BEFORE INDEPENDENT HEARING COMMISSIONERS
IN CHRISTCHURCH

TE MAHERE Ā-ROHE I TŪTOHUA MŌ TE TĀONE O ŌTAUTAHI

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

AND

IN THE MATTER of the hearing of submissions on Plan Change 14 (Housing and Business Choice) to the Christchurch District Plan

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SUMMARY STATEMENT OF BRETT ANDREW GILMORE ON BEHALF OF CAMBRIDGE 137 LIMITED

HISTORIC HERITAGE

12 April 2024

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WYNN WILLIAMS

Summary Statement

1 My name is Brett Andrew Gilmore. My qualifications, experience and confirmation I will comply with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses are set out in my Evidence in Chief dated 20 September 2023 and I do not repeat those here.

2 I have prepared evidence on behalf of Cambridge 137 Limited (**Cambridge 137**) providing structural engineering evidence in respect of Cambridge 137's submission seeking Harley Chambers be removed from Appendix 9.3.7.2 Schedule of Significant Historic Heritage of the Christchurch District Plan.

3 In preparing my Summary Statement, I have briefly summarised the key points from my evidence and provided comments on the Rebuttal evidence of Mr Stephen Hogg and Mr David Pearson where they note some matters of disagreement with my evidence.

4 The building has been extensively damaged from the Canterbury Earthquake Sequence (**CES**). The building is repairable, as most buildings are.

6 The building has been assessed to have a current earthquake strength of 15% x NBS. It is an earthquake prone building under the Building Act 2004. The scope of works required to repair the building back to a minimum earthquake strength level of 34% x NBS is significant.

8 The normal industry standard minimum target level for earthquake strengthening is normally considered to be 67% x NBS (if the use and occupancy of the building were to remain unchanged from its previous office/commercial use). The scope of repairs, strengthening works are again higher than for 34% x NBS.

9 If the building were to be considered for a change of occupancy and use as part of the repairs then the Council would require the building to be strengthened to 100% x NBS, or as close as practically possible to do so. The scope of repairs and strengthening works are higher than for 67% x NBS.

10 I have been involved with the review and assessment of the building since September 2010. Over this time, it has been hugely difficult, despite the best efforts of the owners (both previously and current), to prevent access into the building from unauthorised parties. A fire occurred

recently in a section of the building that resulted in localised weakening of the structure.

11 I recommended that temporary propping be installed to the north-east column in December 2016, if the north section of the building were not to be demolished at that time. This followed my review of the building and the added damage I observed following the 2016 Kaikoura earthquake.

12 To date no temporary propping has been installed to the north-east column (although I note the current owners have only very recently taken ownership of the building and I understand discussions are ongoing in relation to this). This column may fail under a moderate earthquake and result in partial collapse of this corner of the building.

13 Other dangerous areas from a structural perspective of the building include the concrete canopy apron slab that is directly adjacent to the public footpath on the east side of the building, and the unreinforced brick parapets to the rear sides of the building and with some of these directly above and adjacent to the shared right-of-way with the Worcester Chambers building and that acts as a fire egress path for that building.

14 In its current condition, the building, as a whole, is not likely to collapse outwards into public spaces in an earthquake due to its proportions and structure, but localised parts such as the north-east column and small debris from the façade could likely fall outwards and cause a hazard to public safety.

14 The building continues to degrade over time, with ongoing exacerbation of cracks to the exterior façade and east canopy apron slab, plus the effects of foundation settlement at the north-east corner, and the effects of vandalism and a fire from unauthorised parties. Moderate earthquakes will also degrade the building further.

15 My recommendation to install a nominal safety barrier between the building and footpath were being acted upon, but it has been impossible for the owners to ensure that it is retained in the correct position (which is on public footpath and therefore not in the owner’s control) which means it is not serving its intended purpose.

16 With my long involvement with the building since the CES, I have observed genuine attempts to retain the building in the best condition possible and develop an option to repair and strengthen the building. This has resulted in both the previous and current owners concluding that it is

not economic to repair and strengthen the building back to a minimum earthquake strength of 67% x NBS.

17 I agree that the dangerous and vulnerable parts of the building can be temporarily secured to mitigate the safety issues, but these added works will increase the repair costs further beyond what has already been assessed by others to be uneconomic.

18 From a technical perspective, the façade to Harley Chambers could be retained and incorporated into a new building development, but substantial additional works are required to repair, strengthen it to 100% x NBS, temporarily prop the façade, and demolish the building in behind.

19 Demolition experts have advised the new owner that a section of the south side façade would need to be deconstructed to achieve suitable access to demolish the building behind the façade.

20 In addition to the part demolition of the south façade, the north end of the east side façade that includes the north-east corner column will also need to be deconstructed and rebuilt, plus all of the plaster to the façade will need to be removed and reinstated as part of the repairs and strengthening. The heritage impacts of this are addressed in Mr Brown's evidence.

Comments on Rebuttal Evidence

21 Mr Hogg considers that the reasons provided by myself for demolishing the Harley Chambers building are not valid. Mr Hogg refers to paragraph 66 of my evidence that includes 9 items, (a) to (i) inclusive.

22 Mr Hogg notes that each item is not a reason for building demolition. In this regard, I am in agreement with Mr Hogg to the extent that the dangerous parts of the building can be temporarily secured to mitigate safety issues, however my evidence also notes that these works have been assessed by others to be uneconomic.

23 I believe the main point of difference between Mr Hogg's and my opinions regarding demolition is that I have considered the costs involved in repairing the building back to a usable condition to help form my opinion that the building be demolished.

24 From an engineering perspective, Mr Hogg and myself appear to be in general agreement.

25 Regarding the temporary works referred to in paragraph 19 of Mr Hogg's Rebuttal evidence, these would mitigate the main hazards to public safety but would not address the hazards within the interior of the building. Also, such measures do not increase the strength of the building in any way, and the building is still earthquake prone and unable to be occupied.

26 Such mitigation type works would likely be temporary and add to the cost of any meaningful strengthening of the building.

27 Regarding Mr Pearson's understanding that "*the column is the only portion that would likely require to be reconstructed*"[1] I have previously noted that there are a number of other parts of the building that will require reconstruction as part of the repairs. The areas to be reconstructed that most affect the external heritage fabric include the north-east column, exterior beams adjacent to the north-east column (extent depends on further assessment of damage to these beams), all of the external brick parapets, and the east side external canopy apron slab, and external plaster. If the facade only were to be retained, then part demolition of the south side external facade is required to provide suitable access for the demolition to be undertaken.

28 Regarding Mr Pearson's comment "*there is no reason why proportions of the existing building should compromise the design of a new building*",[2] I note that incorporating the existing building or its façade into a new building would mean that the new building would need to match the floor-to-floor height of the existing building and that any new external loadbearing columns (at least) would need to match the existing columns locations to avoid any clash with the existing windows and doors in the external elevations. While a new building can be designed to accommodate such constraints, it would prevent any new building having standard floor-to-floor heights that are commonly used for retail and lobby type spaces at the ground floor level, and may also result in a less cost-effective layout of the main structural columns, walls and/or braces for a new building.

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1 Rebuttal Evidence of Mr Pearson for CCC dated 9 October 2023, paragraph 39.

2 Rebuttal Evidence of Mr Pearson for CCC dated 9 October 2023, paragraph 41.

Dated 12 April 2024

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Brett Gilmore