

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 ELIZABETH MARY CAMMOCK
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

DATE OF HEARING: COMMENCING 25 JUNE 2012

**STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH MARY CAMMOCK
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING**

1. My full name is Elizabeth Mary Cammock and I reside in Spreydon, Christchurch. I am a counsellor.
2. I am currently employed with Relationships Aotearoa, previously known as Relationship Services. I joined Relationship Services in 2008.
3. Relationship Services occupied the 5th floor (Level 6) of the CTV Building (the Building). I was on the 5th floor along the western side of the Building when the 22 February earthquake hit.

Events after the 4 September 2010 earthquake

4. I believe that the Building initially had a yellow sticker after the September earthquake, but I think this was only temporary until we had been inspected. We were then given a green sticker. I took this to mean that the building had been adequately checked.
5. A number of areas of damage had appeared on the 5th 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 issues of concern that I refer to in my evidence are marked on this plan.
6. Two cracks had appeared on either side of the elevators. I have marked these cracks as "1" on the plan. I can't be sure when these cracks first appeared because the elevator was not something I used often, but I know they were more pronounced following the Boxing Day earthquake. We talked about the damage by the elevators at staff meetings. Moira Underdown, the Upper South Area Manager, assured us that the Building had been inspected and it was safe.
7. I saw people downstairs fixing the entrance way after the September earthquake. I'm not sure if this had anything to do with the earthquake but I know that they had to return and redo some of the tiles after the Boxing Day earthquake.
8. This was the only damage I was aware of after 4 September.

9. I expected some answers regarding the cracks that had appeared but there didn't appear to be any real follow up. I didn't see anybody come around and inspect the Building. I didn't see any inspection reports on the safety of the Building either. I didn't get a letter as a member of staff or as a tenant of the Building with the findings that were made on the safety on the Building.

Demolition

10. Demolition began to the west of the CTV Building around 4 September, but I don't think it was connected to the earthquake. I think the buildings next to us had some connection to Les Mills and they wanted to convert the land into a carpark. I think this because that is basically what it was by the time of the 22 February earthquake.
11. I remember after the 4 September earthquake the CTV Building would vibrate as a result of the demolition. I don't remember this before the earthquake. Every time part of the building was brought down the Building would vibrate. It felt like the Building was hollow.
12. As the demolition moved closer to us the Building would shake more and more. It seemed like it was happening right next door. We had clients who were there for counselling, some traumatised from the earthquakes, and we would take them to the window and show them what was happening to keep them calm.
13. As part of the demolition a wall on the western side of the CTV Building was brought down. When the wall came down it felt like it had been ripped away from our Building. When it was brought down there was quite a big jolt, which felt like another earthquake. It was huge. It made everyone on our floor stop in their tracks. I remember thinking it had to be attached to make that sort of impact on our Building but I never saw whether it was or not. I think that this occurred just before Christmas because I remember thinking that when I come back to work after the break there will be no more demolition, but of course there was.
14. After Christmas work was still being carried out on the demolition site. There were big machines moving around.

15. I was able to differentiate between movement from the demolition and from aftershocks. Aftershocks tended to roll, whereas the demolition felt more like vibrations.

Boxing Day

16. When I returned to work after the Christmas break I saw that we had a Green Sticker on our door. Again I took this to mean that the Building had been inspected and that it was safe for us to be in there.
17. There were cracks that had appeared up the stair well in the north core. I have marked the area of cracking as “2” on the plan. I biked into work and used to carry my bike up the stairs. I only noticed cracking around the 4th and 5th floors. I remember feeling really uncomfortable walking up the stairs and feeling unsafe.
18. The lights were not working and these were never replaced. Plaster and small bits of debris had come off the walls too and no one cleaned this up. I remember wondering why nothing had been done and asking myself if I was the only one who used the stairs. I don't recall saying anything to anyone about the damage I saw.
19. I remember the cracks by the elevator were more pronounced after the Christmas break. I can't remember how wide they were but you could see them very easily, even from a distance of approximately ten metres away. I remember they ran from floor to ceiling and were very distinctive. It looked like someone had slightly pulled the wall apart. I wondered how the Building could be safe with these cracks in both corners.
20. There were clear differences in the Building and people were worried. We talked about the elevator cracks amongst the staff; it was a common theme of discussion. I remember standing in front of the elevators one day and asking one of my colleagues how the Building could be safe with all the cracks running down the corners.

21. I don't know whether there was an inspection following the Boxing Day earthquake. I didn't receive any information regarding the damage around the floor or any checks that had been carried out.

22 February

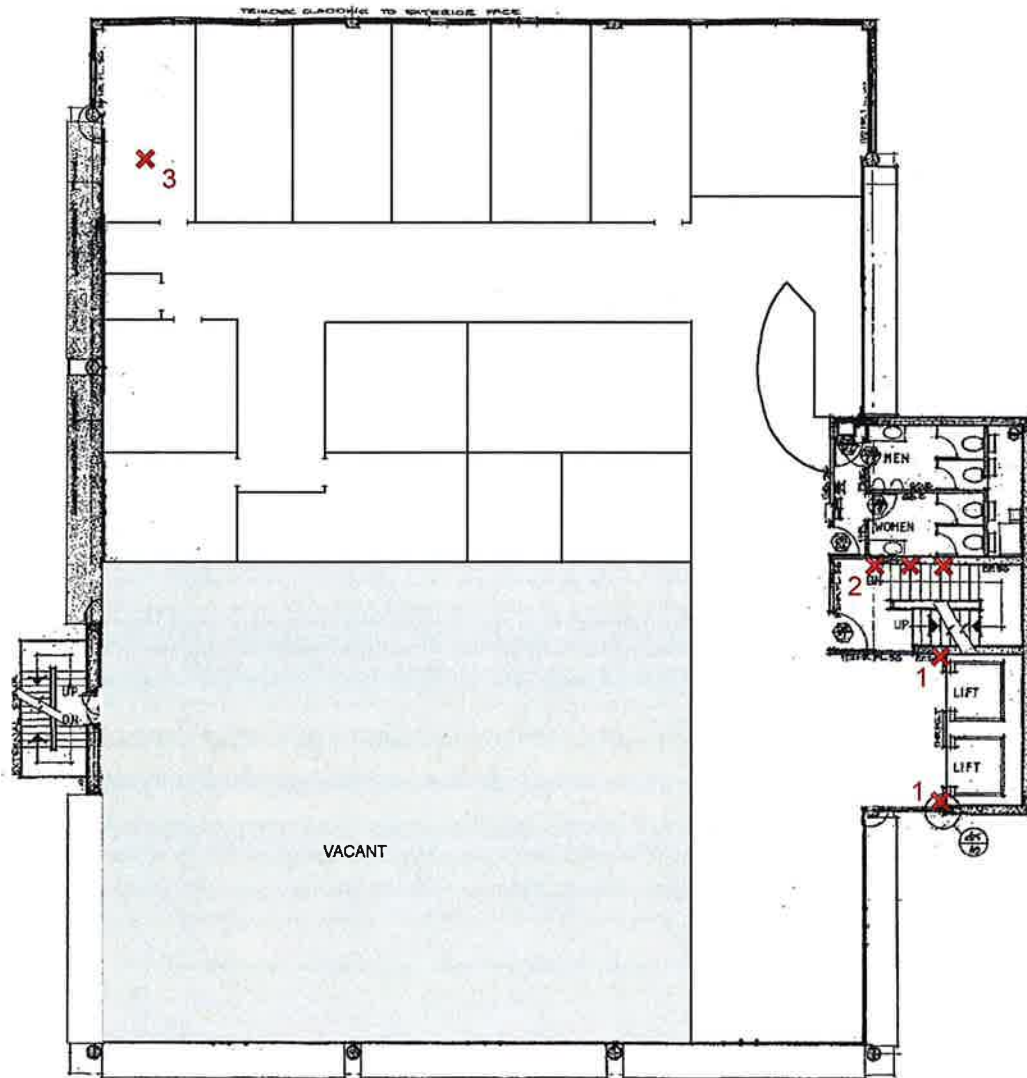
22. I was sitting with a group of people on the 5th floor for cultural supervision session when the earthquake hit. I have marked my position as "3" on the plan. I had my back up against the wall on the eastern side when there was a sudden lurch to the east. I felt like I was being tipped over backwards and I could see my colleagues and things in the room sliding towards me. From this first movement I knew it was serious.
23. The Building didn't move a whole lot after the lurch. I saw Angela and Nilgen bolt immediately for the door frame and with hindsight I don't think they would have been able to make it if the Building was moving at that time. After that first strong lurch it was like there was a fraction of a second of stillness.
24. After the pause I sat there and gripped my chair as the Building began shaking uncontrollably. I remember seeing glass explode in the window along the southern wall, twisted metal, exploding glass; I just remember craziness. I could see Nilgen standing under the doorframe and I remember thinking good luck girl. I later found out that she remained standing through the whole collapse.
25. I didn't experience any sensation of falling, although this may have been because I remained seated. I don't have a strong recollection of what happened but it felt like the building was down in about 15-20 seconds. It all happened so fast.
26. The next thing I know I have been thrown from my chair and am pinned to the floor by the collapsed ceiling. I remember David Millar asking me if I was okay. He lifted the collapsed ceiling off me and the first thing I did was check my head for injuries.
27. I could see out onto Cashel Street so knew the southern wall was gone. People were looking at us with shocked faces and I remember wondering how they got up there and were so close. I still hadn't registered that the Building had collapsed. I guess my brain had switched off.

28. The rescuers were able to get to us by scrambling over the rubble on the Cashel Street side of the Building. I felt like I was only about 3 metres off the ground. I can't remember how I got down the rubble to safety. Everything felt surreal.

Signed: 

ELIZABETH MARY CAMMOCK

Date: 04.08.12



249 MADRAS ST - LEVEL 6

KEY

- 1. Cracking by the elevators
- 2. Cracking in the stair well
- 3. Location of Elizabeth Cammock