immediately adjacent to the foyer on the eastern side. I have marked it as "12" on the plan. The other survivors from the 3rd floor were helped free by Search and Rescue.
28. Together with David Horsley I was able to crawl to the eastern side of the Building and we were able to find our way down the rubble. Two policemen then came up to about the top of what was the 2nd floor and helped us both down. Two photographs were supplied to the Royal Commission by the Police which show me being helped. These are attached and marked "B". I understand that these were taken by David Horsley after he made his way down the rubble to Madras Street. I am the man wearing the maroon shirt. I am not sure of the identity of the other pictured males.
29. I was out of the Building and in Latimer Square by the time of the second quake.
30. I think it was the second quake that caused the fire in the Building. I did not smell smoke while I was in the Building.

Signed: 

RONALD WILLIAM GODKIN

Date: 



PLAN NOT TO SCALE

249 MADRAS ST - LEVEL 4



KEY

- 1. Horizontal plaster crack
- 2. Crack in glass wall
- 3. Crack in internal partitioning wall
- 4. "Hump" in the floor
- 5. Collapsed wall (ground floor)
- 6. Gap between wall and roof (ground floor)
- 7. Cracked glass
- 8a Location of Ronald Godkin
- 8b. Location of David Horsley
- 9. Filing cabinets
- 10. Fallen concrete
- 11. Position of individual who dropped from view
- 12. Location of survivors

"B"



