

Earthquake strengthening seminar 3: Question and answer session

1. Comment from Project Management Company representative (Tom Colman)

The representative stressed the need for a geotechnical assessment.

Sue Glyde responded that a geotechnical assessment had been budgeted. However, it had not proved necessary because there was sufficient information from the Wellington City Council (ie 11 m piles).

John de Groen noted that his body corporate had obtained a geotechnical report which said there was little chance of liquefaction in the area. Piles had been driven in 1926 but the building was too rigid and that the latter is what had to be addressed in the earthquake strengthening.

Geraldine Murphy noted that the next seminar in the series would deal with geotechnical assessments as part of the theme professional/expert reports.

2. Comment from Terry Jones.

Terry noted that his body corporate, comprising 28 apartments, had dealt with both weathertightness and earthquake strengthening costing \$5.2m. The project had been managed by a team of three body corporate owners. As there was a high time commitment their time has been charged out as part of the project. Terry also noted the cost and distribution agreement that every owner had to sign.

3. Question asking how funding and earthquake strengthening options were managed.

Jon de Groen said they had not been able to get a fixed price. It was therefore important to get owners involved and keep them up to date by way of a circular to owners. This was important as owners needed to source funds between the stage of getting information and before work commenced. People's circumstances can be very different across an apartment complex – some have large mortgages, some are retired with banks unwilling to lend. The body corporate was doing its best to accommodate all owners as best as possible. In the absence of earthquake strengthening, owners could lose up to 80 or 90 per cent of their investment. There were instances of bodies corporate hamstrung because owners could not afford the cost of strengthening while other bodies corporate were proceeding with strengthening regardless.

Geraldine Murphy commented that the Inner City Association and the Body Corporate Chairs' Group had had discussions with Grant Robertson, Paul Foster-Bell and Mayor Celia Wade-Brown about funding issues relating to earthquake strengthening by owners of residential apartments. Iona Pannett (City Councillor) had also been at those discussions but so far there has been no feedback. Geraldine Murphy and Neil Cooper encouraged apartment owners to contact the Lambton Ward or local city councillor, especially Iona Pannett who is Chair of the Built Environment Portfolio.

4. Public good

A member of the audience advocated for some public responsibility as there is a public good in earthquake strengthening of inner city buildings. The Wellington City Council has the ability to go to the government seeking support because of the public good element.

Geraldine Murphy commented that Grant Robertson (MP, Wellington Central) had undertaken to get an analysis done of funding options but, so far, we have not heard anything more. The earthquake

strengthening issue affects Wellington mostly and regional towns with earthquake prone buildings on their main streets and the funding issue needs to be raised with political representatives of the relevant regions. Chrissie Hill suggested that an earthquake strengthening fund should be established.

5. Matters of unequal disadvantage

David Levitt asked how matters of unequal disadvantage had been resolved, in cases where some owners had impeded outlook because of K frames in front of windows or taking up internal space.

Chrissie Hill said that in her building, it was mainly the bedrooms that had been affected. There had been options with fewer or no unequal impacts but those options were more expensive. Overall, the strengthening options ranged from \$2m to \$13m. Consideration had also been given demolition by offering the site to a developer. However, this last option was not progressed as owners wanted to continue to live there.

Update – Building Act legislation

6. Stephen Cody (Manager Building Resilience, Wellington City Council) provided an update on implementation of the legislation. It is expected to take effect early next year when regulations are brought into force. Currently, the Ministry of Building, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has six streams of work developing the regulations. Things that are being worked on include:

- defining earthquake buildings
- standard notices throughout the country
- a national register of earthquake prone buildings.

Councils are providing input. Lower seismic risk means that Auckland has longer to implement the requirements than Wellington. MBIE is developing general guidelines which are expected to be put out for public consultation in September 2016.

Update - Review of the Unit Titles Act

Neil Cooper (National Chairperson, BCCG) advised that he had met with MBIE on the potential review of the Unit Titles Act and raised 20 issues in addition to those raised in the Unit Title Working Group's Report (<http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2848147-Unit-Title-Working-Group-May-2016.html>). Public submissions will assist officials in reporting back to the Minister of Housing in August. Please email any input to national.president@bccg.org.nz.

Next Seminar

Geraldine Murphy advised that:

- Seminar 4 in this series is scheduled for mid-October 2016 on managing earthquake strengthening from a technical perspective
- Seminar 5 will on methodologies and an update on the regulations to be confirmed.

Note: the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the speakers, and acknowledgement of the generous subsidy for the meeting venue by CQ Hotel.