

Old Post Office falls...

FOR 88-YEAR-OLD Albie Burnett it was sad to see a building which had been part of Kaiapoi for so long torn down.

He watched as a digger tore into the old Post Office building, which dated from 1904, on the corner of Charles St and Williams St on Wednesday.

It was a place he had been into many times when it was a busy part of the town.

The building was purchased by the council last week and pulled down because it was unsafe since September 4, particularly so after Monday's aftershocks.

Mr Burnett, a long-term resident of Kaiapoi, was pragmatic.

"It's no good if it is not safe. Never mind." He said the town had to move on.

The building was uneconomic to repair and was not heritage listed. It had not been a post office since 1968, and had housed shops and accommodation.

The council had purchased it because it was an important site in the town's development plans.

Waimakariri Mayor David Ayers said the council wanted to have some control over what was built on the site in the future so had bought it, as it gave more control than the district plan.

He wanted to ensure there was a "distinguished" building constructed on the site, but was concerned about the town losing its older buildings.

"All we can do as a council is do all we can to build the heritage buildings of the future," he added.

"People need to remember the art deco buildings

like the Riverside Church were new once."

Kaiapoi Community Board chairwoman Robyn Wallace said there were not many old buildings left in the town after the September quake.

"It was an act of nature, there is no option (but to demolish). We have to look to the future."



Unsafe structure: The digger does its work on Kaiapoi's old Post Office building. **Inset (right):** The old Post Office building as it was and (above), Albie Burnett looks on as the old Post Office building comes down.