

All you need to know about Auckland's Victopia apartment tower: shedding, leaks and defects

5 Jul, 2019 10:11am

4 minutes to read



CBD chaos: Streets could remain closed for a week.



By: **Anne Gibson**

Property editor, NZ Herald

anne.gibson@nzherald.co.nz @anneherald

The Auckland high-rise apartment block, which yesterday shed a 40kg cladding panel, has a long and sorry history as New Zealand's biggest leaky building case, costing \$40 million to fix.

It was shedding corner cladding as far back as 2012, according to body corporate documents.

The 16-level [14 apartment levels with two basements] Victopia is on the corner of Nelson St and the now-shut section of Victoria St West.

READ MORE:

- NZ's biggest leaky building case begins
- Cladding, balconies focus of NZ's biggest leaky building case

At the time the owners sued the developers and the builder in 2016, Victopia was New Zealand's biggest leaky building litigation, with a sum of \$42m cited by lawyer Gareth Lewis.

Here's all you need to know.

Q: Where and what is Victopia?

A: The property is at 135 Victoria St, opposite TVNZ, a building distinctive for its upper-level feature where the building juts out at the top. The building is to the west of the city's CBD, on the ridge between Spaghetti Junction and Fanshawe St.

Q: What happened?

A: Yesterday, a 1.2m wide by 2m long fibre cement exterior panel was blown off the block, resulting in emergency services closing part of Victoria St. The panel was reported as falling from a bedroom on level 13, descending 36m to the ground.

Q: Who owns Victopia?

A: Around 201 individuals or entities who bought apartments within the corner-site tower nearly 20 years ago.

Q: Who manages it?

A: Victopia's Body Corporate 346799 is headed by apartment owner Jacquie Turner, who has a place on level 14 of the block. But Body Corporate Administration has the body corporate secretary contract.

Related articles:

NEW ZEALAND

'Holy cow': Rising river nearly sweeps away sleeping German tourists

5 Jul, 2019 9:22am
3 minutes to read

NEW ZEALAND

CBD chaos: More loose panels found, net plan for building

5 Jul, 2019 9:40am
3 minutes to read

NEW ZEALAND

Street closed: Traffic chaos expected in Auckland CBD this morning

NEW ZEALAND

People queue from 2am outside WINZ for help

Q: Who's in charge of repairs?

A: Paula Beaton of Body Corporate Administration is today referring people to the Ian Harris, project director in charge of the remediation. He is listed as Victopia Apartments remediation project manager and wrote to owners earlier this year telling of the phased repair programme, due to take two years to complete.

Q: Who built Victopia?

A: Brookfield Multiplex was the main contractor. It was part of a global entity which built a number of buildings in New Zealand which suffered defects, including Orewa's Nautilus apartments, the Chancery shopping centre in inner-city Auckland and others. In litigation, the owners brought against developer KNZ International as the first defendant. It was formerly named Ganada Development Co and Dae Ju Developments, the court heard in 2016 when the owners sued parties involved in Victopia's creation.

Q: Who designed Victopia?

A: ADC Architects was engaged by the developers to design the building, the court heard, when plans were submitted from 2002 and 2003.

Q: What did the owners do?

A: That meeting in 2012 heard how "Brookfield are available to be sued although they are trying to move out of New Zealand". In 2016, the body corporate sued developer KNZ International (formerly named Ganda Development Co Ltd and Dae Ju Developments Co Ltd), construction business Brookfield Multiplex, Auckland Council and Bostik New Zealand.

Q: Did anyone pay out?

A: According to a 2016 High Court case, the owners reached a settlement before litigation with Facade Design Services. A confidential settlement with parties has been reported as being reached in the High Court case which proceeded to trial.

Q: Who else was involved with the building?

A: Body corporate minutes also show a cladding company, an installer and a facade engineer which the owners heard all had professional indemnity insurance.

Q: What was happening at Victopia when the panel blew off yesterday?

A: The \$40m leaky building repairs are part-way through. Teak Construction won the main contract. Leisa Brett of Teak Construction Group which won the contract to fix the tower wrote to residents four months ago, telling them how pre-construction started on March 4 "and will approximately continue for the next two years". Fortnightly letters will give residents updates on the project's progress.

Q: What's wrong with Victopia?

A: Around 2012, specialists Maynard Marks undertook initial investigations and identified cracks in the cladding on the exterior and tiles cracking on decks on the upper levels. "In some cases, the corners have fallen off," owners were told then of fibro cement cladding. In the 2016 court case, Victopia owners' lawyer Gareth Lewis said the high-rise "suffers from defects in the cladding, balconies and podium. The body corporate estimates costs will be \$42m," he said although some savings might reduce that to \$40m.

Q: What needed fixing?

A: Lewis said remedial works will include replacement of the cladding, new waterproofing for the balconies and works to rectify fire safety issues. He showed the court photographs of the exterior building cladding and pointed out how sheets of materials had "dislodgement" or cracks and splits in them.

Herald recommends





New Instant Kiwi Online game

Play Wheel of Fortune. Win up to \$45,000. \$3 per game. R18.

[View more on mylotto.co.nz»](http://mylotto.co.nz)



Is your business secure, or is it an easy target?

For many companies, knowing where to start can be confusing. Kordia has many options to help you protect your data. Start by reading our free guide.

[View more on kordia.co.nz»](http://kordia.co.nz)



Want to create your dream home? Now's your chance!

It's a renovator's dream - Vintage Ponsonby villa filled with potential seeking a modern upgrade

[View now on oneroof.co.nz»](http://oneroof.co.nz)