

20 June 2022

Jack Hulls

By email: fyi-request-19468-0909aa95@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: H202206948

Tēnā koe Jack

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 25 May 2022. You requested:

“information about the earthquake assessment of the ministry of health head office building on molesworth st.

Of interest is when was it last assessed and what was the result”.

The Ministry has identified two documents within scope of your request, itemised in Appendix 1 of this letter. The table in Appendix 1 outlines the grounds under which I have decided to withhold information. Where information is withheld under section 9 of the Act, I have considered the countervailing public interest in release in making this decision and consider that it does not outweigh the need to withhold at this time.

The Ministry head office located at 133 Molesworth Street is a leased building that was redeveloped back in 2015. At the time construction was finished, the building was declared to have achieved one hundred percent of the New Building Standard (NBS) at Importance Level 3¹ (IL3), although the building would only generally meet the definition of IL2. As such, when discussing the strength of the building it is usually stated as being 130% IL2.

Furthermore, as the building does not contain the structural elements of concern as detailed in section C5 of the Engineering Assessment Guidelines (Yellow Chapter)^{2,3}, the structural assessments provided can be considered current.

I trust this information fulfils your request.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

¹ <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1992/0150/latest/DLM162576.html#DLM4417717>

² <http://www.eq-assess.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/c5-concrete-buildings.pdf>

³ <https://www.building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/b-stability/b1-structure/what-you-need-to-know-section-c5-concrete-buildings-proposed-revision/>

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Celia Wellington'.

Celia Wellington
Deputy Director-General
Corporate Services

Appendix 1: List of documents for release

#	Date	Document details	Decision on release
1	26 May 2015	Letter from Beca to Molesworth Office Trustee Ltd – 133 Molesworth St Redevelopment – Update to Importance Level 3	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons.
2	10 October 2016	Letter from Beca to Molesworth Office Trustee Ltd – 133 Molesworth St – Structural Statement for CPU	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.



85 Molesworth Street
PO Box 3942, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
T: +64 4 473 7551 // F: +64 4 473 7911
E: info@beca.com // www.beca.com

Molesworth Office Trustee Limited
PO Box 30626
Lower Hutt 5040
New Zealand

26 May 2015

Attention: Mike McCombie

Dear Mike

133 Molesworth St Redevelopment - Upgrade to Importance Level 3

Further to our discussions in relation to the Importance Level of 133 Molesworth St, we are pleased to summarise the key changes and benefits of upgrading from Importance Level 2 (IL2) to Importance Level 3 (IL3).

The New Zealand loadings standard AS/NZS1170.0:2002 defines Importance Level for a building and sets out loadings for gravity, wind, earthquake and other loading conditions. The required building Importance Level is based mainly on the building use, occupancy level and design life. Most office buildings are only required to be IL2 – it is rare for an office building in New Zealand to be IL3 and would generally only apply to buildings that are very large and/or have a large occupancy.

Beca has carried out investigations into the requirements for an upgrade to IL3, which included:

- Analytical modelling of the building
- Preliminary design of new lead rubber bearings to arrive at a feasible replacement bearing design
- Consideration of implications on the foundations and superstructure.

An upgrade to IL3 will be achieved for 133 Molesworth St with revisions to the design, which includes the following considerations:

- Because of increased seismic demands, the base isolation system will require an upgrade which will involve the replacement of 39 of the existing lead-rubber bearings with new, higher performing lead-rubber bearings. Mainly around the perimeter of the building.
- Because of increased wind loading, the building cladding and roofing systems require some upgrade.
- The increased demands on the suspended ceilings and services have also been considered.

Benefits

The main benefits of changing from IL2 to IL3 are:

- The seismic capacity of the building is increased by 30%. That is, IL2 buildings are designed to remain standing after a 1-in-500 year seismic event, which has a 10% chance of being exceeded in a 50-year period. IL3 buildings are designed to remain standing after a 1 in 1000 year seismic event, which has a 5% chance of being exceeded in a 50-year period.
- The wind capacity of the building is increased by approximately 10%, in terms of ability to resist design-level wind. That is, IL2 buildings are designed to remain standing after a 1-in-500 year wind event, which

has a 10% chance of being exceeded in a 50-year period. IL3 buildings are designed to remain standing after a 1-in-1000 year wind event, which has a 5% chance of being exceeded in a 50-year period.

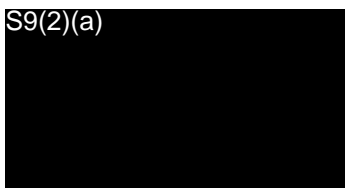
In summary, an IL3 building will provide a safer, more robust building than an equivalent IL2 building. Due to increased robustness, the chance of disruption to business operations as a result of damage to the primary structure following an earthquake is also reduced.

Additional Benefit of Base Isolation

Base isolation inherently provides a high level of protection to the building contents which include non-structural elements such as ceilings, partitions and building services. Therefore base-isolated buildings are more likely to remain operational after an earthquake than an equivalent non base-isolated building.

We trust this letter meets your requirements. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate the undersigned.

Yours sincerely

S9(2)(a)


Technical Director - Structural Engineering

on behalf of

Beca Ltd

Direct Dial: S9(2)(a)

Email S9(2)(a)



85 Molesworth Street
PO Box 3942, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
T: +64 4 473 7551 // F: +64 4 473 7911
E: info@beca.com // www.beca.com

John Robinson
Molesworth Office Trustee Ltd
PO Box 30626
Lower Hutt, 5040

14 October 2016

Dear John

133 Molesworth St - Structural Statement for CPU

The structural redevelopment work was designed to achieve 100% New Building Standard (%NBS) in accordance with NZSEE guidelines 2006 (including Corrigenda 1 and 2) and NZS1170.5:2004 assuming an Importance Level of 3.

Based on our site inspections carried out to CM3 in accordance with ACENZ/IPENZ guidelines, and information supplied by the contractor to date, we believe on reasonable grounds that the redevelopment works have been carried out generally in accordance with our design documents as consented under building consent N° SR318039 and amendments 1,2&3 and subsequently altered by Consultant Advice Notices 1-243.

On this basis we see no reason why the building should not be occupied after 28th October 2016.

We trust this letter is satisfactory. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely

S9(2)(a)

Senior Associate - Structural Engineering

on behalf of

Direct Dial: S9(2)(a)
Email: S9(2)(a)

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