

Rust and earthquake damage at former C.C. Ward premises



The old C.C. Ward building in Currie St, New Plymouth, is sealed off, having been declared 'dangerous' by the district council.

PHOTO: GRANT MATTHEW/AIRFAZ NZ

'Danger' building evacuated and sealed off

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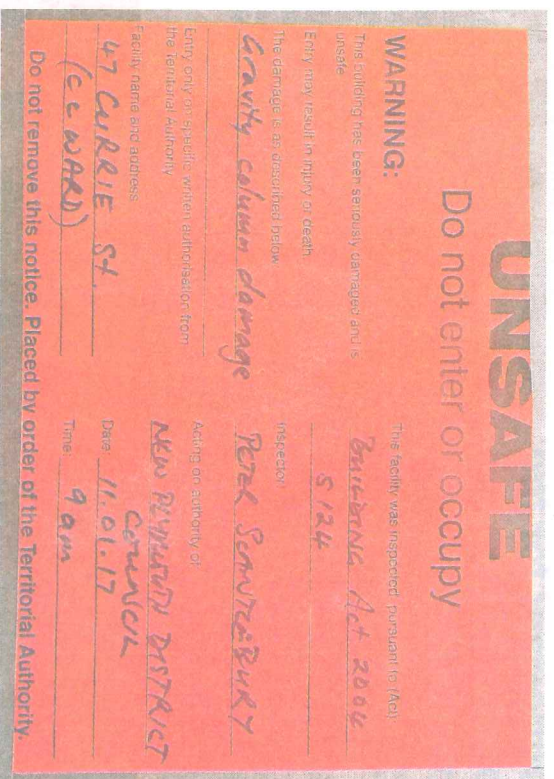
A building which has stood in the heart of New Plymouth since the 1920s has been evacuated after being assessed as "dangerous".

The New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) sealed off the former C.C. Ward building, at 47 Currie St, yesterday and ordered all occupants to leave.

"Engineers have inspected the building over the last couple of days and say three of the columns which support the south wall of the building are not structurally sound," NPDC customer and regulatory services manager Katrina Brunton said.

The laneway between the building and neighbouring Taranaki Newspapers Limited (TNL) building has been cordoned off to protect the public from any risk of falling concrete and plaster.

"As the regulator, public safety is our top priority, the building has been vacated and neighbouring businesses have



been advised to take precautions," Brunton added.

Engineers advised the council on Tuesday of rust discovered within three interior columns.

Termed "spalling", the rust has been growing on the steel within the columns and pushing away the concrete exterior.

"It's not recent damage. It's likely to be gradual degradation and possibly exacerbated by the Kaitioura earthquake in November," Brunton said.

Additional damage was discovered on Wednesday when council inspected the building. "There appears to be some

"It's not recent damage"

NPDC customer and regulatory services manager Katrina Brunton

movement of the south wall, affecting the stability of the floor. "Further forensic assessment will occur in due time."

Owners Roslyn and Murray Holyoake were given 20 working days to provide a plan for remediation to the NPDC.

But Brunton said they could extend this time if need be.

She said at this stage, the owners are solely responsible and will either need to restructure the building or demolish it.

In the meantime, "the front facade is safe and the windows facing Currie St will be hoarded [walled] to prevent broken glass from falling" as a precautionary measure.

The rapid red taping of the building was only possible because of the owners' quick notification to council, Brunton

said. "We advise all building owners to check their buildings after a major earthquake and notify the council of any damage, and council can provide assistance."

She said the safety of the public and those inside buildings should be the top priority of building owners. Puke Ariki's Kete project - an online digital archive - said the three storey concrete building, which bears the year 1925, had a family history dating back much earlier.

The land was bought by an early New Plymouth pioneer, Joe Ward, who purchased the lot for £750.

He then leased it to his son, who later became owner in 1905. Four adjacent buildings were purchased between 1917 and 1928 to allow for construction.

While plans were drawn up in 1928, early years of the depression delayed construction until about 1933.

An escalator to the first floor was installed some time in 1989.