

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 GRAEME JOHN CALVERT  
IN RELATION TO THE CTV BUILDING

DATE OF HEARING: COMMENCING 25 June 2012

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## STATEMENT OF GRAEME JOHN CALVERT TO CTV BUILDING

1. My full name is **GRAEME JOHN CALVERT**. I am 42 years old. I am currently employed as a Building Surveyor at Alexander & Co.

### **My Work Experience**

2. I was employed by the Christchurch City Council ("CCC"). My title was Senior Building Support Officer. This meant I was responsible for dealing with litigation claims against the Council, particularly in the form of leaky building claims.
3. I worked for the CCC for about 6 years. I was initially employed as a building inspector.
4. A building inspector will inspect and look at a building as it is being built at various stages to ensure it complies with building consent requirements. I inspected residential and commercial buildings.
5. The CCC had ongoing professional development training courses for building inspectors. These were external courses which the CCC put their staff on.
6. Prior to joining the CCC, I worked for a building certifier. I was involved in processing plans and doing building inspections for residential buildings. I was employed by that company for about 3 years. Before joining that company I was an in-house carpenter for a freezing works. During this period I was employed to do more maintenance work. My first job where I did my apprenticeship was for a building company. I worked for them for 5 years before going to another building company for 5 years and then the freezing works.

### **4 September 2010 Earthquake**

7. On 4 September 2010, Christchurch was rocked by a 7.1 earthquake at about 4.35am. After I had made sure my family were safe and we had got over the shock of things and sorted ourselves out, I drove into work. I arrived at work at about 6.15am.

8. When I arrived at the CCC Hereford Street office there were only about 7-9 people, including the Mayor Mr Bob Parker, assembled. I recognised 1 or 2 other Council employees. It was still dark when I arrived.
9. I made contact with my direct manager, Mr John Buchan. Mr Buchan is heavily involved in Civil Defence and he took a leadership role. He directed me to get into my truck and drive around the CBD to acquire an initial overview of the state the CBD was in and form an assessment.
10. I did that. It was just coming into daylight when I started. This task took about 45 minutes to an hour. When I had finished, I returned to the Hereford Street building and reported.
11. I travelled with John Buchan to the old CCC Tuam Street office. We went there because the CCC was in the process of moving premises and the civil defence helmets and other items and equipment were still at Tuam Street.
12. A decision was made by someone that our headquarters would be at the Art Gallery. The emergency centre at the Art Gallery was set up during that first day. People were putting in power lines and computer terminals and this was all taking a bit of time. We assembled at the Gallery.
13. For the rest of that day, people were sent out on reconnaissance to look at the state of the city. We were tasked to go to various suburbs and other areas to do a preliminary visual assessment and report back.
14. I think from memory I spent most of the day at the Art Gallery noting down information as it was reported in from my colleagues. I was recording what my colleagues were seeing out in the CBD and suburbs.

#### **5 and 6 September**

15. My memory of what I did in the following days is a little unclear only because of the passage of time. I have a memory that on the following day, Sunday 5 September, of being tasked to go out with others and make certain roads safe or open up certain roads, and to assist in allowing traffic to move more freely. We marked the footpath and the road so that a truck behind us which had site or barricading fencing could

place these barriers where we had marked it. This was a big exercise. I think it occupied at least a full day if not more.

16. At some point I stopped doing that task. I was then given another task of assessing buildings. Assessing the buildings was part of what was called the Rapid Assessment Process.

### **Rapid Assessment Process**

17. Before the 4 September 2010 earthquake, I was broadly aware of the Rapid Assessment Process. Approximately a year before the September earthquake, I attended a course on the Emergency Management Centre. I was not part of the Emergency Management Centre but for some reason I was sent on the course. The course was about different aspects of civil defence and how the Emergency Management Centre was to operate. One aspect of the course concerned the Rapid Assessment Process. I remember Dave Brunnsden giving a presentation about the Rapid Assessment Process. I have a very clear memory of the different placards being spoken about by Mr Brunnsden. I understand the Rapid Assessment Process was a new system which he was heavily promoting. I had never heard of it prior to then. I think Mr Brunnsden might have given a powerpoint presentation.
18. Before going out to perform rapid assessments of buildings in Christchurch I was given a briefing about the Rapid Assessment Process. My memory of that now is a little vague due to the passage of time. I cannot recall exactly when it was. It was not a one on one talk or briefing, certainly not a talk from my immediate manager to a small group. I recall it being a briefing that was delivered to a large number of people who were going to be involved in this process. I do not have detailed memory of the briefing.
19. I understand the Council say that at 9.30am on 5 September rapid assessment teams were given a powerpoint briefing on the NZSEE Guidelines, and the process that would be followed. It is highly likely that the memory I have is of this briefing. One needs to be aware that people were coming and going and that you could be on a 5.00am to 10.00am shift or other shifts. This meant you may miss various briefings if your roster times did not coincide with the briefings. There were a lot of briefings.

### **Rapid Assessment Process**

20. There are two Rapid Assessment Processes – Level 1 and Level 2. Level 1 was a brief exterior inspection of the building. Level 2 was a brief exterior and interior inspection of the building.
21. I am not sure I was altogether clear on the criteria for level 2 assessments. Staff at the Art Gallery were assessing and categorising buildings and asking us to do Level 1 and Level 2 assessments.
22. Over the next couple of days I was doing a number of things including marking for barriers and containers to protect roads and buildings. I remember going out with engineers and different groups at times and I may well have been doing Level 1 assessments. It was a very busy and unusual time and I cannot give a minute by minute, hour by hour description of what I did.

### **7 September**

23. On 7 September I was working with two colleagues, Mr Dave Flewellen and Mr Russell Simson. They were both CCC employees. Dave was a Senior Building Inspector. Russell used to be a Building Inspector and was at that date a Building Consent Officer.
24. Again, I cannot give a detailed recollection of what I did hour by hour that day. However, I have been reminded by looking at a Rapid Assessment form – Level 2 that I filled out for the CTV building. I remember going to this building and assessing it.
25. I was usually at the Art Gallery by 7.00am. I see that the assessment form has a start time of 11.45am. I may well have done some work in the Art Gallery for the first couple of hours that day. There was a lot of down time because we often were not able to get a team together and it was not permitted to go out on your own to do an assessment.
26. At some stage that morning, I got together with Dave and Russell. We walked from the Art Gallery into the CBD and walked to Madras Street. We must have been tasked with carrying out assessments along Madras Street or certainly in a grid that encompassed that area. Our objective from memory was to head towards Latimer Square.

27. I remember the three of us stopping and inspecting the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church. I do not think that this was one of our tasks but it was simply a building that we had to walk past.
28. I remember seeing one of the columns at the Church was out of vertical alignment and was tentatively supporting a large mass of stone which had disconnected from the front facade of the church. We went up and had a closer look at it. There was already emergency tape around the building. We put some more emergency tape up around the dangerous area to seal it off as being out of bounds.
29. This to my mind was a classic example of what a rapid assessment is for and what you are supposed to do. We were walking around these buildings examining them. We were tasked to look at the buildings to determine whether there was anything obvious that was a hazard. We would then record it and perhaps carry out some sort of remedial action such as in the form of putting a barrier up or marking an area out so that at least the potential hazards are minimised.
30. We may have filled out a form for the Baptist Church job but I cannot remember now whether we did.
31. I remember going to the Latimer Square building. It is an old garage. We had been instructed to mark out on the road where the barricade should go around this building. The building had a loose parapet up top. This was clearly visible. We had been tasked with ensuring that there was a barricade placed around this hazard or ensuring an area was marked where a barricade could be placed. Again I do not recall filling out a form for doing that task but I may well have.
32. We then looked at the CTV building. I do not recall whether the CTV building was one of the buildings on the list of buildings for us to check or whether we were called up on our mobile by someone at the Art Gallery and directed to do that. We were often called when we were out on the field to check something which one of our superiors or senior staff members had decided needed to be checked while we were looking at another building.

**Rapid Assessment of CTV Building on 7 September**

33. I have noted on the form that we arrived at 11.45am. I see I have signed the document, dated it and timed it 12.54. This suggests we were there for an hour. I am not sure whether we were there for that long. Sometimes I would sign, date and time the form as we were walking back or even when I got back to the Art Gallery. I do not recall us being there for an hour but we may well have been.
34. We are tasked as part of the assessment to look at the outside of the building. I am sure the three of us would have walked around the outside of the building. There was no obvious damage that caused me any concern. There was damage which I think may have been broken panes of glass or cosmetic damage but there was nothing that caused me any concern.
35. After doing an outside assessment, we went inside. I recall speaking to the receptionist or at least one of us doing that. A man came out from behind the reception area to speak to us. My memory is that he was the boss of one of the businesses in the building.
36. I think it needs to be mentioned that I am not an engineer and neither are my other two colleagues. I understand that the CCC were suggesting that Rapid Assessment teams should have included one Building Inspector, one CPEng Engineer, and one Civil Defence Rescue Team member. That was not the case. It might have been after the February 2011 earthquake but it certainly was not always the case for the September 2010 earthquake rapid assessments.
37. As I said, the exterior seemed fine visually. That said, we are not engineers so we were not doing an in depth analysis or looking at the technical aspects of the building. That is not the purpose of a Rapid Assessment.
38. I do recall the man that we spoke to at reception seemed happy to be in the building. He did not have any concerns about the building. We specifically asked him whether he had any concerns. This was a standard thing we did because it made our job much easier. We would ask whether there were any problems or issues and if so we could go straight to them and have a look at them. Neither the receptionist nor this man had any concerns. I have a very clear memory of this aspect of the rapid assessment of the CTV building.

39. I remember the business man telling us that they were going to get an engineer to inspect the building. I certainly have a memory of us talking to him about engineers inspecting the building and the need for this to be done.
40. One of the things we always told people who were in buildings that we were looking at, was that they needed to get an engineer to inspect their building. It was a standard comment that we made to everyone we saw who was present when we carried out a rapid assessment. We were told to make that comment because the fact that we could not see any obvious things that were wrong with the building did not mean that there were not things wrong with the building. Obviously there could be cracks in the foundations or all sorts of problems that were hidden from view. We were instructed by CCC to mention this and to tell owners and occupiers there was a need for them to engage their own independent engineer to do a thorough assessment. This was something we always said.
41. I recall us looking at the interior of the building. We could not look at all of the floors because some were locked. I think we could only get up to the second or third level. I remained on the ground floor and checked out the ground floor and may have spoken to the receptionist. Dave Flewellen went up to the second or third floor. The fact we could not inspect all floors was not ideal. However, from what we saw there was no obvious damage. There was also a back up in that an engineer's report would be obtained and this would examine all floors.
42. I then went back outside again and had another look at the exterior of the building. I am not sure what Russell was doing. I think that he went with Dave through the ground floor and exited out the back of the building to have a look at the building as they went through. We then all met back at the car park and had a discussion about the building.
43. As I have said, a rapid assessment is not an indepth analysis of the building. It did not involve looking at building plans or any assessment of the strength of the building. We were looking for obvious damage and if there was any such damage we would then assess the extent of the damage.



**Filling in the Level 2 Form**

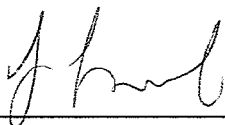
44. Again, I am not really sure when I filled out the assessment form. It probably would have been when we were out standing in the car park, although some of it might have been completed when walking away from the building. As I said, the time at the very end could have been noted down as when we got back to the Art Gallery.
45. In any event, it records some basic details about the building, and that there was a green placard on the first assessment. This means I would have sighted the first green placard.
46. Under comments it said that we called in to inspect, it was looked at by the three of us, and we spoke to a manager who had no issues as far as he was concerned. As I explained earlier, we would have asked him if there was any damage that he had seen which he wanted to draw to our attention. I have in effect recorded or noted his answer.
47. You will see that I have recorded that there was an existing green placard on the building. This would have been a level 1 assessment. I have circled inspected green G2 which I see actually means occupiable, repairs required. On reflection I now wonder whether I meant that or thought "G2" meant it was a green second inspection. There certainly was cosmetic damage and there probably were some repairs required.
48. This perhaps highlights to a degree a slight lack of understanding and knowledge of the rapid assessment process in relation to the meaning of "G1" and "G2" and particularly the details set out in the forms.
49. My memory is that we were given information about the different placards themselves, green, yellow, red and what these meant. Red definitely means no one could be in the building. It was unsafe and the building was a risk to life and limb. Yellow meant that there was damage and problems with the building but limited access was permitted to retrieve articles. Green meant basically that there was no obvious damage and therefore it appeared it was safe to occupy. I do not remember getting any training or information about the details of these forms and what input was required on them. Although I accept this may have been covered in the briefings.

50. You will also see that I have ticked 0-1% damage estimated overall building damage. That shows the level of damage that we saw which as I said was merely cosmetic.

**Conclusion**

51. There was no reason as far as I am concerned after that 7 September inspection for any alarm with the CTV building. There was nothing obvious that required remedial action. If there was something obvious, I would have noted it and I would have raised it with the building manager and the receptionist. If there was significant damage, I would have gone in there and told them to get out. There was definitely no concern expressed by my colleagues Dave and Russell about the building. We all agreed with the assessment that it was "*a green*". This rapid assessment of course was not designed for, nor did it purport to be, a detailed assessment or analysis of the building. The engineer's reports would perform that task.
52. I undertook other assessment of other buildings over the next couple of weeks. These were a mixture of residential and commercial buildings.
53. I was still employed by the Council when the 22 February earthquake struck. After the 22 February earthquake, I was again involved in rapid assessments and assisting throughout. These assessments differed in that we were not allowed to do an assessment such as the one we did on the CTV building unless we had an engineer and a USAR team with us. That said, I think I did assessments for the first week and then I was assigned to assisting CBD occupants to retrieve files and articles with USAR teams. I left the Council in late March 2011 to work for Alexander & Co.

Dated this 4th day of May 2012



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Graeme John Calvert