

**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**

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF SIMON LEE THOMAS  
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

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

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**STATEMENT OF SIMON LEE THOMAS  
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

**Personal Background**

1. My name is Simon Lee Thomas and I reside in Christchurch. I am currently employed with Steelbro Ltd as a spare parts administrator.
2. I worked at CTV from 19 August 2009 to 5 January 2011. I was an Account Manager at CTV and spent approximately 80% of my time in the CTV Building (the building), and the other 20% visiting clients. CTV occupied Levels 1 and 2 of the building. I spent most of my time on Level 2 but also frequented Level 1 where I would meet inbound clients and sit in on the production of the show I initially sold advertising into called "Let's go Shopping, Themed". My final day at CTV was 23 December.

**After 4 September 2010**

3. After the 4 September earthquake a couple of cracks had appeared on Level 2. Attached and marked "A" is a floor plan of the building I have prepared (the plan). The positions of the rooms and internal walls have not been drawn to scale and their placement is approximate only. The issues of concern that I refer to in my evidence are marked on this plan.
4. I sat beside the window in the south-western corner of Level 2. I have marked this position as "1" on the plan. From my desk I could see two major cracks in the wall. I would describe these as major because they were very large and got bigger as the earthquakes continued.
5. One of the cracks was on the western wall in the southern corner. I have marked this as "2" on the plan. The second crack was near the middle of the room on the western wall. I have marked this as "3" on the plan. This was right above Amanda (Mandy) Uraio's desk. They ran from close to the roof to around the middle of the wall. Over time these cracks slowly got bigger and bigger. By the time I left CTV

they ran from the roof nearly to the floor. I thought the cracks looked very bad and was very concerned about them. It looked as though the wall was falling to pieces.

6. There was also damage to the windows along the eastern wall of Level 2. I have marked these as "4-6" on the plan. The worse cracks could be seen in south-eastern corner. This is the area marked as "4". There was no pillar in the corner and the glass went right around. Tape had been put on the window. I think this was to stop the cracks spreading. It looked very bad. I don't think it was ever replaced. The crack marked as "5" kept getting worse and worse and was eventually replaced. The crack marked as "6" was also taped, but I don't think it was replaced.
7. This was the only damage I saw.
8. I mentioned the damage to Sheri Ward, a member of our management team. I don't recall her being overly concerned about them. I also mentioned it to Peter Brown, who looked after the maintenance of the building, and he told me he was already aware of the damage. I thought that Sheri must have mentioned it to him after all. I pointed the cracks out to Peter and he said they were nothing to worry about because they were only in the plaster, to which I agreed.
9. I am aware that EQC Assessors carried out assessments on the cracks in late October or early November. I can't remember exactly when it was but I do remember it was just after one of the magnitude 5 earthquakes. I remember Peter saying that the owner had organised the inspection. I am not sure if this earthquake prompted the check or whether it was already arranged. They spent only about 10 minutes in my part of the office. I never heard the outcome of this assessment.
10. I was not aware of any further inspections of the building. There was certainly no further inspection of the cracks in my part of the office before the Boxing Day earthquake.

### **Movement**

11. The building had always felt very solid but after the 4 September earthquake this all changed. I would not say it felt unsafe, just different. Every time someone walked up the hallway the floor would roll quite a bit. It is hard to describe but it almost felt

like shockwaves from the footsteps. We used to joke about it and tell people to lift their feet when they walked but never thought anything more of it.

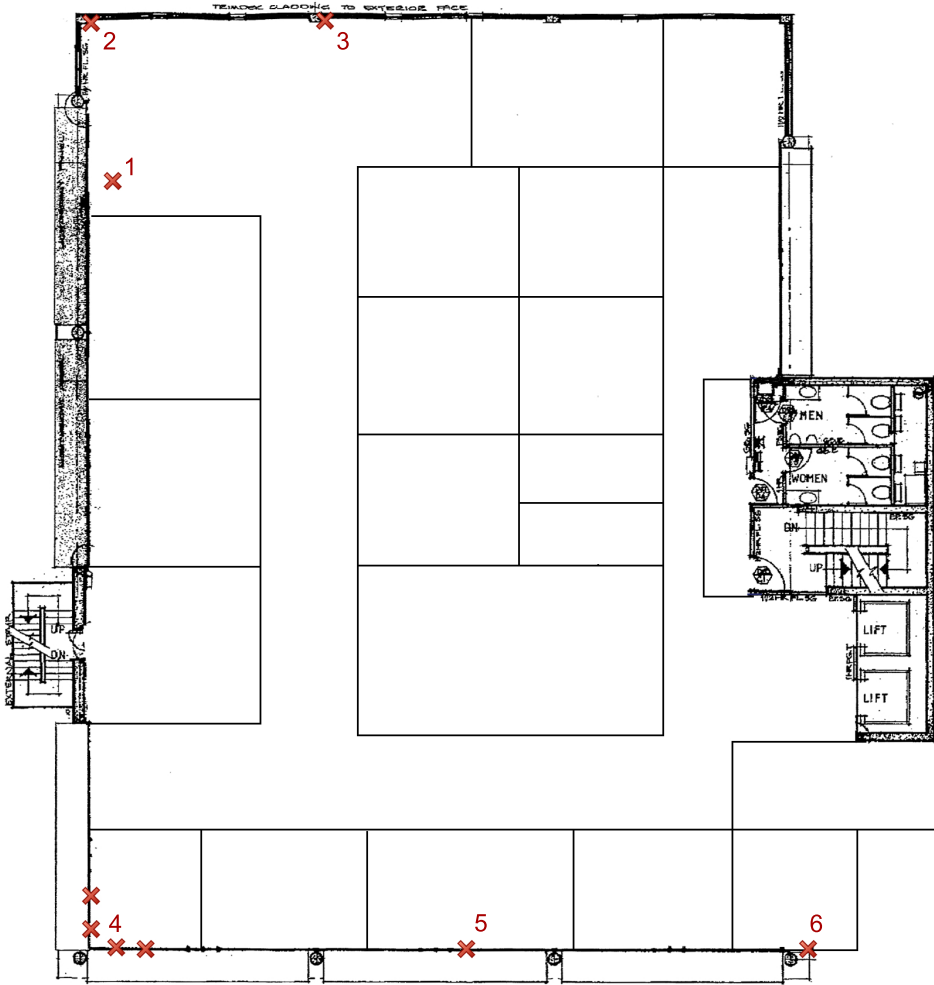
12. In about mid November they began to demolish the building next to the CTV Building. It was always boarded up and I think it was just an unused warehouse. The building was two levels.
13. I took two photographs sometime in December. These are attached and marked **"B" (BUI.MAD249.0241)**. I was prompted to take the photos because of the distance between where the CTV Building and the demolition. I was in wonderment at what was going on because we were so close. The photos help show the distance between the two buildings. The walls were about 4 inches apart. I don't think they were connected in any way.
14. I taped a video of the final wall coming down next door. Robert Cope-Williams, a presenter at CTV, can be heard saying "if it (the building) didn't have earthquake cracks, it now has demolition cracks". This was in reference to the amount of movement felt in the CTV Building as the wall crashed to the ground. I took the footage using my phone on the same day as I took the photographs. A copy of this footage was provided to the Canterbury Earthquakes Royal Commission.
15. The movement in the building was very bad during the demolition. Every time a piece of debris fell to the ground the whole building would shake. You couldn't distinguish between this and an aftershock. I felt uncomfortable being in the building. The ground felt unstable.
16. I always had a bad feeling about the ground floor car park. There appeared to be only two big beams holding it up and my instincts told me not to stay under there too long if I ever had to go through there. I would get in and out as quick as I could. When I heard the building had collapsed I immediately assumed it was a failure of the western wall in the ground floor. I can't explain why I thought this it just always seemed not quite right.
17. My last day at CTV was 23 December 2011. I did not visit the building again.

Signed: .....

**SIMON LEE THOMAS**

Date: 18/04/12.....

"A"



PLAN NOT TO SCALE



249 MADRAS ST - LEVEL 2

KEY

- 1. Location of Simon Thomas
- 2. Crack in southwest corner
- 3. Crack along western wall
- 4-6 Damage to windows

"B"

WIT.THOMAS.0001.7

BUI.MAD249.0241.1



"B"

WIT.THOMAS.0001.8

BUI.MAD249.0241.2

