

Before the Building Practitioners Board

	BPB Complaint No. CB25149
Licensed Building Practitioner:	Meerten Soeteman (the Respondent)
Licence Number:	BP 110794
Licence(s) Held:	Carpentry and Roofing

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

Complaint or Board Inquiry	Complaint
Hearing Location	Wellington
Hearing Type:	In Person
Hearing Date:	15 October 2019
Substantive Decision Date:	19 December 2019
Penalty Decision Date:	3 March 2020

Board Members Present:

Richard Merrifield, LBP, Carpentry Site AOP 2 (Presiding)
David Fabish, LBP, Carpentry Site AOP 2
Robin Dunlop, Retired Professional Engineer
Rob Shao, LBP, Carpentry Site AOP 1

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.

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Introduction

- [1] This penalty decision arises out of the Board's substantive decision in which it found that the Respondent had committed the following disciplinary offence(s):
- (a) carried out or supervised building work or building inspection work in a negligent manner (s 317(1)(b) of the Act);
 - (b) carried out or supervised building work or building inspection work that does not comply with a building consent (s 317(1)(d) of the Act); and
 - (c) has failed, without good reason, in respect of a building consent that relates to restricted building work that he or she is to carry out (other than as an owner-builder) or supervise, or has carried out (other than as an owner-builder) or supervised, (as the case may be), to provide the persons specified in section 88(2) with a record of work, on completion of the restricted building work, in accordance with section 88(1) (s 317(1)(da)(ii) of the Act).
- [2] Having found that one or more of the grounds in section 317 applies the Board must, under section 318 of the Act¹, consider the appropriate disciplinary penalty, whether the Respondent should be ordered to pay any costs and whether the decision should be published.
- [3] 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.
- [4] On 10 February 2020, the Board received the Respondent's submissions. It has considered them and made the following decisions.

Penalty

- [5] The Board's initial view was that a fine of \$2,500 was the appropriate penalty for the disciplinary offence. The penalty was reduced from a starting point of \$4,000.
- [6] The Respondent's submissions focused, in the main, on his disagreement with the Board's decision. In this respect the Respondent is reminded that if he does not agree with the Board's decision, he has a right of appeal to the District Court. The Respondent should also note that the Board did not consider that any of the matters raised by him as regards its substantive decision would have changed its decision.

- [7] The Respondent did bring health and financial matters to the Board's attention as well as some of the wider circumstances relating to the complaint. Whilst the Board acknowledges those factors it also notes that a significant reduction in the fine has been granted. It does not consider that any further reductions are warranted. The Board has therefore decided to uphold its original decision.

Costs

- [8] The Board's initial view was that \$2,000 in costs was appropriate. As with the above the Board does not see any reason to reduce the amount of costs.

Publication of Name

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

Section 318 Order

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

Penalty: Pursuant to section 318(1)(f) of the Building Act 2004, the Respondent is ordered to pay \$2,500.

Costs: Pursuant to section 318(4) of the Act, the Respondent is ordered to pay costs of \$2,000 (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(1)(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.

- [11] 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

- [12] The right to appeal Board decisions is provided for in s 330(2) of the Actⁱⁱ.

Signed and dated this 3rd day of March 2020



Richard Merrifield
Presiding Member

ⁱ **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."*

ⁱⁱ **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.*