

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 MARIE-CLAIRE BRIDGET BREHAUT
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

DATE OF HEARING: COMMENCING 25 JUNE 2012

**STATEMENT OF MARIE-CLAIRE BRIDGET BREHAUT
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

Personal Background

1. My name is Marie-Claire Bridget Brehaut. I reside in Christchurch and am not currently employed.
2. I joined Kings Education in March of 2010. My role involved administration duties, design work and course development. Kings Education occupied the 3rd floor (Level 4) of the CTV Building (the Building). I had left the Building and was standing on the corner of Cashel Street and Manchester Street when the earthquake hit.

After 4 September 2010

3. A number of areas of damage had appeared on the 3rd floor. Attached is a floor plan of the Building I have prepared marked "A" (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. There was a crack on the wall that separated the teachers' room from the AV room. I have marked this as "1" on the Plan. It spanned the entire length from the floor to the ceiling and was about one millimetre wide. I had always been able to hear muffled voices between the rooms, because the walls were so thin, but when the crack appeared I could actually hear what was being said in the next room.
5. There was a hairline crack running down the internal wall next to the elevators. I have marked this as "2" on the Plan. I only have a vague memory of this. The walls were a deep blue and I remember there was a whiteness to it, that may have been the plaster coming through, but I can't be sure.
6. I did not notice any cracking on the external walls.

7. I noticed some tape in a diagonal pattern on the glass wall next to the cafeteria. I have marked this as “3” on the Plan. I don’t think the glass was cracked. I think the tape was more a preventative measure against it cracking in future aftershocks.
8. There were some glass panes replaced on the southern side of the Building. I had heard that some were bulging. I can’t remember whether I found this out about before or after the 22 February earthquake.
9. I did not notice any other damage.
10. Two newsletters were sent out to staff following the 4 September earthquake. These are attached and marked “B”. Both newsletters have been signed off by Brian Taylor.
11. Brian drafted the newsletter with the date stamp 9 September 2010. I typed this up for him and emailed it to staff the same day. The newsletter included the following message:

The King's building suffered no damage, Civil Defence engineers inspected the structure and have informed us that it is safe to enter. They have also advised us to get the school underway again as quickly as possible so that things can return to normal. The school was opened today for teaching.

12. It is likely that Brian would have drafted the newsletter with the date stamp 20 October 2010. It would then have been emailed out to staff by either Beth Pettigrew or Margaret Aydon. The newsletter included the following message:

King's was very lucky to have virtually no damage to the school at all.

13. I did not notice movement from people walking around the floor. However, during aftershocks I definitely had a sense that the Building felt flexible and moved easily. I wasn’t sure if this was unique to the CTV Building because I didn’t have anything to compare it to. Brian Taylor used to tell us that swaying was good and meant that the Building was moving and rolling with the earthquake. The most memorable aftershock was one that made Sandra Hii and I both immediately get under our desks. I could hear the students screaming throughout the Building. The Building moved a lot and seemed to sway in an east to west direction. There was a bit of up and down

movement as well. When we looked at GeoNet I remember being really surprised at its size because it felt a lot bigger than what was recorded.

Demolition

14. They began to demolish the building next door sometime in October or November 2010. It was a rundown two story building. I walked past it every day. It was covered in posters and seemed to be in disuse as it was always dark through the windows.
15. The CTV Building moved a lot during the demolition of the building next door. The movement felt like a shudder usually accompanied by quite short bursts of movement. The movement coincided with dull thudding sounds. It made my colleagues Sandra Hii, Beth Pettigrew and Margaret Aydon feel unwell.
16. I was able to differentiate between aftershocks and movement from the demolition next door. Earthquake movement felt sharper and more powerful and was accompanied by swaying or rocking. The movement in the Building resulting from the demolition felt more like shudders and vibrations.
17. Work on the adjoining site continued right up until the 22 February earthquake. By the 22 February earthquake it was levelled shingle.

After Boxing Day

18. After Christmas I covered Reception for Sandra Hii who was away on holiday. I noticed that if I wasn't holding onto my pen it would roll down the desk from west to east. I have marked the position of the Reception desk as "4" on the Plan. It would start off slowly and then speed up. It hadn't done this when I had covered Reception in November. I commented to the few staff members who were working over Christmas that the floor must not be even. I also showed the pen rolling to my colleague, Ron Godkin, when he paused in reception to comment to me that he thought the floor was on a lean. I am sure I would have mentioned this again but I soon became used to it and adapted by positioning my pen horizontally so that it wouldn't roll. I am not sure if anything was done about it.

19. I remember plumbing and building work was being done at the Clinic, which was on the level above (Level 5). A tradesperson came in to inform us that they would be working above us. A lot of noise came from the floor above while they were working there. It wasn't of any concern. I couldn't feel any movement, it was just noisy.
20. In the week before 22 February there was a water leak appearing in the hallway at the northern end of the Building. I have marked it as "5" on the Plan. We were waiting for this to be fixed.
21. I was aware that they were repainting the exterior columns of the Building on all of the floors. This was in the colours of the Clinic, which had moved into the floor above us (Level 5). I could see that they had secured ropes and safety clicks on the outside columns. I saw a painter working outside my window. I think he even climbed out Margaret Aydon's office window.
22. I can't remember whether I noticed any new damage to the Building after the Boxing Day earthquake.

Inspections

23. We were told the Building had been inspected in the days after 4 September by Civil Defence engineers. This resulted in the Building getting a Green Sticker, which meant that it was safe to occupy. I understood from general news coverage, as well as information passed to us by Brian Taylor, that the Building was checked because it was situated within the inner city cordon. Details of the inspection were never fully explained but it was my understanding that this inspection was not a thorough assessment of the Building because of the number of buildings they had to get through in such a short timeframe. Reference to this inspection is made in the newsletter from Brian dated 9 September 2010 ("B").
24. There were a number of people who came to look at the Building between 4 September and 22 February. I can't be sure how many times I saw them or when. I am not sure what the purpose was for each of the visits.

25. I do remember one person was there to do a valuation of the building for insurance or leasing purposes. This was around the time the Clinic moved in. I think it was likely that this was after the Boxing Day earthquake.
26. There was a lot of activity and it's difficult to remember what happened when.

22 February 2011

27. I had been working at Kings Education in the morning and was going to work the afternoon at Kings Education's sister company, Castle Recruitments. I was rostered to work this split shift for the next two weeks and had worked occasionally for them in the past. Castle Recruitments was at Shades Arcade in Cashel Mall. As I was leaving the CTV Building I looked at the clock on my computer and saw it was 12.48pm. I know this was the time because I was a casual and had to record my start and end times.
28. On my way down Cashel Street I saw that there was a scissor lift up beside the Building. It looked like they were stapling building paper to battens on the wall. I thought they might have been preparing to build a new structure. I hadn't seen it there before.
29. I was on the corner of Cashel Street and Manchester Street when the earthquake struck. The earthquake felt very powerful. There was a lot of movement in all directions. It was difficult to keep balanced and I staggered to walk into the middle of the intersection away from the buildings. I could see facades of buildings collapse looking south down Manchester Street. The noise of the earth rumbling was very loud. It felt like it lasted for at least thirty seconds. I could not see the CTV building from the intersection.
30. I stayed there for a couple of minutes deciding what to do and then made my way back up Cashel Street to go back past the CTV Building. I chose to walk in that direction because it seemed like the safest direction to walk out of the city. I wanted to check on my colleagues and get some comfort from seeing people I knew too. I felt quite frightened and was in shock.
31. There was a lot of dust everywhere. I remember looking at the water pouring out of the roads and footpaths. I was amazed and thought it must have been water coming from

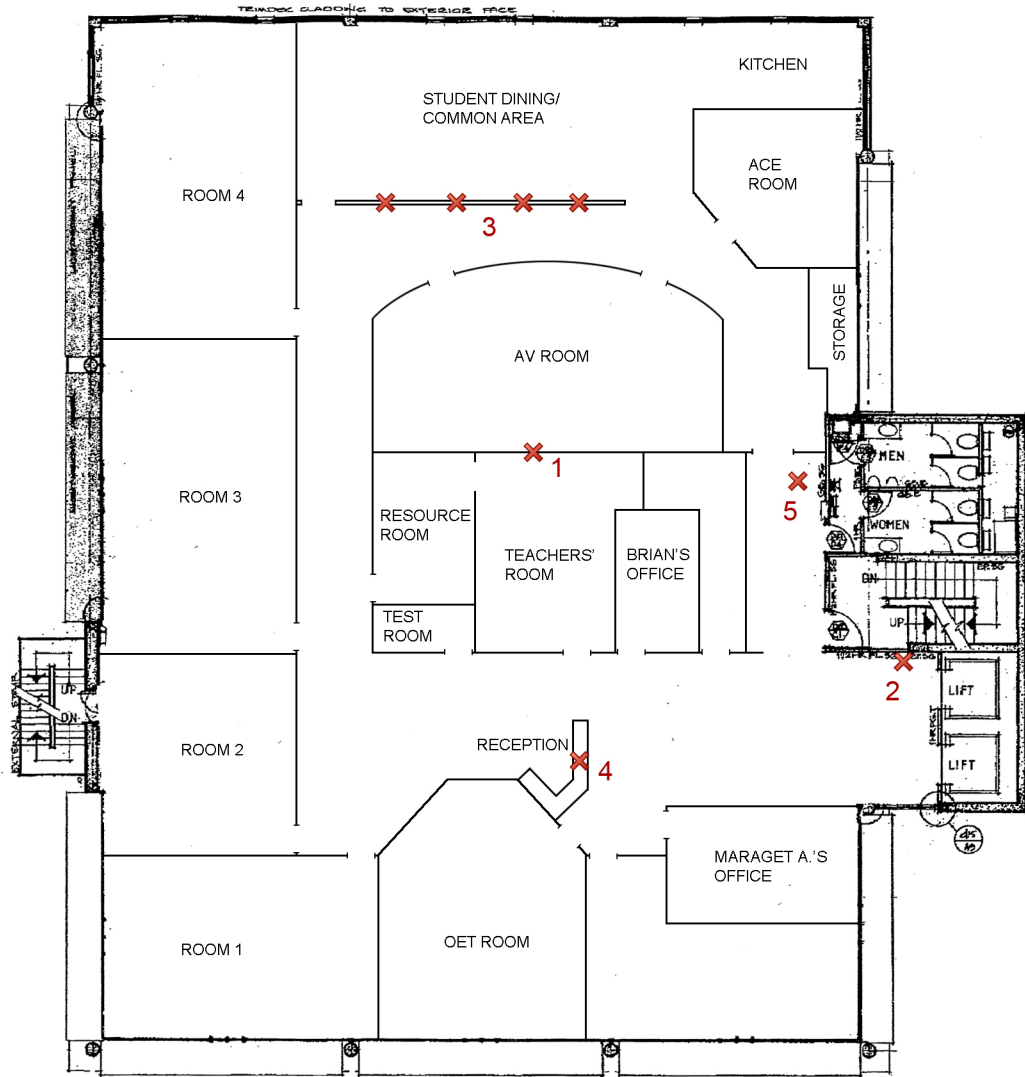
burst pipes and only later realised it had been liquefaction. There were sirens going off everywhere and I saw police arriving at the corner of Cashel and Liverpool Streets.

32. I would have been back to the Building within five minutes of the earthquake. I started to take a video clip of the liquefaction but then noticed the collapsed Building. The timestamp on it is 12.55pm. A copy of this footage has been provided to the Canterbury Earthquakes Royal Commission. However it doesn't contain any images of the CTV Building.
33. When I first saw the collapsed Building I didn't recognise it. It was just a heap of rubble. I stood outside of the IRD Building in shock, unsure of what to do. People were scrambling all over the rubble trying to pull people out. The only part of the Building standing was the elevator shaft wall. I also noticed that there was a small amount of smoke coming out of the back of it.
34. The first aftershock would have been about 6 or 7 minutes after the earthquake. I was standing outside the IRD Building with a student from Kings Education, Dennis Demanawa, when it struck. The police were yelling for the people on top of the CTV Building to get down and ordering everybody nearby to start leaving east on Cashel Street.
35. I immediately went to Latimer Square and spent the rest of the day there. I had direct line of sight to the CTV Building and could see the smoke had worsened and was billowing into the sky.

Signed: 

MARIE-CLAIRE BREHAUT

Date: 19/04/12



PLAN NOT TO SCALE



249 MADRAS ST - LEVEL 4

KEY

- 1. Cracks in partition wall
- 2. Crack by the elevators
- 3. Cracks in glass wall
- 4. Reception desk
- 5. Flooding

NEWSFLASH!!

From King's Education

Greetings!

King's weekly Newsflash includes news, views and information from King's Education, located in Christchurch, New Zealand.



Christchurch Earthquake

As many of you will know there was a large earthquake in Christchurch last Saturday at 4.35 am. While some older brick buildings were damaged, modern houses where most of the homestay families live were not. Contrary to what the media have indicated, of the 550 buildings in the central city only 5% were seriously damaged. The King's building suffered no damage, Civil Defence engineers inspected the structure and have informed us that it is safe to enter. They have also advised us to get the school underway again as quickly as possible so that things can return to normal. The school was opened today for teaching.

For more information about the above items or for any general enquiries please contact King's Education Limited. E-mail: enrol@kingseducation.co.nz or Phone: 0064 3 962 7390.

Best regards,

Brian Taylor
Kings Education Limited

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October/2010

King's Newsflash

Price Change Reminder



On the 1st October 2010 King's Educations' prices changed. This was due to the increase of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) from 12.5% to 15%, imposed by the New Zealand Government from.

General English is now \$360 per week for students studying 24 weeks or less and \$330 per week for students studying 25 weeks or more. Our healthcare courses are now \$385 per week. However we have a special discounted price of \$8600 for English for Nursing Registration 26 week course (special conditions apply - please contact us for information).

To view our prices please [click here](#) or you can download our enrolment form, which includes our new prices by [clicking here](#)

Earthquake Report



After the earthquake King's is fully operational. King's was very lucky to have virtually no damage to the school at all.

On Monday, King's ran an evacuation procedure drill to ensure that in case of any other event, the students can exit the building quickly and safely. New Zealand has strict rules regarding health and safety. Part of that is having regular building evacuation drills.

Brian Taylor
Kings Education

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