



The Journal

Education and collaboration key

Getting vital input from the very people, facilities managers, who will look after the building for decades from the outset will help prevent future facade issues.

IN THIS ISSUE



**Business as usual
with a stronger
focus on growth and
engagement**



**New Zealand's
economy and
construction
industry 'in flux'**



**Building knowledge
and connections at
2025 conference**



**A pregnancy journey
as a young Building
Surveyor**



CONTENTS



FRONT COVER: In our ongoing facade series, we look at how building surveyors and facilities managers can better maintain our cities' largest assets.

Business as usual with a stronger focus on growth and engagement.....	2
Technical challenges and professional insights defining the sector.....	4
Building knowledge and connections at the 2025 NZIBS Annual Conference.....	5
Where has it been, where is it heading, and why is it so important?	12
Façade failures are a known risk, so why aren't we acting?	14
Education and collaboration key to bridging the gaps in façade management	17
What is a Building Surveyor?	19
New Zealand's economy and construction industry 'in flux'	22
Shifting the Building Act's boundaries.....	25
Urban Renewal: The Mass Timber Building at 211 High Street, Christchurch.....	27
Building Foundations and Families – A Pregnancy Journey as a Young Building Surveyor in Aotearoa.....	30
Thank you to our sponsors.....	35



CONTACTS

President: Darryl August

Operations Officer:

Sarah Pugh

Email:

operations@buildingsurveyors.co.nz

NZIBS Contact: New Zealand
Institute of Building Surveyors
PO Box 79015 Avonhead,
Christchurch, 8446

Phone: 0800 113 400

Email:

operations@buildingsurveyors.co.nz

Layout: Heysmartypants Design
www.heyssmartypants.co.nz

Editor: Sarah Hohaia

Newsletter Disclaimer

The information in any NZIBS newsletter is for general use only. The information has been provided by NZIBS and by third parties including NZIBS members. While NZIBS has endeavoured to provide accurate information, neither NZIBS nor the third parties provide any guarantees regarding the correctness, currency, completeness or suitability of the information for any particular purpose. It should not be relied on in place of appropriate specific advice or verification. Opinions provided by third parties on any matter do not necessarily represent the opinion or policy of NZIBS.



FROM THE PRESIDENT



DARRYL AUGUST

NZIBS PRESIDENT

president@buildingsurveyors.co.nz

Business as usual with a stronger focus on growth and engagement

Stepping into the role of President, I want to begin by reassuring all our members that it is very much business as usual at NZIBS.

Our work supporting the profession and contributing to New Zealand's built environment continues without interruption, guided by the new Executive team.

At our recent Executive meeting, I was formally appointed President and Operations Chair, joined by a committed group of colleagues:

- **Scott Dunnett**
Vice President/Finance Chair,
- **Max Harlow**
Training Chair,
- **Dirk Stahlhut**
Membership Chair,
- **Ian Fong**
Industry Chair,
- **Malcolm Arnold**
Technical Chair,
- **Rhys Ellery**
Executive member,
- **Phil O'Sullivan**
Special Projects Chair, and
- **Sarah Hohaia**,
Marketing Chair.

Together, we are focused on strengthening the Institute's foundations and ensuring our members remain at the heart of everything we do.

With that in mind, we're actively engaged on two fronts: delivering for our members, and helping shape the future of the construction sector.

That means maintaining the day-to-day support you rely on (training opportunities, technical resources, and professional advocacy) while also positioning the Institute to play an even stronger role in industry conversations.

One of my priorities is to grow our membership and to deepen engagement, both with you, our members, and with external stakeholders.

A larger, more connected Institute means greater influence, more opportunities for collaboration, and a stronger platform to promote the expertise building surveyors bring to the industry.

In listening to members, I have also recognised the need for more direct, two-way engagement.

To that end, we are reintroducing the NZIBS webinar series, first launched during the COVID-19-era, but now refreshed as a dedicated member engagement initiative.

Starting this quarter, we will host a one-hour lunchtime webinar every three months. Each session will include:

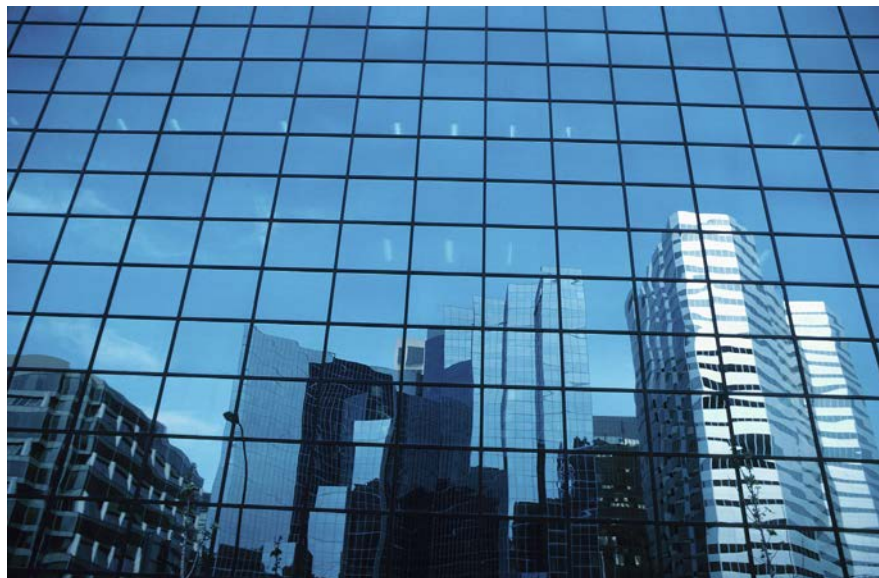
- 30 minutes of updates from the Executive on what NZIBS has been working on;
- 15 minutes for sponsors to share insights and updates on their products or services;
- 15 minutes of live Q&A with members.

This format will provide transparency, foster dialogue, and help strengthen our sense of community across the membership.

I encourage all of you to take part, ask questions, and share your perspectives.

Beyond our internal focus, NZIBS must continue to engage with wider industry challenges. One debate currently shaping the sector is proportionate liability.

There has been a lot of noise around the Government's proposals, with some warning it could spell "disaster" for homeowners. At NZIBS, we see both the risks and the potential benefits. Proportionate liability, if supported by accessible insurance, can be part of a stronger framework that protects



Beyond our internal focus NZIBS must continue to engage with wider industry challenges. One debate currently shaping the sector is proportionate liability.

homeowners and encourages better outcomes. But insurance alone is not enough.

As I've said before, we need a building industry that delivers higher-quality homes with fewer defects. That requires better education, stronger professional standards, and a commitment to doing things right the first time.

Read our full statement over on **LinkedIn**, if you haven't already.

So, the months ahead will be about stability and momentum. We will continue to deliver the services you expect, while also creating new opportunities for professional growth, dialogue, and influence.

I invite you to stay engaged and to encourage colleagues in the sector to consider joining NZIBS. And I look forward to connecting with many of you in the months ahead. ■

**SARAH HOHIA**

EDITOR

marketing@buildingsurveyors.co.nz

Technical challenges and professional insights defining the sector

This issue of *The Journal* highlights both the challenges we face and the opportunities to shape a stronger, safer built environment.

From the technical detail of façade safety to the human stories of resilience and adaptability, the range of contributions shows just how wide our profession's impact really is.

In Christchurch, the mass timber development at 211 High Street is a striking example of urban renewal and sustainable design.

With engineered timber at its core, the project shows how commercial imperatives and low-carbon construction can align, offering a landmark for a city still defined by its rebuild.

Our Annual Conference in Christchurch reinforced the value of knowledge-sharing and connection.

Attendees engaged with topics ranging from moisture attribution and façade remediation to heritage archaeology and proportionate liability. These discussions reminded us that complacency is a risk in itself, and that our collective expertise is strengthened when we come together.

Warren Nevill's reflections on education underline this point; training isn't a cost but an investment in the profession's future.

Façade safety features prominently again. Victoria Richardson revisits concerns first raised in 2019, finding too little progress despite clear evidence of risk.

Her observations are reinforced by Facilities Management Association of NZ Board Member Alex Hampshire and FMANZ member Stuart Bryant, who emphasise the need for collaboration across building surveyors, facilities managers, and owners.

Their call is practical: embed education, shared language, and early involvement into everyday practice.

Policy change is also shaping our work. Recent reforms to the Building Act ease restrictions on smaller structures, aiming to reduce red tape.

While the Government's goal is flexibility, the risks (like fire safety, drainage, privacy, liability) are real.

As NZIBS President Darryl August notes, professional oversight is not diminished by these changes; if anything, it becomes more important.

At the same time, broader economic shifts are influencing the construction landscape. With costs stabilising and interest rates easing, conditions are

less volatile, though the need for rigorous, practical advice is only growing.

Among the technical and regulatory discussions, personal perspectives bring balance.

Amarita Khun Khun reflects on her pregnancy journey while working as a young building surveyor, highlighting the adaptability required to navigate professional and personal demands.

And in our ongoing *What is a Building Surveyor?* series, James Bundy draws on his career to describe the surveyor as the GP of the built environment: a pragmatic problem-solver who bridges disciplines and sees the bigger picture.

Taken together, these stories are a glimpse into profession both grounded and forward-looking.

We're addressing immediate risks, adapting to reform, and investing in education and future leaders.

Just as importantly, we are telling our own human stories, showing that building surveyors are not only technical experts but resilient contributors to a safer, smarter built environment. ■

Building knowledge and connections at the 2025 NZIBS Annual Conference

The New Zealand Institute of Building Surveyors (NZIBS) gathered in Christchurch on 12–13 September for its 31st Annual Conference, themed *Better Built Environment*. Over two days, delegates from across the country immersed themselves in a programme that balanced technical learning, industry reflection, and professional camaraderie.



The event once again affirmed its role as the cornerstone of the Institute's calendar: a forum where surveyors, engineers, architects, academics, and industry partners collectively explored the challenges and opportunities shaping the built environment.

continued on page 6

Day One: From governance to the ground

The conference opened on Friday morning with a karakia from Drew Knowles, who also served as MC. Drew has spent 30 years transforming business leaders through human performance and behaviour expertise.

As a former VP and Partner at a global consultancy firm, Drew has 25+ years international speaking experience across eight countries. He also helps leaders “behave better with anyone, in any situation” – delivering proven results for thousands of executives worldwide.

President David Clifton welcomed attendees, acknowledging long-standing Gold Partners GIB and Resene Rockcote, along with Bronze Partners Nu-Wall and Viking Roofspec, and corporate sponsors including Corporate Cost Consultants, Starke Windows, and Stamford Insurance.

Christchurch Mayor Phil Mauer delivered the keynote address, reflecting on the city's evolution and his vision of Christchurch as “the best place to live, work, invest and play”.

His remarks set a tone of civic pride and forward momentum, reminding delegates of the wider social context in which building surveyors operate.

The morning sessions leaned into technical expertise. John Gardiner, Managing Director of Building Confidence Ltd., distilled two decades of lessons in building controls, challenging building surveyors to maintain their professional relevance in a fast-changing regulatory environment.

Working at heights: Risks, responsibilities, and remediation

He was followed by Sergey Arykov of Vertac Height Services, who drew on 17 years of international experience to deliver a high-impact presentation on façade



remediation and working safely at height.

His presentation went far beyond the basics of working safely at height. Sergey unpacked the spectrum of access methods, from ladders and scaffolding to BMUs and rope access, and highlighted how each option must balance safety, cost, and practicality.

Through vivid case studies, he demonstrated the consequences of poor workmanship and insufficient inspection. In one project, his team uncovered 60 hidden de-bonded render patches after another contractor's cursory tap-testing had declared the façade safe. On another, they removed 120 kilograms of loose concrete spalling, preventing potential disaster for building users below.

Sergey also cautioned against overreliance on emerging technologies. Drones, he noted, are valuable for reconnaissance but still fall short in accuracy; a recent survey delivered only 70% reliability compared with physical inspection. His key message was clear: rope access is among the safest and most versatile tools in the construction sector—but only when executed with rigorous standards, skilled operators, and the right reporting practices.

Moisture, ventilation and blame

Denise Martin of Building Envelope Optimisation delivered one of the most technically detailed sessions of the conference. Her presentation, *Moisture, Ventilation & Blame: Is it the Building or the People?*, tackled a challenge that has vexed building surveyors for decades: identifying whether dampness stems from design faults or occupant behaviour.

Denise walked delegates through building code requirements, airflow maths, and real-world leakage scenarios, showing



continued on page 8



how the numbers often don't add up. Her analysis illustrated how intermittent fans, leaky windows, and occupant practices interact in ways that can mask underlying design or commissioning flaws.

Central to her talk was a decision matrix for fault attribution: first assess the capacity of installed systems (airflow, runtime, airtightness) before turning to behaviour. If the system cannot keep up "on its best day" she argued, then the fault lies in design or installation, not the occupants.

She also underscored the new legal context. With New Zealand shifting toward proportionate liability, building surveyors will be called on to provide clear, evidence-based apportionment of blame in moisture disputes. Tools like blower door testing, fan flow measurement, and data logging of humidity and CO₂ are no longer optional extras. They are essential instruments in a building surveyor's toolkit.

A lighter note followed: the Institute paused to celebrate Life Member Don Frame's 90th birthday. The celebration of the one of the Institute's most dedicated members highlighted the intergenerational ties that define NZIBS, connecting emerging

building surveyors with those who have shaped the profession over decades.

The post-lunch sessions highlighted Christchurch's architectural and cultural layers. Szymon Gozdzikowski of Ignite Architects and Euving Au of Ruamoko Solutions presented on *211 High Street*, a landmark mass timber development. Their joint session demonstrated how engineered timber is redefining sustainable construction in seismic contexts.

That theme of heritage and continuity carried through into the next presentation. Archaeologists Kirska Webb and Katharine Watson introduced delegates to the discipline of building archaeology, showing how detailed study of past structures deepens our understanding of heritage buildings and informs future conservation strategies.

The afternoon concluded with Sharon Robinson of Smart Living Spaces, whose session, *Homestar vs Remediation*, compared the benefits and limitations of New Zealand's sustainability rating system against the realities of remediation projects. Her candid analysis sparked debate on balancing aspirational standards with practical retrofit challenges.

Recognising achievement

Friday also featured the annual awards ceremony. Among the highlights:

- **Training Awards (Best in Class):** Jointly awarded to archaeologist Kirska Webb and Ulrickë Gibbs.
- **NZIBS Diploma in Building Surveying:** Achieved by Nick Brownlee, Sean White, and Martin Roche.
- **Golf Award – Sean O'Sullivan Cup:** Presented to Graeme Calvert by Darryl August on behalf of Resene Construction Systems.
- **Chapter Chair Award:** Presented to Christchurch Chair Graeme Calvert by Ian Fong.

The formal programme ended with a site visit to the new Court Theatre, one of Christchurch's most significant cultural rebuild projects. Delegates toured behind the scenes of the innovative facility, gaining first-hand insight into the technical challenges of constructing a performing arts venue to modern standards while honouring its civic role.



Day Two: Workshops and AGM

Saturday shifted the focus from plenary sessions to smaller, interactive workshops. Delegates rotated through sessions led by conference partners:

- **GIB and Resene Rockcote** shared updates on product innovation and application best practices.
- **Viking Roofspec** showcased solutions for complex roofing projects.
- **Proportionate Liability**, led by NZIBS then Past President Darryl August, tackled a topic of increasing legal and professional importance, sparking robust discussion on accountability within the sector.

The workshops underscored the central role of sponsors, not only in supporting the event but also in providing technical education that feeds directly into members' professional practice. The conference closed with the Institute's AGM, where members reviewed governance matters and set strategic priorities for the year ahead.

Several threads wove consistently through the two-day programme,

shaping the conversations both on and off the stage. Safety and responsibility emerged as constant refrains, whether in John's reflections on two decades of building controls or in Sergey's sobering discussion of working at height.

Both underscored that every technical decision carries with it a duty of care, not only to clients but to the broader public who inhabit the built environment.

Equally present was the push for sustainability and innovation. From the timber structure of 211 High Street to Sharon's candid critique of Homestar in practice, delegates were invited to balance aspiration with practicality.

The message was clear: while the industry must pursue greener, more resilient building practices, solutions need to be grounded in the realities of remediation, retrofitting, and cost.

Heritage provided another lens through which to view the profession's responsibilities.

The session on building archaeology by Kirska and Katharine reminded conference attendees that every structure tells a story, and that understanding the past is

crucial to guiding the future.

This interplay of continuity and change gave the conference a sense of depth, placing contemporary technical issues within a much longer historical frame.

Equally important was the atmosphere: networking over tea breaks, engaging with trade exhibitors, and reconnecting with colleagues face-to-face after months of dispersed work.

The 31st Annual Conference affirmed why NZIBS gatherings are so vital. Because they create space for technical growth, sector-wide reflection, and personal connection.

Whether examining moisture ingress, celebrating a 90th birthday, or walking the halls of the new Court Theatre, attendees left Christchurch with fresh insights and renewed purpose.

As the industry faces mounting pressure from climate change, regulatory reform, and heritage stewardship, NZIBS remains anchored by its mission: to support building surveyors in creating a better built environment. ■

continued on page 10







WARREN NEVILL
TRAINING OFFICER

Where has it been, where is it heading, and why is it so important?

Historical insights courtesy Philip O'Sullivan

PART 1 OF A TWO-PART SERIES ON EDUCATION

Well, where did it start?

We all know, or should, about the Prendos brothers. Greg and Phil waving flags, and pressing alarm buttons with respect to the perceived looming of a Weathertightness crisis back in the late 1990s. Phil, along with Adrian Bennett, was part of the then BRANZ steering group on the issue. Given the knowledge Prendos held, Adrian realised their IP needed to be shared with the industry, and so the three of them initiated a pilot course attended by some of the big names in surveying at that stage, Kevin Longman, Steve Alexander, Ken McGunnigle and the like. Having attended, Kevin, the Institute President, realised the need for a wider transfer of this knowledge. With the Institute, and Adrian having the BRANZ scientists and Accredited Advisers on call, the Weathertight courses were initiated. This was late 2001, and directed at both NZIBS members and the Accredited Advisors scheme.

When Don Hunn published the report from the BIA Weathertight Investigation Group a year later,

and the fan started collapsing under the load, the impending demand for investigation and expert services became obvious.

A forward-looking Executive philosophy, favouring essential investment in industry standards and expectations, realised accordingly that an exponential membership demand – for what was then a much smaller Institute – was required. It being apparent, that existing Institute numbers would be incapable of coping with the magnitude of such a problem.

Not only was a considerable influx to the ranks of Registered Surveyors going to be required, but the then Institute Executive, working with David Curry who initially led the WHRS, were astute enough to convince Government that only Institute members, screened and trained by the Institute, would be capable of such an undertaking. And some of you are still wondering what you have got out of your membership. Perhaps dementia could be a side-effect of investigating a seemingly endless stream of deteriorating buildings.

This influx of new members, I being one of them, would not only need to pull up our Muckboots if we were to learn how to deal with the crisis, but would also require bringing up to speed, on the depth of the issue, the means of investigating, reporting, resolving, and ultimately scraping it out in litigious situations. Then we had to find ways to cope with the human tragedy. Fortunately, DBH, at least saw that coming and provided support.

Out of this evolved the first set of modules. Two days of Weathertightness investigations, two days on Claddings, a day on the Building Act by a woman called Rosie Killip, who'd have you standing on your chairs dancing if you so much as batted a sleepy eyelid. Somewhere in the middle were also sessions on Fungal Deterioration, plus a scientist or two from BRANZ informing us on the Properties of Moisture and Durability.

The likes of Greg and Phil O'Sullivan, and retired members Russell Cooney and Kevin Longman, along with BRANZ scientists Adrian and Mark Bassett

and this young curly-headed boffin called Robin, bewildered us over five days in the old Winstone's building somewhere in Penrose. Then we had a day of examinations. And if you thought that was onerous, it was followed by a three-hour assessment of Professional Competence exam, which was the equivalent of Baba Yaga visiting from one of your deepest, darkest nightmares.

During that era, Phil, Greg and Kevin also assisted with upskilling sessions for staff from Territorial Authorities on E2, and Alternative Solutions. These courses were greatly valued, and in a sense were possibly our first foray into our sharing of knowledge amongst the wider industry.

The education modules continued in this manner for several years, until Phil O'Sullivan, as Institute President, realised that I had a background level of expertise in education – something in hindsight I should perhaps have kept better hidden – and enlisted me to review the effectiveness of the current modules. I remember my report to him, describing one of the venues being used as, at best, a dejected funeral chapel; probably complete with ghosts and ogres. At least it wasn't cold. The presenters, however, were doing the best they could within the constraints imposed.

During the process, I bumped into Frank Wiemann, struggling in his meticulous politeness, to accommodate the alternative and completely incorrect views of a stropy participant. I embarrassed both him and myself by leaping to my feet to assist; something a reviewer should never do. That, however, was the beginning of a great team-tagging duo, as realising that Russell Cooney wanted to retire, I threw my hat in the ring and together we developed what is now the Forensic module. When Kevin followed suit, finding that such retirement attitudes were contagious, I climbed into the Cladding module as well.

Somewhere along the line, organisation of the Module program was taken over by Neville Scott, our

then Executive Officer, who ran it – there's only one way of describing this – on the cheap. We didn't need to go out and about to investigate leaky buildings or mould situations. The rent-a-room-by-the-hour motel venue used, hung heavy with after-battle fragrances of Chaetomium and budget air freshener. Lunch options were easy: go hungry or head to the local takeaway. It might have been called the Greasy Bucket; probably not, but you get the message. By day three, most of us preferred the hunger option. Venturing out for site visits required putting your life at risk getting into rent-a-dent rejects, and that was before they even pulled out of the car park. Health and safety aspects didn't go beyond your own inclination.

Early in the piece Phil, no doubt wanting another break from the cut and thrust, had come out to observe me with a group; doing due diligence on my claim of having the ability to teach, based solely on brown eyes and bullshit. I knew Phil well enough, realising this was my one shot to cement a position in the Education Arm of the Institute, so quickly changed the topic to one I knew he was interested in. The intention was for him to observe me for half an hour. Within the first three minutes, I asked his opinion on the topic. He filled in the next hour, enthusing the candidates about the necessity and benefits of airseals. And, went away thinking I was fantastic.

I keep entreating our team of presenters to get as much audience participation as they can. I firmly believe, the greater the group's involvement, the greater their appreciation and absorption of what you are offering. I put way more effort into enlisting participation than I do to conveying knowledge – perhaps it's all teaching, and I'm good at that as well. Phil was like a lamb to the slaughter.

Then a blonde livewire, Sally Dunbar, came on board as a General Manager. Ideals of endowing our modules with a degree of accredited status, shedding from her like water from a duck. But she delivered:

kicking and screaming us toward becoming a Centre of Technical Distinction. She enlisted the collaboration of 'Vertical Horizonz NZ', now our Certification body, and between them, they formalised the existing 10 modules into a level 5 Diploma.

One of the requirements she needed to accomplish, for this level five status, was a Moderation Policy, and that was something my previous existence in a large educational institution enabled me to provide. Except I didn't realise I was also going to be appointed the Institute moderator, which can be the only job less enjoyable than marking exam papers.

Since then, we have upped the status and coverage of our Diploma to include the full gamut of core competency areas to which a building surveyor may be involved. Comprising now 14 modules, extending from the in-depth study of governing legislation to due diligence of multi-storey buildings, the Diploma is underpinned by three distinct and standalone certificates. These cater to candidates, other than Transitional Members, seeking a lesser specialised degree of knowledge.

We have evolved to presenting training events for organisations external to the Institute, having travelled the country from Whangarei to Queenstown, providing in-house training to BCA staff (unfortunately the bits in between haven't realised the benefits of being involved with us yet). We have developed to become a recognised leader in the field of construction education and provide such with a team of competent and enthusiastic presenters.

So, where has that led us? And do we have a future? Hang in there for next month's exciting instalment and find out what I believe.

If you're simply interested in what's going on, come along and find out; or click on this link <https://buildingsurveyors.co.nz/training/>

It might inspire you.



Façade failures are a known risk, so why aren't we acting?

Three years ago, Victoria Richardson wrote in issue 8 of *The Journal* about the hidden dangers of neglected façade maintenance. At the time, she'd already seen enough concrete spalls, dislodged tiles, and de-bonded cladding to know that the next tragedy was a matter of when not if.

"I wish I could say things have changed," she says.

Since that article was published, Victoria has continued to inspect dozens of commercial buildings across New Zealand (mostly high-rises) and she says the mindset is still the same.

"Facilities managers are often focussed on leaks, and the wider property sector still operates on the dangerous assumption that facades do not need maintenance, or window cleaning

equals façade maintenance. The reality is far worse."

In one case, Victoria had written a report in 2017 documenting clear cracks and concrete spalling.

"Nothing was done until 2024 and only then because leaks from unrelated defects were disrupting tenants. During the reinspection, we had to physically remove chunks of concrete and bring these to the attention of the facilities managers and owner to impress on them the wider condition issues and need

for action. The risk? Obvious. The urgency? Apparently not.

"One of the most frustrating things is knowing the truth is often already written down.

"My reports get filed, then forgotten. They don't live with the building; they live in drawers, or in an email inbox. Ownership changes, facilities managers change, and institutional memory disappears."

Meanwhile, the assumption that contractors or window cleaners will flag dangers is wishful thinking.



"These workers haven't been trained to assess building integrity, nor should they be expected to. They rightly assume someone else is responsible."

Victoria has tried both diplomacy and blunt messaging. In presentations to facilities managers and owners, she now starts with a photo of Greta Green, the child killed by falling façade material in Manhattan. She ends with a pointed question: Do you want to go to jail?

"It sounds harsh, but it's not theatrical," she says.

"If someone dies because a building wasn't maintained, someone will be held responsible."

Even after showing examples of tombstone-sized render chunks crashing through steel handrails and onto public footpaths, Victoria says many building owners remain unmoved. "They're lucky no one's died – so far."

The illusion of preparedness

According to a BRANZ Building Energy End-use Study (BEES), analysis of building records from Quotable Value and an extensive web search of over 2,600 buildings help estimate the total number of offices and retail shops in New Zealand.

The analysis shows there were approximately 33,000 retail and office buildings at the time, with a total floor area of 31,000 million m². Albeit this data was published in 2011, so likely there has been an increase in both the number of offices and shops, and floor space.

Regardless, Victoria says she'd be generous to assume 20 per cent have even a superficial maintenance plan.

"Of those, most conflate cleaning with inspection. The real figure with proper, proactive façade maintenance strategies? Probably under 20 per cent."

"On due diligence projects, I often receive data rooms where the

'maintenance' section lists a single budget line item for window cleaning. That's it.

"Meanwhile, commercial buildings over 15 years old – especially mid-to high-rise ones – are all showing signs of material degradation."

What we can learn from the US

In her original article, Victoria referenced the Façade Inspection Safety Program (FISP) out of New York: a law that came after a student died from falling masonry. That program has since spread to 13 states.

"In those jurisdictions, façade inspections are mandatory for buildings above a certain height. There are penalties for non-compliance. Local authorities can even complete the work themselves and recover the cost," she explains.

Victoria imagines what that might look like in New Zealand:

continued on page 16



- Accountability: Clarify legal liability in the event of injury or death due to façade failure, so owners understand the stakes.
- Awareness and data: Create national guidelines and public awareness campaigns, similar to how seismic standards were rolled out.

“These are not radical ideas; they’re common sense. We already do this for fire safety systems, structural upgrades, etc. Why not façades?”

This year alone, Victoria expects to assess around 40 buildings, often alongside experts like Sergey Arykov – who, said in issue 17 of *The Journal*, he is seeing exactly the same problems.

“Every one of those buildings will have issues. And not once has someone called me hoping for a clean bill of health. They usually call me because something went wrong.

“But how long can we keep getting lucky?

“If a piece of concrete falls and injures a pedestrian in New Zealand tomorrow, it won’t be due to a lack of knowledge. It’ll be due to a lack of action. And when that happens, the question won’t be how could we have known? It will be: Why didn’t we listen?” ■

inspections every three to five years, carried out by qualified professionals, logged with local councils or the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and included as part of a building’s warrant of fitness.

“It wouldn’t fix everything, but it would set a minimum standard,” she says.

“Because the current voluntary system for commercial buildings isn’t working. Right now, we’re relying on goodwill and good luck. That’s not enough.”

At this point, Victoria believes we need both carrots and sticks. A balanced approach could look something like:

- Regulatory requirement: Amend the Building Warrant of Fitness framework to include periodic façade inspections by qualified personnel.
- Insurance incentive: Work with insurance providers to offer reduced premiums to building owners who maintain certified maintenance plans and follow through on them.



ALEX HAMPSHIRE
FMANZ BOARD MEMBER



STUART BRYANT
FMANZ CERTIFIED MEMBER

Education and collaboration key to bridging the gaps in façade management

When concrete fell from a Queen Street building earlier this year, injuring pedestrians, it jolted Aucklanders into confronting a reality the industry already knew well: façades are not self-maintaining, and when neglected, they become dangerous.

For building surveyors, the incident underscored the need for stronger inspection regimes.

For facilities managers (responsible for keeping buildings safe, functional, and compliant) it reinforced the need for FM expertise to be at the table at the design stage. Getting vital input from the very people who will look after the building for decades from the outset will help prevent this issue.

In this instalment of *The Journal's* façade series, Alex Hampshire, Facilities Management Association of New Zealand (FMANZ) Board Member, and Stuart Bryant, FMANZ Certified Member, share why façades still fall through the cracks, and how collaboration across the sector can change that.

Facilities managers don't see a façade as an isolated surface but as part of a building's integrated system.

"You've got the envelope, roof and façade, and everything inside it:

HVAC, electrical, plumbing," Alex says.

"None of them work well independently. You can't ignore your façade and expect HVAC to perform."

Yet façades often slide down the priority list until failure forces action. Building surveyors frequently report that their recommendations sit idle until they return years later to find problems worsened.

Stuart says this isn't usually down to facilities managers themselves.

"It's more about competing priorities. Owners may pay for the squeaky wheel. A hole in the wall gets fixed because tenants see it daily. But hidden cracks in a façade? They don't create the same pressure, until it's too late."

Both Alex and Stuart point to education as the critical tool for change.

Owners often hesitate to invest in façades because the business case isn't immediate. Tenants can help drive change, just as seismic ratings became a tenant-led issue.

"Facilities managers, surveyors, architects, engineers; we need a common language," says Alex. "If we can present a stronger, unified case, owners are more likely to act."

Stuart adds: "Education should go beyond owners. Tenants, too, can be powerful influencers. If they start demanding assurance around façade maintenance, that pressure filters up."

Design disconnects

Safe access is another obstacle, they say.

"You can't maintain what you can't reach, and too many buildings lack tie-off points or practical routes for maintenance. Without those, upkeep becomes costly, or sometimes impossible," Stuart says.

continued on page 18



Alex argues this stems from a disconnect between design ambitions and operational realities.

“Whole-of-life costing forces the question: how will this façade be inspected and repaired in 20, 30, 50 years? Bringing facilities managers into the design stage would avoid many headaches later.”

Some building surveyors suggest adding façades to the Building Warrant of Fitness (BWOFF) system, but Alex is cautious.

“If we make everything, from roofs to façades, a specified system, we risk diluting the focus from life safety systems such as fire, which is critical.”

Instead, he and Stuart favour a pragmatic approach.

“Base isolators are inspected visually every five years,” Alex

says. “That model could work for façades: regular checks, but not to the point where compliance becomes unmanageable.”

Regardless, for both men, façade safety is not one profession’s responsibility.

“Building surveyors bring the technical expertise and facilities managers bring operational oversight. Owners bring funding. If we combine those voices, we can turn technical reports into practical plans.”

But technical detail must be translated into clear priorities.

“Building surveyor reports are incredibly valuable, but they can sometimes overwhelm owners,” Stuart notes. “If we present findings in a common, accessible language, uptake will improve.” ■

Looking forward

For facilities managers, the Queen Street incident was tragic but not surprising. It was also a wake-up call for the public.

Stuart sees an opportunity: “Case studies, education tools, joint statements; if we show what’s at stake, we can prevent repeats.”

Alex agrees. “Façades aren’t decorative extras. They’re integral to a building’s safety and longevity. If we don’t act early, we’ll see more preventable failures. The time to look up is now.”



What is a Building Surveyor?

In the latest of the What is Building Surveyor series, James Bundy reflects on the pragmatism and problem-solving required in the profession. It means that he sees himself and colleagues as the GP of the built environment.

When James Bundy first arrived in New Zealand in 2002, he found himself in a country where “building surveying,” as he had practiced it in the UK, barely existed.

Recruitment consultants didn’t understand his skillset, and the market for his services was scattered across architects, engineers, and quantity surveyors.

Yet from that gap, James helped build a profession that is now

well-recognised, with its own institute, training pathway, and growing presence across the built environment.

Today, James’ work stretches across New Zealand and Australia. He is regarded as both a pioneer of the profession locally and a thoughtful advocate for what makes a good building surveyor: a “GP of the consulting world,” equipped with broad technical knowledge and a pragmatic mindset.

James trained and qualified in the UK, studying in Bristol before beginning a career that spanned commercial property, healthcare, and education. After gaining Chartered status, he took a break for 12 months, dedicating his time to volunteer work in New Zealand.

“There was no such thing as building surveying as I knew it,” he recalls.

continued on page 20



"You had architects doing some things, engineers doing others, but not that integrated, investigative role of the building surveyor."

In 2005, alongside another Chartered Building Surveyor, James co-founded one of New Zealand's first RICS-regulated building surveying practice.

The firm grew to more than 65 staff across four offices, filling a vacuum in the market for defect analysis, reinstatement advice, and technical due diligence.

After selling his share in 2018, James shifted towards expert witness and insurance-related work, eventually establishing a practice that combined building surveyors and quantity surveyors.

Last year, it was acquired by a global consultancy serving the insurance sector, where James now oversees building consultancy across both New Zealand and Australia.

So, what makes a building surveyor? James' description of the profession draws directly from his UK training.

The first year of study, he explains, was shared with architects, engineers, project managers, and quantity surveyors.

"We learned a little bit of everyone's language."

The result was a generalist role, equally at home discussing material science, contract law, or structural performance.

"A good building surveyor is a GP of the consulting world.

"We understand how buildings are constructed, how legislation applies, and how materials behave in service.

"We're trained to work on the existing built environment, which makes up the majority of what's out there, and to grapple with how those buildings perform in an ever-

changing regulatory landscape."

That breadth is what differentiates surveyors from other specialists.

Where an architect may design, or an engineer may calculate, a building surveyor often bridges gaps, spotting where disciplines talk past one another.

"Sometimes it's about chairing the conversation, seeing the disconnect, and helping people land on a practical resolution."

James' own career shows a clear preference for certain fields: defect analysis, reinstatement after damage, and landlord-tenant law.

The common thread, he says, is problem-solving.

"I love when a client says: 'Can you explain this building to me in plain language?' Or when there's been a major event like a fire, a flood, an earthquake, and we need to scope out how to get it back into service.

"That's when you need someone who can think across construction, legislation, materials, and cost."

One project he recalls involved a 13-storey building damaged in an earthquake, with asbestos contamination, and subject to new legislative requirements.

"It was about finding a reinstatement strategy that didn't escalate costs unnecessarily, while still getting people safely back inside."

Other recent assignments have included post-flood remediation for an airport, reinstatement of film studios and hospitality venues, and forensic work for insurers.

Much of this requires expert witness skills, which means James often can't share details publicly.

Still, the underlying principle is clear: practical, durable solutions over perfectionist standards.

"The best surveyor isn't the one who applies the most rigid compliance lens," he argues.

"It's the one who can explain what needs to be done and take a pragmatic approach that genuinely adds value."

Working across both countries has highlighted for James how terms and traditions diverge.

In Australia, "building surveyor" generally refers to a compliance inspector, whereas consultants in James' mould are called "building consultants".

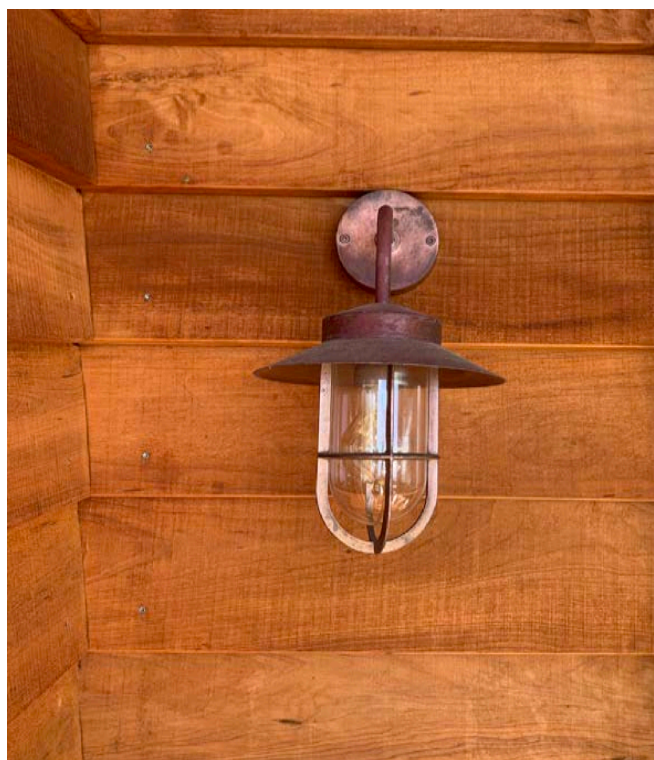
"It's really just who got there first," he says.

"In Australia, the regulators adopted the term for National Construction Code compliance inspectors. In New Zealand, the leaky building crisis in the early 2000s meant people were

already using it for surveyors that specialised in defect analysis.

"When we set up one of our businesses, we had to do a lot of education to explain the breadth of services a building surveyor provides."

Interestingly, James notes that New Zealand's painful experience with leaky buildings may now be an asset.



At a recent Sydney conference, he heard Australian regulators pointing to New Zealand's detailing standards, such as E2/AS1, as a model to emulate.

"It was the last thing I expected. But it shows how the profession here has matured, with NZIBS and RICS creating real pathways for people to enter and specialise."

Asked what lies ahead for building surveyors in New Zealand, James points to the issue of durability.

"There are still too many lightweight products on the market, designed for a short lifespan. If we're serious about sustainability, we need to build

for intergenerational use. Buildings should be maintainable and expected to last a hundred years."

He points to his own home in Northland, clad in regrowth tōtara, a native timber with remarkable natural durability.

"It was harder to source, and I had to justify it to council because it wasn't in the standards. But I wanted a material that would withstand the weather and be there for decades."

For James, that is the next frontier for building surveyors: advocating not just for compliance or remediation, but for long-term thinking in material choice and design.

"If we can help clients make those decisions now, we can save enormous cost and disruption for future generations."

This series in *The Journal* seeks to define a profession that, even now, is sometimes misunderstood. James' own career reflects both the challenge and the opportunity of that definition.

He came to New Zealand when the title was unknown, helped establish one of the country's first dedicated practices, and has since worked on some of the most complex reinstatement and insurance cases in the region.

Through it all, he has argued for the surveyor as a generalist with a pragmatic eye: someone who sees the whole picture and finds workable answers.

"The built environment is mostly existing buildings," he says.

"They don't just need architects or engineers. They need surveyors who can diagnose, interpret, and guide owners through the maze. That's the role, and it's more important than ever." ■



New Zealand's economy and construction industry 'in flux'

New Zealand's construction sector is in a delicate phase. After years of surging demand, spiralling costs, and global supply shocks, 2025 is offering something different: moderation.

Inflation has eased, interest rates are starting to come down, and the worst of the material shortages have passed. Yet no one is calling it easy.

Builders and developers alike are treading carefully in a market that remains uneven and highly sensitive to shifts in finance, policy, and consumer confidence.

So, what are the latest economic data, industry reports, and government perspectives highlighting across both residential and commercial construction?

The Reserve Bank of NZ (RBNZ) set the tone early this year with a surprise 50 basis-point cut to the Official Cash Rate (OCR), bringing it down to 3.75%.

The move was widely seen as a response to sluggish growth and fading inflation pressures.

For builders, it meant a glimmer of relief: mortgage rates have started to edge lower, giving homeowners a little more breathing space, and reducing financing costs for developers.

But the RBNZ has been careful with its messaging, warning that while inflation has cooled, risks remain. The OCR now sits at 3%.

Westpac NZ's Chief Economist Kelly Eckhold believes the RBNZ will cut 50bp in October and 25bp in November. This change, he says, follows weaker than expected GDP growth in Q2.

In the middle of September, speaking at the Financial Services Council annual conference, RBNZ Governor Christian Hawkesby stated: "While our central

projection for the OCR is to fall to around 2.50% by the end of the year, that could occur faster or slower depending on how the economic recovery evolves."

The economic recovery (or lack thereof) is visible in the data.

Construction activity fell 1.8% in the June quarter, contributing to a 0.9% drop in GDP. Building consent figures paint a similar picture.

Non residential consents were down nearly 30% compared to last year, while residential consents slipped by about 1.4%.

The contrast is stark. The appetite for large office towers or new retail complexes is fading, but households, while cautious, haven't disappeared from the market altogether.

Government policy is trying to fill the gap. The *Going for Housing Growth* programme, launched this year, is designed to unlock more land, fund infrastructure, and speed up approvals.

Housing Minister Hon Chris Bishop has been blunt about the need to align homes with services: "You can't have housing without water, transport, and community facilities."

It's a reminder that consenting reforms alone won't shift the dial unless councils have the means to deliver.

The residential market is catching its breath

For home builders, 2025 feels like a comedown from the frenzy of the past five years. The boom is over, but the bust that many feared hasn't quite arrived either. Instead, the residential market is cooling: slowly, unevenly, and with important shifts in what's being built.

Cotality's latest Cordell Construction Cost Index **shows** costs rising at less than one percent annually, a remarkable slowdown from the double digit spikes of 2022 and 2023.

A 0.3% rise in the March quarter was followed by 0.6% in June, suggesting inflationary pressures are contained but not gone.

Builders say land and labour remain stubbornly expensive, even as timber, steel, and imported fittings stabilise.

Demand is also evolving. Stand alone homes, once the symbol of Kiwi aspiration, are falling out of favour as affordability bites.

Townhouses and apartments now account for a growing share of consents, while renovations are keeping many smaller firms afloat.

"Cautiously optimistic" is how Master Builders Chief Executive Ankit Sharma described the sector earlier this year.

Optimism because the long term demand for housing is undeniable; caution because the financing environment remains tough, and forward work pipelines are short.

Small and mid sized builders are carrying the heaviest load.

According to BDO's 2025 **Construction Report**, many are working with less than 12 months of confirmed projects.

Margins are thin and banks are wary. One unexpected cost shock (a spike in freight, a labour shortage, a delayed consent) can turn a viable job into a loss maker.

Commercial construction on uneven terrain

On the commercial side, the story depends on where you look.

Large office developments are languishing. Hybrid work has shrunk demand, and investors are reluctant to fund projects without iron clad tenants.

Retail is in a similar bind. With consumer spending under pressure, few retailers are expanding footprints, and developers are shelving plans until confidence returns.

But it's not all grim. Industrial and logistics builds are in demand.

The growth of e commerce and the need for resilient supply chains have made warehousing space a rare bright spot.

Public infrastructure is also helping to hold the line. New hospitals, schools, and transport projects are rolling ahead, supported by **government commitments** that give contractors some certainty in a jittery market.

Still, commercial building is no easy ride.

Compliance costs remain high, imported materials are vulnerable to price swings, and complex projects are proving difficult to budget accurately.

A June report from **CBRE** pointed to financing as a major barrier.

Developers, it said, are struggling to secure bank approval without presales or long term leases, a hurdle that delays projects before they even break ground.

Industry says there is a mix of anxiety and adaptation

This year's **BDO survey** of nearly 200 construction business leaders makes for sober reading.

Two thirds expect inflation to erode profitability further, and half list interest rates as their biggest challenge.

Most reported forward work pipelines shorter than in previous years, and a significant share said competition for tenders was pushing prices down to risky levels.

Yet, amid the anxiety, there's resilience. Builders are experimenting with modular construction, more precise project management, and new sourcing strategies.

Some see opportunity in the shift toward smaller, more flexible housing formats. Others point to public procurement as a stabilising force, even if it comes with bureaucratic headaches.

continued on page 24

Building surveyors are seeing the impact of systemic delays in real time.

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment data shows around 64% of consent applications are held up by requests for further information (RFI).

NZIBS has argued that involving building surveyors earlier in the design process could reduce those delays and improve documentation quality, cutting down on the piecemeal RFI process that frustrates both councils and developers.

The **Mood of the Boardroom 2025** survey adds another layer of context.

Chief executives across sectors, including construction and property, rated infrastructure delivery, housing affordability, and regulatory reform as top government challenges.

Many expressed frustrations at bottlenecks in planning and consenting, warning that delays were adding cost and risk across the economy.

At the same time, business leaders acknowledged progress (particularly in housing policy) while stressing that execution will matter more than announcements.

The outlook is looking like a slow and conditional recovery

Looking ahead to the rest of 2025 and beyond, the path is unlikely to be dramatic.

Interest rate cuts should feed into greater affordability, but demand won't rebound overnight. Residential construction will probably tick along at subdued levels, with multi-unit housing taking a larger share.

Commercial activity will remain mixed: logistics and public sector projects will prop up activity, while retail and office may struggle for years.

By 2026 and 2027, conditions could improve more noticeably.



If inflation remains tame and the Government's reforms deliver on their promise housing supply should accelerate. »

GlobalData forecasts that after contracting by about 1% in 2025, construction output will return to growth at around 4% annually through 2029, driven largely by investment in transport, health, and education infrastructure.

If inflation remains tame and the Government's reforms deliver on their promise, housing supply should accelerate.

Business leaders, as reflected in the *Mood of the Boardroom* survey, are cautiously optimistic that regulatory reform and infrastructure delivery can underpin recovery, and provide policy execution matches ambition.

Nevertheless, the risks are still there: renewed global supply chain shocks, unexpected inflation spikes, or delays in implementing reforms could quickly undermine confidence. But the balance of evidence suggests a slow, conditional recovery, rather than further deep contraction.

What does this mean for building surveyors?

The stakes are clear. Cost moderation doesn't eliminate risk; it just changes its shape.

Early stage estimates need contingencies. Compliance oversight must stay sharp as firms compete aggressively on price.

And with policy reforms altering planning and consenting rules, building surveyors will need to keep one eye on legislation and the other on the ground.

Regional differences will matter too. In Auckland and Wellington, building surveyors may see higher volumes of multi unit projects, while in smaller centres, the work may lean toward retrofits, infrastructure upgrades, or delayed projects finally moving forward.

For NZIBS members, the role of the building surveyor has rarely been more critical.

As firms grapple with short pipelines, tight finance, and evolving policy, the need for rigorous oversight, practical advice, and grounded risk assessment is paramount.

The industry may not be booming, but it is recalibrating. And in that recalibration lies the foundation for a steadier, more sustainable future. ■

Shifting the Building Act's boundaries

When the Government announced reforms to the Building Act this August, it marked a long-overdue step toward reducing bureaucracy in the housing sector.

For others, it raised fresh questions about safety, neighbourly relations, and how far deregulation should go.

At the heart of the change is Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004, which now allows small structures such as sheds, sleepouts, garages, and granny flats to be built closer to property boundaries without needing building consent.

The amendments expand long-standing exemptions that previously applied only to very small buildings.

Under the new rules, detached structures under 10 square metres can be built right up to, or very near, the boundary line without a consent.

Buildings between 10 and 30 square metres can now sit as close as one metre from the boundary or another building, a significant departure from the older "height-to-boundary" setback test that effectively pushed these structures further into one's property.

In practice, this means that what was once the preserve of the smallest garden sheds now extends to larger hobby rooms, granny flats, or standalone garages, provided the work still complies with the Building Code.

For builders and homeowners, the upsides are clear. Reduced red tape means fewer delays and lower compliance costs.

By sidestepping the full consent process, projects that might



have dragged through months of paperwork could instead be completed in weeks.

For a country wrestling with housing affordability and capacity constraints, this could open the door to more flexible living arrangements, from teenagers' sleepouts to semi-independent units for extended family.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment has framed the move as part of a wider effort to "cut unnecessary bureaucracy" while enabling innovation in small-scale housing.

Industry commentators have also noted that simplifying minor works could free up council resources to focus on more complex developments.

Yet the freedom to build closer to the boundary comes with

consequences. Fire safety is at the top of many professionals' lists.

Reduced separation between buildings increases the risk of a fire spreading, particularly where lightweight timber construction is the norm and where outbuildings may double as storage for fuels, firewood, or other likely flammable material.

Privacy and amenity issues follow close behind: windows overlooking neighbours' gardens, shading effects from a garage wall built near the fence, and noise impacts could all inflame neighbourly tensions.

Unlike the consent process, which allows for early identification of these effects, the new system shifts resolution to after the fact, through disputes, complaints, or even litigation.

continued on page 26



Water run-off presents another underappreciated risk.

Structures built closer to boundaries may concentrate roof water or hard surface run-off, directing it toward neighbouring properties.

The Building Code still requires owners to manage surface water under Clause E1, ensuring that rainwater is collected and disposed of without nuisance, while Clause E2 prevents external moisture from causing damage to buildings.

But without the consent step, poor drainage design could slip through until it becomes a problem.

Ponding, erosion, or water intrusion across boundary lines can lead to disputes and potential liability for property damage.

Insurers may take a hard line on claims where inadequate drainage or noncompliance is found. For professionals advising on design, ensuring adequate downpipes, soak pits, or stormwater systems becomes a crucial safeguard.

The NZ Institute of Building Surveyors President Darryl August stresses that these risks highlight the importance of professional oversight.

He notes that while the reforms aim to simplify, “owners are not escaping responsibility”, instead they’re simply taking on more of it.

Additionally, insurers, particularly those offering warranty-backed cover for granny flats and similar builds, will still demand independent inspections Darryl says.

In practice, this means a building surveyor will often be engaged to verify compliance before insurance cover is approved, a safeguard that mirrors, and in some cases exceeds, the council process.

The changes also carry implications for insurance. Some insurers may scrutinise new structures more closely, particularly if they sit directly on boundaries.

Questions of compliance, liability for fire damage, and adequacy of construction could influence premiums or exclusions.

Lawyers point out that removing the consent step does not remove the owner’s obligation to build to Code, and councils retain enforcement powers where work is found to be noncompliant.

However, without pre-approval, the risk of mistakes slipping through

until a complaint is lodged becomes greater.

Councils, too, face a delicate balancing act.

While they will no longer grant formal consents for these exempt works, they are still responsible for monitoring compliance under the Building Act and district plans.

Notification requirements mean owners must tell councils when they intend to build and again when the project is finished.

But without plans to check in advance, monitoring will largely depend on complaints from neighbours.

This reactive model raises questions about consistency of enforcement and potential backlogs in addressing disputes.

Many builders welcome the flexibility and reduced paperwork, noting it aligns with the Government’s broader push to enable more small-scale housing solutions.

Lawyers, however, caution that the reforms place greater responsibility on owners to self-manage compliance with both the Code and district plan rules.

For insurers, the shift creates a fresh layer of risk assessment, particularly in dense urban areas where structures may cluster tightly along shared boundaries.

By bringing sheds and sleepouts closer to the fence line, the Government has tilted the balance toward flexibility and speed.

Whether the sector can absorb the risks – through careful design, stronger professional oversight, and pragmatic neighbour relations – remains to be seen.

What is clear is that boundary lines, once a predictable buffer, have just become the new frontier of regulatory change. ■



BY GRAEME CALVERT

Urban Renewal: The Mass Timber Building at 211 High Street, Christchurch

At the recent NZIBS conference held in Christchurch, attendees heard the story of this building through a presentation delivered by Szymon Gozdzikowski of Ignite Architects.



continued on page 28



Earlier this year, members of the New Zealand Institute of Building Surveyors had the opportunity to tour the construction site at 211 High Street in central Christchurch. Among the remarkable projects we have visited, this is one that stood out for me. My Linked In post at the time: "Sincere thanks to @Jonoskinner for hosting us, providing a clear and informative overview of the construction

earthquakes. Today, rising from its footprint is a different kind of landmark, not one built on nostalgia, but on innovation, resilience and environmental responsibility. A symbol of historic continuity is the retention of the aptly named Phoenix Palm tree, a living nod to the site's past and a quiet, living reminder that renewal does not have to mean erasure.

accompanies site or factory visits where new systems or products are presented.

Instead, the project prompted a sense of engaged curiosity. Observing the works in progress conveyed the impression of innovation and precision, which brought a response of professional admiration rather than critique.

6 The project represents a new way of thinking about urban development that prioritises sustainable materials future-focused design and smart construction techniques. 9

process, and thoughtfully addressing the questions posed by our inquisitive group of Building Surveyors. Jono's depth of knowledge in mass timber construction is truly commendable, and the quality of work on site is a testament to this."

The project represents a new way of thinking about urban development that prioritises sustainable materials, future-focused design, and smart construction techniques.

Positioned on the corner of High and Tuam Streets, the site carries deep historical resonance. It once housed the Excelsior Hotel, a heritage landmark lost to the devastating Canterbury

The project remains under construction, and I am not directly engaged in its delivery. Consequently, I do not have access to the detailed design information or the benefit of sustained site involvement. My observations are therefore limited to what was evident at the time of the visit.

As building surveyors, it is customary for us to question design intent, material selection, and construction methodology. During this visit, the discussion with the project manager included issues of material protection and long-term durability. What was notable, however, was the absence of the familiar undercurrent of scepticism. The quiet "what about this, what about that?" often

Timber at the Core

What truly defines this building is its use of Glue Laminated timber (GLT) and Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) as the core structural material and the innovative structural connections are particularly of interest. The project adopts a timber-first construction philosophy, making it one of the most interesting commercial timber builds in the country.

Over 100 engineered timber columns, some reaching in excess of 8 metres in height form the building's super structure.

The timber elements were fully machined overseas and underwent a partial assembly offsite in Christchurch before being brought to site. Some incorporate a new range of industry leading proprietary connections from Hilti, the first time in the world these connections have been deployed, greatly increasing safety and efficiency.

A Mixed-Use Future

The building is designed across four levels above ground with a basement below, offering a versatile mix of uses. Street-level



spaces are tailored for retail or hospitality, designed to activate the pedestrian frontage with a sense of openness. Above, flexible office spaces feature generous ceiling heights and extensive glazing to maximise natural light. A central atrium, open through multiple levels acts as the heart of the building.

Strategically Located, Thoughtfully Executed

The building's location sits within walking distance of some of Christchurch's key civic and commercial infrastructure; Cashel Mall, the Bus Interchange, Te Kaha Stadium, and the Health and Justice Precincts.

As Christchurch's city centre continues to densify and attract new businesses, demand is growing for high-quality, sustainable office spaces within a well-connected neighborhood.

The post-quake rebuild brought with it a wave of urgently needed commercial buildings. Many were built with traditional materials and at speed to meet the pressing needs of the time, and I tip my hat to the brave developers and investors that took on this work in an environment of uncertainty. 211 High Street represents the next phase, a more deliberate, performance-oriented approach that places long-term value.

A Vision for Smarter Building

What is happening with this project reflects a shift within the construction and development sector. It demonstrates that it is possible to meet commercial objectives while still designing for a lower carbon future. The building offers a compelling case for the role of engineered timber in modern construction, repositioning it not as a relic of the past, but as a solution for the future.

Construction is progressing well, with completion anticipated Q1, 2026. Once finished, it will not only provide a valuable commercial space, but also serve as a case study for what can be achieved when sustainability is placed at the heart of design and delivery.

A New Kind of Christchurch Landmark

211 High Street is more than just a building, it reflects Christchurch's evolving identity. While we continue to honour the memory of the city that was, there is great value in building something that speaks to who we are becoming. This project does not attempt to recreate the past, it contributes to a more sustainable, resilient future. It is proof that we can rebuild not just what was lost, but something that points forward with clarity and confidence. ■



BY AMARITA KHUN KHUN

Building Foundations and Families – A Pregnancy Journey as a Young Building Surveyor in Aotearoa

When I first stepped onto a construction site as a Graduate Building Surveyor, I was armed with a notebook, hi-vis, steel capped boots, and the unwavering drive to grow into a successful expert in the field.

Alongside me came the silent pressure to prove myself in a male dominated industry and defy expectations. Years later, I walk those same paths with a few wins in my pocket and ticks on my checklist, except now, I'm doing it while carrying a new life inside me.

Pregnancy is a profound journey, but when combined with a hands on, technical profession like building surveying, it becomes something even more meaningful. It's a powerful reminder of how capable and adaptable we truly are. Each day brings with it a quiet strength, a growing resilience, and a sense of pride in balancing two roles of a professional and a new mother.

Responding, Reporting and Rising Hormones

In New Zealand's construction industry, building surveyors wear

many hats acting as problem solvers, technical advisors, critical thinkers, and mediators between design, compliance, on site realities and client expectations. The work demands physical presence, crawling into roof spaces, inspecting failing building components, tracing leaks, standing for hours and walking hundreds of square metres through the toughest of days and longest most complex of meetings.

Pregnancy, however, introduces a new set of site conditions, ones that can't be mapped out on plan or foreseen. Fatigue doesn't wait for lunchtime, lift accessibility, or for a single levelled building. Nausea doesn't care about timings and important meetings, and PPE isn't exactly designed for a growing bump. It has been a challenge but through it all I found myself subtly adjusting which meant taking more photos instead of bending down repeatedly, pacing my energy differently, and wearing dresses once I was no longer accessing heights. I became increasingly aware of how others looked at me when I paused to take a breath, often surprised to see me still

out on inspections at 36 weeks pregnant noticeably bump forward, adding but that never stopped me, nor did it impact my ability to do my job with the same focus, precision, and professionalism. The assumption that pregnancy is a pause button, a break in one's career timeline hasn't crossed my mind, in fact I've never been more focused or motivated. The balance of being in the office and on site has made the last 9 months an exciting adventure, easier process and showed a passion in what you do in your role can carry you through even the most transformative chapters of life.

While now I may not be climbing ladders and present onsite every day towards the end of my pregnancy, I'm still delivering and doing tasks as a Building Surveyor, adding value, reviewing compliance, navigating consent queries, writing reports, attending meetings and most importantly I'm still learning. Adaptability is one of the industry's core values and greatest strengths, and in many ways, it has extended and grown into me as a person as I start this new journey.

6

Fatigue doesn't wait for lunchtime lift accessibility or for a single levelled building. Nausea doesn't care about timings and important meetings and PPE isn't exactly designed for a growing bump. 9



As I prepare to step into motherhood, I don't see it as stepping out of my career. I see it as expanding it. Just like learning to interpret a weathertightness failure or navigating through a compliance issue, becoming a parent is a process of learning, recalibrating, and embracing the unknown, all processes and skills that Building Surveyors are familiar with but in the built environment. To those entering the construction industry who may one day want to build both careers and families, know it's not only possible, but powerful.



So lately you would've seen me walking across site, hard hat on, and dusty boots, with a baby softly kicking in my belly beneath the hi-vis as I build two worlds at once. Through it all, I've never felt more excited and stronger and being surrounded by supportive peers makes it that much easier. ■

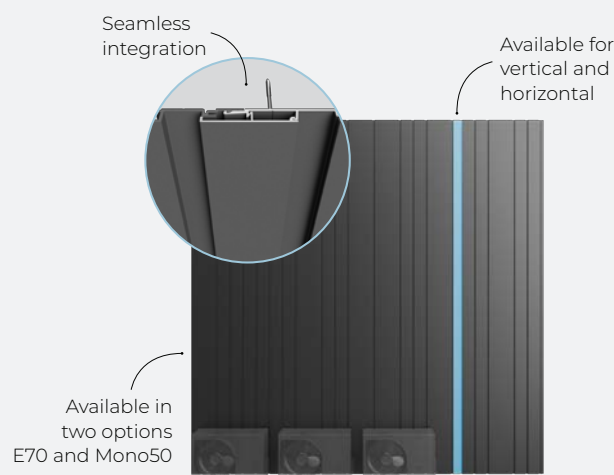
Say goodbye to full-wall disassembly

Easily fix one board, not the whole wall with the Nu-Wall Maintenance Joint®

Engineered to integrate seamlessly with our most popular profiles the Maintenance Joint provides a clean, serviceable break point within the wall, so repairs or replacements can be made quickly, cleanly, and without disrupting the entire elevation.

Available for ordering now.

nuwall.co.nz



CORRECTION: Clarification regarding NZIBI

In the Issue 17 of *The Journal*, the article The risks of an unregulated inspection industry highlighted important challenges in the pre-purchase inspection sector. However, it did not sufficiently acknowledge the role of the New Zealand Institute of Building Inspectors (NZIBI).

For clarity, NZIBI is an industry-recognised professional body, originally established by Theo Marlow, who was also one of the founders of the NZIBS. The Institute was revitalised in 2013 and has since grown steadily. Today, NZIBI has 57 fully registered Building Inspectors, with a further 20 members progressing through its peer review process.

The Institute maintains a structured system of control measures to uphold standards and manage any issues that arise. Its members are recognised by the wider industry, including banks, insurers, real estate professionals, lawyers, and government agencies.

In practice, NZIBI members generally provide initial inspections, and where anomalies are identified, they often recommend further investigation by NZIBS members, who operate at the specialist end of the sector.

It is also worth noting that NZIBI currently has more inspectors undertaking pre-purchase inspections than either BOINZ or NZIBS. This further underlines the organisation's established position within the industry.

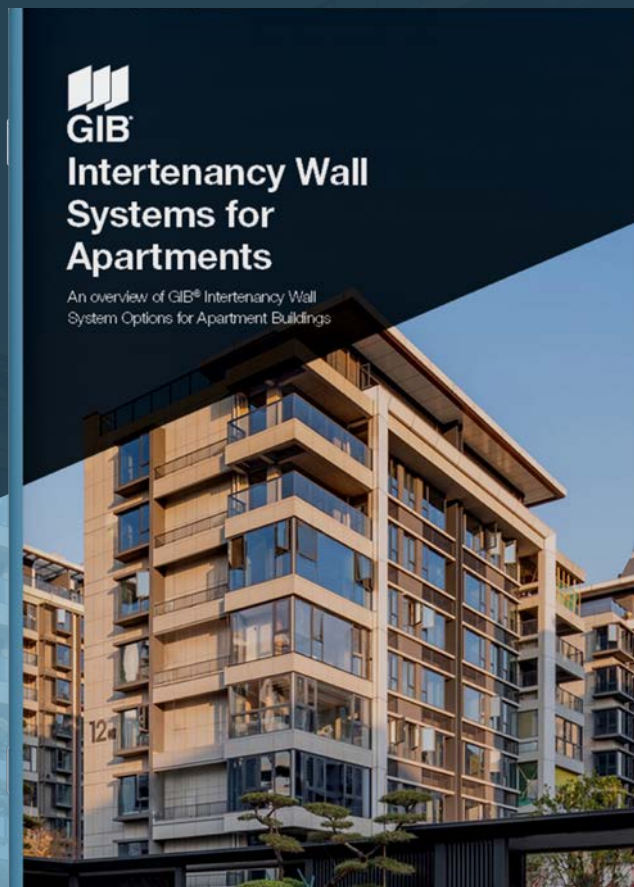
The omission of these details in Issue 17 was an oversight on the editorial team's part. The intent of the article was not to diminish the work of NZIBI but to underscore the risks posed by unregulated operators outside recognised professional bodies. The editorial team acknowledges NZIBI's contribution in raising industry standards and regrets any confusion caused.



New Intertenancy Barrier Systems for Apartments

Tailored systems for non-loadbearing intertenancy walls in multi-level apartments.

- Noise control system options between 63-68 STC
- 60 minute fire rating
- Wall height options up to 3600mm



Scan to learn more
or visit gib.co.nz/barrierline



New Zealand
Institute of
**BUILDING
SURVEYORS**

SAVE **THE DATE**

MARCH EDUCATION DAY
THEME: NEW HORIZONS
AUCKLAND

14 MARCH 2026



Thank you to our sponsors



Resene
Construction Systems

ROCKCOTE®

Roofspec
Viking
Taking care of detail

**nu-
wall**
CLADDING

STÄRKE



CONSTRUCTION COST
CONSULTANTS


Stamford
INSURANCE