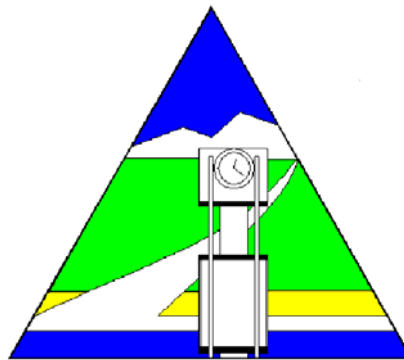


Ashburton District Council



DANGEROUS, EARTHQUAKE PRONE AND INSANITARY BUILDINGS POLICY

**Adopted by the Ashburton District Council
29 June 2006**

Dangerous, Earthquake-Prone and Insanitary Buildings Policy

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1. Introduction and Background

Section 131 of the Building Act, 2004 requires territorial authorities to adopt a policy on dangerous, earthquake-prone and insanitary buildings by 31 May 2006.

This document sets out the policy adopted by Ashburton District Council in accordance with the requirements of the Building Act, 2004.

The policy is required to state:

1. the approach that the Ashburton District Council will take in performing its functions under the Building Act 2004;
2. Ashburton District Council's priorities in performing those functions; and
3. how the policy will apply to heritage buildings.

In developing and adopting its earthquake-prone buildings policy, Ashburton District Council will follow the consultative procedure set out in section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002.

In preparing this policy, Ashburton District Council has made extensive use of the Department of Building and Housing's guidance document and has also prepared an Issues & Options document for consultation prior to formulating a draft policy.

2. Building Act Principles

Section 4 of the Building Act lays down the principles to be taken into account by the Ashburton District Council in adopting this policy. The subclauses appropriate to be taken into account are as follows.

- (2) *"In achieving the purpose of this Act, a person to whom this section applies must take into account the following principles that are relevant to the performance of functions or duties imposed, or the exercise of powers conferred, on that person by this Act:*
- a) *when dealing with any matter relating to 1 or more household units*
 - (i) *the role that household units play in the lives of the people who use them, and the importance of —*
 - A) *the building code as it relates to household units; and*
 - B) *the need to ensure that household units comply with the building code:*
 - (ii) *the need to ensure that maintenance requirements of household units are reasonable:*
 - (iii) *the desirability of ensuring that owners of household units are aware of the maintenance requirements of their household units:*
 - b) *the need to ensure that any harmful effect on human health resulting from the use of particular building methods or products or of a particular building design, or from building work, is prevented or minimised*

- (c) *the importance of ensuring that each building is durable for its intended use:*
- (d) *the importance of recognising any special traditional and cultural aspects of the intended use of a building:*
- (e) *the costs of a building (including maintenance) over the whole of its life:*
- (f) *the importance of standards of building design and construction in achieving compliance with the building code:*
- (g) *the importance of allowing for continuing innovation in methods of building design and construction:*
- (h) *the reasonable expectations of a person who is authorised by law to enter a building to undertake rescue operations or fire fighting to be protected from injury or illness when doing so:*
- (i) *the need to provide protection to limit the extent and effects of the spread of fire, particularly with regard to —*
 - (i) *household units (whether on the same land or on other property); and*
 - (ii) *other property:*
- (j) *the need to provide for the protection of other property from physical damage resulting from the construction, use, and demolition of a building:*
- (k) *(not applicable)*
- (l) *the need to facilitate the preservation of buildings of significant cultural, historical, or heritage value.*
- (m) - (p) *(not applicable)*”

3. Definitions of Buildings Covered by this Policy

The definitions of dangerous, earthquake-prone and insanitary buildings are set out in ss121 - 123 of the Building Act 2004 as follows.

(i) 121 Meaning of dangerous building

(1) “A building is **dangerous** for the purposes of this Act if –

- (a) *In the ordinary course of events (excluding the occurrence of an earthquake), the building is likely to cause –*
 - (i) *injury or death (whether by collapse or otherwise) to any persons in it or to persons on other property; or*
 - (ii) *damage to other property; or*

(b) *in the event of fire, injury or death to any person in the building or to persons on other property is likely because of fire hazard or the occupancy of the building.*

(ii) 122 Meaning of earthquake-prone building

(1) *“A building is **earthquake prone** for the purposes of this Act if, having regard to its condition and the ground on which it is built, and because of its construction, the building –*

(a) *will have its ultimate capacity exceeded in a moderate earthquake (as defined in the regulations); and*

(b) *would be likely to collapse causing –*

(i) *injury or death to persons in the building or to persons on any other property; or*

(ii) *damage to any other property.*

(2) *Subsection (1) does not apply to a building that is “used wholly or mainly for residential purposes” unless the building –*

(a) *comprises 2 or more storeys; and*

(b) *contains 3 or more household units.”*

(iii) 123 Meaning of insanitary building

*“A building is **insanitary** for the purposes of this Act if the building –*

(a) *is offensive or likely to be injurious to health because –*

(i) *of how it is situated or constructed; or*

(ii) *it is in a state of disrepair; or*

(b) *has insufficient or defective provisions against moisture penetration so as to cause dampness in the building or in any adjoining building; or*

(c) *does not have a supply of potable water that is adequate for its intended use; or*

(d) *does not have sanitary facilities that are adequate for its intended use.”*

The definition of **moderate earthquake** is laid down in the Building Specified Systems, Change the Use, and Earthquake-prone Buildings Regulations 2005 as:

“... in relation to a building, an earthquake that would generate shaking at the site of the building that is of the same duration as, but that is one-third as strong as, the earthquake shaking (determined by normal measures of acceleration, velocity and displacement) that would be used to design a new building at the site.”

4. Overall Approach

4.1 Policy Principles

Ashburton District Council has noted that provisions of the Building Act 2004 in regard to dangerous, earthquake-prone and insanitary buildings reflect the government's broader concern with the health and safety of the public in buildings and, more particularly, the need to address human safety in the event of an earthquake.

Ashburton District Council is committed to ensuring that the Ashburton District is a safe and healthy place to live and work while also ensuring that the District continues to develop and thrive. This policy supports the following outcomes from the Ashburton District Long Term Community Outcomes Plan:

- Outcome 2: - Natural & Developed Environments are sustained for the enjoyment of current & future generations.
- Outcome 3: - A community with a strong sense of identity & heritage
- Outcome 5: - Healthy, active people enjoying a good quality of life in a safe & caring community.

Ashburton District Council has also noted that the development of dangerous, earthquake-prone and insanitary building policies is up to each territorial authority to determine and has responded accordingly.

This policy will be further developed and finalised after due consultation with Ashburton District Council ratepayers and stakeholders in accordance with section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002. This process will involve a submission period and an opportunity for Submitters to be heard, before the Council decides on final policy content.

4.2 District Characteristics

The built environment of the Ashburton District has developed over the last 150 years. European settlement has largely been based around the successful agricultural economy of the district. Construction of buildings has been according to the standards and styles of the period.

Local buildings comprise a range of types and ages with construction techniques ranging from wood and unreinforced masonry buildings to a few modern multi-storey steel and concrete buildings. The great majority of buildings are one or two-storey only.

Ashburton District is presently experiencing a period of steady economic growth that reflects the confidence in greater agricultural productivity, increased land prices and an influx of new residents.

Ashburton District is in a zone of high to moderate seismic activity, with the Alpine Fault bordering the district, but due to the mountainous terrain – a very low density of building stock exists close to the Main Divide. Farm Buildings and Recreational Huts make up the greater percentage of buildings in this higher risk location of the district.

As the topography becomes more suited to farming and settlement, small settlements such as Mt Somers and Methven occur within a band of higher risk / shaking intensity; It is estimated that a movement in the Alpine Fault could produce shaking intensities in the region of 8 on the Mercalli Scale in such locations. The eastern part of the district is separated by distance from the Alpine Fault and it is estimated that a movement in the Alpine Fault could produce shaking intensities in the region of 7 on the Mercalli Scale in the Ashburton Community.

Reference:- “Probability & Consequences of the Next Alpine Fault Earthquake – Geotech Consulting Ltd”.

In developing this policy the Ashburton District Council must balance the need to protect public health and safety against the economic implications of requiring significant remedial building work and the community’s desire to protect heritage structures and the heritage of Mid-Canterbury.

Dangerous & Insanitary Buildings are addressed in this first part of the Policy, while Earthquake-prone buildings are addressed in the second part.

5. Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy

5.1 Policy Approach

Conversions of existing buildings, lack of maintenance, lack of appropriate facilities, overcrowding and un-consented alterations can cause serious health and safety problems.

The failure to obtain a building consent or the use of buildings for unauthorised purposes can pose a danger to the occupants as well as users. Dangers may include danger of collapse, inadequate fire protection or means of escape.

The development of the New Zealand Building Code and associated standards creates, over time, an effective “raising of the bar” for the standards which buildings and building owners must meet. Existing buildings must be maintained appropriately in order to continue to meet such standards.

The Council is actively involved in educating the public on Building Act matters with a view to encourage owners to obtain building consent where necessary. The Council treats building safety as a serious matter, buildings must be safe for their intended use and for occupiers.

5.2 Identifying Dangerous or Insanitary Buildings

The Council will identify potentially dangerous or insanitary buildings on the basis of:

1. Complaints from members of the public.
2. Advice received from Council staff.
3. Complaints or advice from other agencies (eg local health providers, NZ Police, NZ Fire Service, tradespersons etc).

5.3 Assessment/Prioritisation Criteria

The Council will endeavour to assess potentially dangerous or insanitary buildings in accordance with s121 (1) or s123 of the Act within five working days. Where the Council is satisfied a building is dangerous or insanitary it will also assess the level of risk to public health or safety that is presented.

The Council will give priority to buildings that have been determined to present such a high level of risk as to warrant immediate action to remove the risk.

Options for such immediate action include:

- Prohibiting any person from occupying or using the building;
- If necessary, erecting barriers and warning signs, plus securing the building to prevent entry until such time as remedial action can be taken;
- Undertaking remedial action under s129 of the Building Act. Note that, in the case of insanitary buildings, the Council reserves the right to use its powers available under s34 of the Health Act, 1956.

Where the Council undertakes remedial action under either s129 of the Building Act or s34 of the Health Act, all costs will be recoverable from the building owner(s) as provided for in the relevant legislation.

Buildings that are determined to present a serious risk which is not immediate will be subject to the minimum timeframes for reduction or removal of the danger (being not less than 10 days) as set out in s124(1) (c) of the Act.

In addition to remedial action, the Building Act 2004 also empowers the Council to prosecute building owners and the exercise of this power may also be considered at times by the Council.

5.4 Investigation and Enforcement Process - Dangerous or Insanitary Buildings

The Council will endeavour to:

1. Respond to and investigate all building complaints received within five working days.
2. Identify from these investigations any buildings that are dangerous or insanitary.
3. Assess the level of risk presented by the building and, if required, take immediate action.
4. Inform the owner and occupier of the building to take action to reduce or remove the danger or insanitary condition, as required by s124 and s125 of the Act.
5. Liaise with the New Zealand Fire Service when Council deems it appropriate, in accordance with s121 (2) of the Act.

“For the purpose of determining whether a building is dangerous in terms of s121 subsection (1) (b), a territorial authority-

- (a) *May seek advice from members of the New Zealand Fire Service who have been notified to the territorial authority by the Fire Service National Commander as being competent to give advice; and*
 - (b) *If the advice is sought, must have due regard to the advice.”*
6. Where the building is a heritage building listed in Council's District Plan, a Marae or building listed in the New Zealand Historic Places Register, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust shall also be advised and consulted.

If the building is found to be dangerous or insanitary but does not present an immediate risk the Council may:

- 7. Attach written notice to the building requiring work to be carried out on the building, within a time stated in the notice being not less than 10 days, to reduce or remove the danger.
- 8. Give copies of that notice to the building owner, occupier and every person who has an interest in the land, or is claiming an interest in the land, as well as the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, if the building is a registered heritage building.
- 9. Contact the owner at the expiry of the time period set down in the notice in order to gain access to the building to ascertain whether the notice has been complied with.
- 10. Where the danger is the result of non-consented building work the owner will formally be requested to provide an explanation as to how the work occurred and who carried it out and under whose instructions.
- 11. Pursue enforcement action under the Building Act 2004 & Health Act 1956 and recover actual & reasonable costs.

All owners have the right to apply to the Department of Building and Housing for a determination under s 177(e) of the Act. However a non-statutory objection process will be available whereby written objections may be lodged with the Council for a hearing and review by a Hearings Panel of the Environmental Services Committee. Council will reserve the right to recover costs of this process from objectors & / or building owners.

5.5 Interaction between this Policy and Related Sections of the Act

Section 41 (1) (C) of the Building Act 2004 provides for situations where, because of the urgency of the work to be done, it is not practical to apply for a building consent before the work is undertaken.

In cases where a building is assessed as being immediately dangerous the Council may not require a building consent to be obtained for any building work considered to be immediately necessary to remove the danger. However, prior to any action being taken it is essential that building owners provide a written proposal of any proposed works to the Council for agreement on the matter.

5.6 Record Keeping

Any buildings identified as being dangerous or insanitary will have an information note placed on the Council's records for the property on which the building is situated until the dangerous or insanitary condition is remedied.

In addition, the information will be placed on any Land Information Memorandum (LIMs) and will be available for public release in accordance with the provisions of Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

6. Earthquake-Prone Buildings Policy

6.1 Policy Approach

Because of the high to moderate seismic risk, with the Alpine Fault bordering the district, Ashburton District Council has pursued a policy of encouraging the strengthening of earthquake-prone buildings through the building consent process and at times when alterations are being considered.

In developing this policy, the Ashburton District Council must balance the need to protect public health and safety against the economic implications of requiring significant remedial building work and the community's desire to protect heritage structures and the heritage of Mid-Canterbury.

In some instances, property owners have acted on their own accord and have carried out strengthening work.

Some buildings have also been strengthened in accordance with the requirements of Section 46 of the Building Act 1991.

In developing its approach to this policy, Ashburton District Council has to consider key issues of:

- Economic impacts of progressively strengthening building stock in anticipation of an earthquake that could damage the building stock.

- Economic impacts of NOT strengthening building stock and incurring the cost of repair / replacement all at the same time and at the same time that infrastructure may be damaged and require repair as the result of an earthquake.
- The level of risk to human life & safety which can be tolerated over both the short and long term if building strengthening is delayed.

In considering the key issues, the Council needs to achieve a balance between a number of conflicting issues and concerns:

- The safety of the public when an earthquake event occurs.
- The likelihood, severity and potential timing of a major earthquake & effects on different locations within the district.
- The economic impact on the District of a major earthquake.
- The relative age and condition of non-residential buildings within the District.
- The costs of undertaking a comprehensive review of potentially earthquake-prone buildings and the availability of funding for this work.
- The costs of planned and progressive strengthening of buildings versus the economic impact of catastrophic failures caused by an earthquake.
- The costs to building owners of undertaking various levels of strengthening work and the potential economic impact (including loss of businesses) to the District.
- The risk that buildings which are uneconomic to strengthen will be demolished and that the character of the built environment in Ashburton District will alter as a result.
- The potential loss of heritage buildings as the result of this process.
- The need for statutory compliance by building owners and the Council.

Ashburton District Council's Earthquake-Prone Building Policy needs to reflect Council's approach to reduce earthquake risk over time, but in a way that advances the interests of its ratepayers in terms of the key LTCCP well-beings;- economic, social, environmental and cultural.

6.2 Identifying Earthquake-Prone Buildings

The Council does not intend to conduct a preliminary "desk top" assessment of the districts' building stock. Alternately the following criteria will drive when the Council becomes involved;-

1. When a Building Consent Application is received, or;
2. When a "Change the Use" occurs; or
3. When complaints or concern is received about the state of a building and the Council considers there are grounds for further investigation and assessment.

6.2.1 Building Consent Applications

On receipt of an application for Building Consent Application alterations to a building, the Council may:

- i. Require the applicant to provide an assessment of structural strength of the entire building or parts of the building where the proposed building work will impact on or relies on the structural integrity of the building. Such an assessment must address whether or not the building is earthquake-prone; or
- ii. Assess whether or not the work to be consented will be so minor that it will not impact on the structural integrity of any part of the building.

Where an assessment of structural strength of the building, or relevant parts of the building, is received which indicates the building is earthquake prone, then a Building Consent will not be issued or progressed further, until the Council is satisfied that the building, or parts of the building subject to the Building Consent Application, will meet the minimum requirements of this policy and the Building Act 2004 for structural strength, or will do so upon completion of the proposed works. In some cases, where the Council is satisfied the building is earthquake-prone and after discussion with the building owner, it may issue the building consent (with any necessary waivers or modifications of the building code) and, at the same time, issue a notice or take other action under section 124 of the Building Act 2004.

6.2.2 Change of Use Applications

All owners wishing to change the use of a building must advise the Council of their intentions in writing.

Section 115 of the Act requires that, an owner of a building must not change the use of the building unless the Council gives written notice that it is:

“... satisfied, on reasonable grounds, that the building, in its new use, will –

- (i) comply, as nearly as is reasonably practicable with every provision of the building code that relates to either or both of the following matters:*
 - (A) means of escape from fire, protection of other property, sanitary facilities, **structural performance...**”*

Where a building is to incorporate household units where there were none previously the building must be upgraded "*as nearly as is reasonably practicable*" to comply with *all* the building code requirements. This means that building owners are required to ensure that their building has the same strength as a NEW building, as far as this is reasonably practicable in the circumstances. As such this aspect cannot be subject to this policy with regard to providing for a lesser level of strength, or for objections to statutory requirements.

6.2.3 Complaints

Potentially earthquake-prone buildings may also be identified as the result of complaints about a specific building or following investigations into complaints about dangerous or insanitary buildings.

6.3 Assessment and Strengthening Criteria

For practical purposes relating to this policy, Ashburton District Council will define earthquake-prone buildings as those that, when subject to moderate earthquake shaking, do not achieve 33% of ultimate limit state as defined in the loadings and materials standards for new buildings, with the exception of those buildings that have special strategic “Life Lines” importance to the Ashburton district as set out in section 6.3.2 of this policy.

The Council will require prior assessment and reporting by an appropriately qualified person or persons of the structural strength of a building, at the building owners’ expense. Such assessment will be provided to the Council before a Building Consent is issued for any structural work on the building or parts of the building.

Where the building is assessed as being potentially earthquake-prone and the work to be consented will not impact on the structural integrity of the building, the Council will require the building owner to undertake, within **fifteen years** of the date of the Building Consent Application, the strengthening work detailed in the Structural Strength Assessment Report that has been accepted by the Council. If upon expiry of the period of **fifteen years** and the strengthening work subject to the Structural Strength Assessment Report, has not been satisfactorily completed, then the Council may take action in accordance with section 124 of the Building Act 2004.

6.3.1 Assessment Process, Criteria and Cost

Assessment of whether or not a building is earthquake-prone will be undertaken by an appropriately qualified person – ie a Chartered Professional Engineer with expertise in Earthquake Engineering and preferably recognised by the New Zealand Society of Earthquake Engineers. The Council anticipates that in the majority of occasions, the building owner will commission Structural Strength Assessment Reports on affected buildings; however, the Council recognises that at times to fulfil its statutory obligations that some investigation and assessment may have to be commissioned by the Council and the cost recovered from the building owner.

In addition to the more generic risks of the likely probability and magnitude of an earthquake affecting the building, assessments will take into account the following factors specific to the building and its site:

- Hazard – geographic proximity to an earthquake hazard/fault line.
- Vulnerability of site – building site conditions, especially with regard to liquefaction risk and soil types.
- Vulnerability of building – construction methods, materials, maintenance, current condition, height, design and loadings.
- Importance – of building and/or contents, eg strategic value of the building.
- Damage – risk of the building damaging neighbouring property.
- Exposure – the numbers of people using the building and frequency of use.

In all situations, the Councils Funding Policy will apply to cost recovery and funding of work related to this matter. Building owners will be required to fund 100% of costs incurred in assessment & strengthening of a building, including Objection Hearings Panel, Council staff, consultancy and legal costs, unless the Councils Funding Policy specifically contains provision for remission due to public benefit.

6.3.2 Strengthening Requirements

Ashburton District Council will use the New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering Recommendations as its preferred basis for defining technical requirements and criteria. These Recommendations are designed to be used in conjunction with AS/NZS 1170 Loadings Standard, NZS 3101 Concrete Structures Standard, NZS 3404 Steel Structures Standard and other materials Standards.

Where a building is formally identified by the Council as being earthquake-prone, the Council will apply the following strengthening criteria:

- A Buildings with special post-disaster functions as defined in AS/NZS 1170.0: 2002, Importance Level 4, to be strengthened to a minimum of 67%.
- B Buildings that contain people in crowds or contents of high value to the community as defined in AS/NZS 1170.0: 2002, Importance Level 3, to be strengthened to a minimum of 33%, with strengthening to 67% to be strongly encouraged.
- C Heritage buildings listed in Council's District Plan Schedule, Marae and buildings listed in the New Zealand Historic Places Trust Register to be strengthened to a minimum of 33%.
- D Buildings with an Importance Level of less than 3 as defined in AS/NZS 1170.0: 2002 and identified as being earthquake-prone to be strengthened to a minimum of 33%.

6.3.3 Partial Strengthening

On occasion, the detailed assessment may find that only part of a building is earthquake-prone and requires strengthening – eg an addition or façade.

In these situations, Council will decide on the level of strengthening and the timetable for remedial action on a case-by-case basis.

6.4 Liaison with Building Owners and Taking Action on Buildings Likely to be Earthquake-Prone

Before exercising its powers under section 124, Ashburton District Council will seek where appropriate to discuss options for remedial action with affected building owners to reach agreement on the best approach to deal with the danger. The building owner will then be required to submit a formal proposal to Council which confirms the works to be undertaken to strengthen the building, remove the danger or remove the building.

In the event that discussions do not result in a mutually acceptable proposal, Ashburton District Council may serve a formal notice on the building owner to strengthen or demolish the building. A Building Consent will not be issued that could extend the building life or maintain / increase the level of danger to building occupants or neighbouring persons / buildings, unless the Building Consent also includes strengthening of the building / parts of the building, to the Council's satisfaction.

Ashburton District Council will:

- i. Advise and liaise with the owners of buildings identified as earthquake-prone.
- ii. Encourage building owners to carry out an independent assessment of the structural performance of those buildings identified as earthquake-prone.
- iii. Serve formal notices on owners of earthquake-prone buildings in accordance with s124 of the Building Act 2004, requiring them to reduce or remove the danger.
- iv. Allow building owners to object to the classification of the building within 12 months of receipt of the notice.]

6.5 Recording a Building's Earthquake-Prone Status

Ashburton District Council will keep a register of all earthquake-prone buildings noting the status of requirements for improvement or the results of improvement as applicable.

In addition, the information will be placed on any Land Information Memorandum (LIMs) and will be available for public release in accordance with the provisions of Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Ashburton District Council will not require earthquake-prone buildings to have an identifying plaque affixed to the building. The information will be available at the Council offices and via the LIM process.

7. Heritage Buildings

Heritage buildings are those listed in Council's District Plan Schedule, Marae and buildings listed in the New Zealand Historic Places Trust Register. The Building Act 2004 recognises that special provision shall be made for such buildings.

Ashburton District Council believes it is important that its heritage buildings have a good chance of surviving a major earthquake in order to retain these important connections to the District's history and unique character. However, Ashburton District Council does not wish to see the intrinsic heritage values of these buildings adversely affected by structural improvement measures.

Heritage buildings will be assessed in the same manner as other potentially dangerous, earthquake-prone or insanitary buildings and as per ss121-123 of the Act, and discussions will be entered into with the owner and the New Zealand Historic Places Trust (pursuant to s125 (2) (f) where the building is contained in their Register) to identify a mutually acceptable way forward which meets heritage objectives and Building Act requirements included in this Policy as near as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.

Council will serve notices requiring upgrading or demolition within specified timeframes, in consultation with building owners. A copy of any notice issued under s124 of the Act will be sent to the Historic Places Trust in the case of all heritage buildings.

Any upgrading work must take into account the principles of the International Council on Monuments and sites (ICOMOS) NZ Charter, any advice from Council's heritage staff or other heritage professionals or organisations, where applicable and should be designed to involve minimal loss to heritage fabric.

Waivers of modifications of the building code will be considered on a case by case basis and seismic strengthening methods that respect heritage values will be supported.

Council Funding of Structural Strength Assessments and Strengthening Works will be subject to availability of Grants from the Council as determined by the Heritage Grants criteria and the Long Term Council Community Plan from time to time. The Council's Funding Policy will also be relevant to this matter. The Council has a positive attitude towards the retention of heritage buildings and values and will encourage building owners to retain their buildings.

Demolition is an option of last resort for heritage buildings.

8. Objections

In the first instance, building owners or other directly affected parties who wish to object to a building being, (or not being), declared dangerous, earthquake-prone or insanitary may record their objections in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of the Council. The Chief Executive Officer will undertake an investigation of the circumstances of the building and the reasons behind the Councils' decision on the matter and arrange for a Hearings Panel of Councillors to review the decision and if necessary to hear evidence from parties involved. A Council decision will be provided by way of response to an objection. Applying to the Department of Building & Housing for a Determination is also an option available to building owners.

The Council reserves the right to recover actual and reasonable costs incurred in conducting review and objection processes, in accordance with fees set from time to time and the Councils' Funding Policy.

Priority will be given to objections where the building has been declared to be of such a risk as to require immediate remedial action so that no undue delays are caused.

8.1 Determinations

Building owners and a variety of other interested parties (eg the New Zealand Fire Service) can apply to the Chief Executive of the Department of Building and Housing for a determination. Determinations can be applied for concerning the Council's decisions to issue or not issue a consent or code compliance certificate, or to exercise or not exercise its powers concerning dangerous, earthquake-prone or insanitary buildings.

Sections 176 – 190 of the Act lay out the requirements for determinations.

9. Economic Impact of Policy

The economic impact of the dangerous and insanitary buildings section of this policy is assessed as being minor, since there are relatively few such issues each year.

The economic impact on the District of an earthquake involving the Alpine fault is likely to be very substantial given the probability of a significant earthquake that is predicted to adversely affect building structures in the district.

Such a quake is predicted as having a probability of 65% (+/- 15%) of occurring within the next 50 years.

Given the level of risk (in terms of both severity and likelihood), the Ashburton District Council could pursue a much more proactive stance on earthquake-prone buildings. However, the Council is sensitive to issues such as the limited rating base and potential costs to building owners.. This policy represents the considered opinion of the Council, in particular to minimum building strength and safety to persons. The minimum strength of 33% and a 15 year duration for strengthening in some cases also reflects the Council desire to improve earthquake safety in a balanced and sustainable manner.

Policy adopted by the Ashburton District Council on 29 June 2006.

Signed by Bede O'Malley Mayor -----

Signed by Brian Lester Chief Executive Officer -----