

**BEFORE THE PALMERSTON NORTH CITY COUNCIL**

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*IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991*

*AND*

*IN THE MATTER OF an application by the Anglican Diocese of Wellington for the refurbishment, strengthening and extension to the heritage-listed building known as All Saints Church, 338 Church Street, Palmerston North*

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF DAVID CHAPPLE**

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## *Introduction*

[1] My full name is David Christopher Chapple. I am a retired architect having practised all of my professional life in Palmerston North, mostly under the banner 'Chapple Architects'. I have been involved in the future of All Saints Church for several decades and more recently, for the last seven years, as a member of the All Saints Church Building Advisory Board. I had close involvement in my role as Diocesan Property Manager, from 2001- 2013 In this statement, I am giving expert and professional evidence concerning:

- (a) The processes followed to assess earthquake strengthening options;
- (b) An evaluation of those options;
- (c) The importance of earthquake strengthening for the survival of All Saints Church.

[2] I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses issued by the Environment Court Practice Note. I agree to comply with the Code of Conduct. I am satisfied that the matters addressed in this Statement of Evidence are within my expertise. I am not aware of any material facts that have either been omitted or altered or might detract from the opinions expressed in this Statement of Evidence.

## *Overview*

[3] All Saints Church is a distinctive masonry building prominently situated close to The Square at Palmerston North. It is the most visible presence of the Anglican Church in Palmerston North. The Conservation Plan by Ian Bowman (architect and conservator) dated February 2018 is at Appendix B to the Assessment of Environmental Effects. It describes the history of the All Saints Church site and the present All Saints Church. The building is, of course, an architectural work by Frederick de Jersey Clere and is a mixture of design elements with the predominant style being the Perpendicular Gothic. The Heritage, New Zealand listing,

describes the building in this way. It is a “*splendid example of the High Victorian Gothic principle of honesty and construction. The brickwork, which is among the finest in New Zealand, is not disguised; neither is the interior wooden roof supports. The overall style of the church illustrates Clere’s reinterpretation of gothic revival architecture*”.

- [4] Mr Bowman identified ( and did not critique) the seven requirements of the All Saints Church Parish at that time (in 2018) for the Church to function and perform its mission. While these matters are noted by Mr Bowman, there are no recommendations and no attempt to reconcile these objectives with the architectural elements of the building in that Conservation Plan because that is not the Conservation plan’s purpose
- [5] Therefore, the draft Conservation Plan leaves unanswered the difficult and somewhat subjective question of how to appropriately adapt the building to meet these pastoral requirements. The Plan is therefore just that, a Conservation Plan.
- [6] I am aware that the desire for church modernisation is not unique to All Saints Church and there is a body of literature on that subject with common themes to those that emerge in the evidence for the All Saints Church. The underlying theme of all this is to revitalise churches and make them places more welcoming and human in scale and design while preserving significant heritage elements. An authoritative guide on the issues is the work of Richard Giles called “Re-pitching the Tent” (Third Edition.) The perspective is that Churches are not museums and not in the business of unduly prioritising fabric over people.

*The need for earthquake strengthening*

- [7] All Saints Church, being a brick structure without internal or external support mechanisms is highly prone to failure in a significant seismic event. The initial engineering assessment demonstrated that the All Saints Church would only meet 3% of the New Building Standard (“NBS”). That is an unacceptable situation for a public space. This assessment of

the 3% rating was communicated by the Palmerston North City Council in a notice dated December 2011.

- [8] Shortly after that notice in 2013 the Church was closed. It has never reopened. The building's lack of use demonstrates the central importance of people to add vitality and life to a building. There are signs of visible deterioration, but at this stage, it is only superficial. That will continue to progress over time without the necessary restoration and maintenance work.

*Earthquake and strengthening work*

- [9] The resource consent application proposes strengthening work as part of a redevelopment in the repurposing of All Saints Church, including providing an entrance and a different relationship to Church Street. The issues of the entrance and the relationship to Church Street have been long-standing. Proposals as early as 1982 were promoted by the then Vicar (now Bishop) Brian Carrell. This early design demonstrates the long-term aspiration of the Church community for improved entrance and better relationship to Church Street
- [10] In 1999 All Saints initiated investigations for earthquake strengthening of the Church. At my suggestion, the Church engaged Dunning Thornton Consultants Ltd as experts in the field. This work was funded by a grant from the Palmerston North City Council Heritage Fund.
- [11] The Bowman Conservation Plan was first commissioned in 2008 and sat in draft form. It was used as a guide for maintenance and later for upgrading work including the west window fronting Church Street. The document was also intended to guide a selection of proposals for strengthening the building.
- [12] In 2010 the Palmerston North City Council first invoked the Earthquake Prone Building Policy. Shortly after that preliminary drawings for strengthening the Church were received from Dunning Thornton.

- [13] After the Church was closed due to the low NBS rating the All Saints Church Building Advisory Board (“CBAB”) commenced in earnest the procedure to identify the optimal solution for strengthening and rebuilding the Church.
- [14] In 2014 the CBAB became aware of a method of strengthening employed by Structural Concepts which was non-invasive and involved post-tensioning to strengthen earthquake resilience.
- [15] The respective schemes from Dunning Thornton and Structural Concepts were commented on by two respected earthquake engineers - David Hopkins and Win Clark. This was to assist CBAB in its recommendations.
- [16] One of the reasons that the Structural Concepts design was recommended as the best option, was because it had the least visual impact on the interior of the church. It employed a technique called *post-tensioning* of the walls using wire strands or bars in unbonded cores drilled vertically in the inner brick leaf. These strands are anchored to a concrete base at floor level and to the new parapet at roof level. The process gives overall strength to the building through tensioning.
- [17] The details of the strengthening design are in the Structural Concepts drawings series in Appendix C to the Assessment of Environmental Effects. Included in that material is a detailed design of the strengthening of the Church Tower. That is a challenging exercise but one that will secure the long-term future of this important element in the overall Church design.

#### *Cost of construction*

- [18] The most recent estimate of the costs of the entire development are contained in the Rider Levett Bucknall preliminary cost estimate dated 26 February 2019. That is located in the Applicants Bundle

[19] That shows the total costs of \$7.215 million. Of that in the order of \$5.3 million represents the cost of strengthening. That represents approximately 73% of the total cost of works. *I need to review this*

[20] It is easy to see why the Anglican Diocese expects any expenditure of that magnitude for strengthening has to result in a final ecclesiastical product that serves the Church's self-defined mission or at least ensures appropriate solutions sufficient to meet the reasonable needs of the congregation.

*Impact on architectural values*

[21] I consider that the impact on architectural values of the strengthening is acceptable and appropriate and overall, significantly positive. I consider that if the Church building is not strengthened, its prospects are poor both in the event of a seismic event and also as a building that could be used for public events. The building without strengthening does not have a future.

[22] The proposal for strengthening introduces elements that are not authentic. For example, the roof will be Colorsteel using a colour and profile that is reminiscent of the existing copper roofing. That lightweight material is appropriate to assist with seismic performance. Complete authenticity cannot be achieved when proper consideration is given to health and safety. I offer two examples:

- (a) The ornamental finials on the tower are highly susceptible to failure in a seismic event. Strengthening is problematic. The Structural Concepts design is to replace these with lightweight structures that will appear the same as that which presently exists;
- (b) Mr Bowman in his Conservation Plan promoted a return to Marseille clay tiles on the roof. However, that is an unrealistic aim because it will add undue weight to the roof and therefore undermine significantly the benefits of earthquake strengthening proposed as well as increasing the risk of roof failure in a seismic event.

*Conclusion*

- [23] The All Saints Church community has been on a significant journey to consider how best to preserve substantial parts of the existing fabric in a way that meets current Code requirements while at the same time meeting their functional needs tied to their spiritual and Church community objectives. I consider that the technique of strengthening proposed and its implementation will achieve its aims and secure a visually pleasing product.
- [24] I note that in the Conservation Plan by Mr Bowman rates all of the facades as having high value and under the current proposal, most of these high-value elements described in that Conservation Plan will be preserved by strengthening. In my professional opinion, if the objective is to secure the majority of the heritage fabric within the existing structure in its authentic state, while enabling a vibrant living church, then that is best achieved by granting consent. I urge that outcome for the City.



David Chapple