

## Before the Building Practitioners Board

	BPB Complaint No. CB25471
Licensed Building Practitioner:	Ashok Maharaj (the Respondent)
Licence Number:	BP 122781
Licence(s) Held:	Carpentry and Site AOP 1

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### Penalty Decision of the Board under section 318 of the Building Act 2004

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Complaint or Board Inquiry	Complaint
Hearing Date:	8 October 2020
Substantive Decision Date:	4 November 2020
Penalty Decision Date:	11 December 2020

#### Board Members Present:

Mr C Preston, Chair (Presiding)  
Mr M Orange, Deputy Chair, Legal Member  
Ms F Pearson-Green, LBP, Design AoP 2  
Mr D Fabish, LBP, Carpentry and Site AOP 2

#### Procedure:

The matter was considered by the Building Practitioners Board (the Board) under the provisions of Part 4 of the Building Act 2004 (the Act), the Building Practitioners (Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures) Regulations 2008 (the Complaints Regulations) and the Board's Complaints and Inquiry Procedures.

#### Disciplinary Finding:

The Respondent **has** committed a disciplinary offence under section 317(1)(i) of the Act.

The Respondent **has not** committed a disciplinary offence under section 317(1)(da)(ii) of the Act.

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### Summary of the Board’s Penalty Decision

[1] The penalty, costs and publication order is upheld. The Respondent has brought the regime into disrepute by obtaining an unethical financial gain. His licence is cancelled for a period of six months. He is ordered to pay costs of \$3,500. The Board has also decided that the Respondent did not carry out any restricted building work and that a record of work did not have to be provided.

### The Charges

[2] This penalty decision arises out of the Board’s substantive decision in which it found that the Respondent had conducted himself or herself in a manner that brings, or is likely to bring, the regime under this Act for licensed building practitioners into disrepute (s 317(1)(i) of the Act).

[3] Having found that one or more of the grounds in section 317 applies the Board must, under section 318 of the Act<sup>i</sup>, consider the appropriate disciplinary penalty, whether the Respondent should be ordered to pay any costs and whether the decision should be published.

[4] In its substantive decision, the Board set out its indicative position as regards penalty, costs and publication and invited the Respondent to make written submissions on those matters.

[5] On 27 November 2020, the Board received the Respondent’s submissions by way of *[Omitted]*, his representative. It has considered them and made the following decisions.

### Penalty

[6] The Board’s initial view was that the Respondent’s licence should be cancelled for a period of six months.

[7] The submissions received attempted to downplay the Respondent’s involvement and responsibility. The matters raised were dealt with at the hearing and in the substantive decision. The submissions are not accepted. If the Respondent does not agree with the Board’s findings, he can appeal them to the District Court.

- [8] No new mitigating circumstances have been put forward. As such, and having considered the submissions received, the Board has decided to uphold its initial view.

### **Costs**

- [9] The Board's initial view was that \$3,500 in costs was appropriate. The submissions noted that the Respondent has been adjudicated as a bankrupt. Whilst that may be the case, it does not detract from the fact that the Respondent should pay for a portion of the costs of and incidental to the hearing. The extent to which he can pay is a matter to for him to raise with the Registrar and/or the Official Assignee. The amount is confirmed.

### **Publication of Name**

- [10] The Board's initial view was there were no good reasons to further publish the matter. This remains the case.

### **Section 318 Order**

- [11] For the reasons set out above, the Board directs that:

**Penalty:** Pursuant to section 318(1)(a)(i) of the Act, the Respondent's licence is cancelled and the Registrar is directed to remove the Respondent's name from the register of Licensed Building Practitioners and pursuant to section 318(1)(a)(ii) of the Act the Board orders that the Respondent may not apply to be relicensed before the expiry of six [6] months.

**Costs:** Pursuant to section 318(4) of the Act, the Respondent is ordered to pay costs of \$3,500 (GST included) towards the costs of, and incidental to, the inquiry of the Board.

**Publication:** The Registrar shall record the Board's action in the Register of Licensed Building Practitioners in accordance with section 301(l)(iii) of the Act.

**In terms of section 318(5) of the Act, there will not be action taken to publicly notify the Board's action, except for the note in the Register and the Respondent being named in this decision.**

- [12] The Respondent should note that the Board may, under section 319 of the Act, suspend or cancel a licensed building practitioner's licence if fines or costs imposed as a result of disciplinary action are not paid.

## Right of Appeal

[13] The right to appeal Board decisions is provided for in s 330(2) of the Act<sup>ii</sup>.

Signed and dated this 21<sup>st</sup> day of December 2020

  
**Mr C Preston**  
Presiding Member

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### <sup>i</sup> **Section 318 of the Act**

- (1) *In any case to which section 317 applies, the Board may*
  - (a) *do both of the following things:*
    - (i) *cancel the person's licensing, and direct the Registrar to remove the person's name from the register; and*
    - (ii) *order that the person may not apply to be relicensed before the expiry of a specified period:*
  - (b) *suspend the person's licensing for a period of no more than 12 months or until the person meets specified conditions relating to the licensing (but, in any case, not for a period of more than 12 months) and direct the Registrar to record the suspension in the register:*
  - (c) *restrict the type of building work or building inspection work that the person may carry out or supervise under the person's licensing class or classes and direct the Registrar to record the restriction in the register:*
  - (d) *order that the person be censured:*
  - (e) *order that the person undertake training specified in the order:*
  - (f) *order that the person pay a fine not exceeding \$10,000.*
- (2) *The Board may take only one type of action in subsection 1(a) to (d) in relation to a case, except that it may impose a fine under subsection (1)(f) in addition to taking the action under subsection (1)(b) or (d).*
- (3) *No fine may be imposed under subsection (1)(f) in relation to an act or omission that constitutes an offence for which the person has been convicted by a court.*
- (4) *In any case to which section 317 applies, the Board may order that the person must pay the costs and expenses of, and incidental to, the inquiry by the Board.*
- (5) *In addition to requiring the Registrar to notify in the register an action taken by the Board under this section, the Board may publicly notify the action in any other way it thinks fit."*

### <sup>ii</sup> **Section 330 Right of appeal**

- (2) *A person may appeal to a District Court against any decision of the Board—*
  - (b) *to take any action referred to in section 318.*

### **Section 331 Time in which appeal must be brought**

*An appeal must be lodged—*

- (a) *within 20 working days after notice of the decision or action is communicated to the appellant; or*
- (b) *within any further time that the appeal authority allows on application made before or after the period expires.*