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**FIVE INDIVIDUALS CHARGED WITH FILING HUNDREDS  
OF FRAUDULENT DOCUMENTS WITH CITY'S BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT**

*Alleged Scheme Affects Dozens of Queens Properties; Cite Safety Issues and Potentially Hazardous Conditions*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn and New York City Department of Buildings Commissioner Patricia J. Lancaster, FAIA, announced today the arrest of five individuals – including two licensed professional engineers – responsible for the alleged fraudulent filing of hundreds of official documents pertaining to construction or home renovation projects involving dozens of buildings in Queens County

District Attorney Brown said, “Left undetected, the defendants’ alleged fraud could have potentially resulted in the collapse of some of the buildings involved or created fire hazards for neighboring structures. Cutting corners is not the same as cutting through red tape. The defendants’ alleged actions posed a serious risk of injury or even death to unwitting occupants. As a result of a joint investigation by the City’s Department of Investigation, Department of Buildings and my own Special Proceedings Bureau, those allegedly responsible have been apprehended and will be prosecuted and punished.”

Department of Investigation Commissioner Gill Hearn said, “The conduct alleged in these arrests appears to be a blueprint being used by the unscrupulous to circumvent the City’s Building Code that could have potentially created public safety hazards. As the City experiences a construction boom, it presents unique challenges, including from those willing to sidestep the law. The arrests today show that the cooperative effort among investigators, prosecutors and the regulatory agency can and will address criminal wrongdoing and at the same time keep public safety and compliance with the Building Code as significant parts of the investigation. This case is another by-product of the ‘Operation Safe Building and Safe Housing’ initiative formed by the Queens District Attorney’s Office. DOI is pleased to participate in that program.”

Department of Buildings Commissioner Lancaster said, “The arrests today should serve as a strong reminder that filing fraudulent documents to the NYC Buildings Department will not be tolerated. Whether you are renovating your home or constructing a new building, Buildings and Department of Investigation inspectors are watching you. I want to thank the Buildings Department inspection and enforcement staff, Investigations Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn and Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown for bringing these individuals to justice. I look forward to continuing this partnership with the Department of Investigation and the Queens District Attorney as we work to implement our new enforcement plan in the coming months.”

The five defendants were identified as Hansa Persaud, 51, of 102-17 129<sup>th</sup> Street in South Richmond Hill, Queens, Moheshwar Chandarpal, 29, of 110-20 160<sup>th</sup> Street in Jamaica, Queens, Satroghaun “Ravi” Singh, 30, of 87-20 175<sup>th</sup> Street in Jamaica, Dong S. Whang, 67, of 15-14 125<sup>th</sup> Street in College Point, Queens, and Robert Mardca, of 444 Middle Neck Road in Great Neck, Long Island.

The defendants, who are awaiting arraignment later today in Queens Criminal Court in Kew Gardens, are variously charged in separate criminal complaints with Falsifying Business Records in the First and Second Degrees, Attempted Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, Attempted Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, Forgery in the Second Degree, Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree and Conspiracy in the Fifth Degree. If convicted, the defendants all face up to four years in prison except for Singh who faces up to seven years in prison.

The investigation leading to today's arrests began in November 2005 when the New York City Department of Buildings began conducting an investigation into the inspection and certification of homes in Queens County. As part of the investigation, Buildings inspectors personally visited homes and discovered that the construction of these homes did not match the plans filed with the Department of Buildings.

The complaints charge the following individuals:

- 1) Hansa Persaud, professional engineer**
- 2) Moheshwar Chandarpal, expediter**

It is alleged that on September 12, 2006, a Buildings inspector went to 6-07 119<sup>th</sup> Street in College Point to check the foundation extension to the house to ensure that it complied with the approved permit that had been filed with the department. According to the permit, the extended foundation was to possess concrete footings approximately two feet wide, at a depth of four feet, and were to span the entire length of the extended foundation. When excavation pits were dug to check the approved footings, it was discovered that there were no footings supporting the rear extension of the now two-story residence, which could have led to the building's collapse. The inspector also discovered that a chimney – which was not part of the original plans approved by the Buildings Department – had been added to the home. The chimney, if improperly constructed, could have collapsed onto itself or on an adjoining structure. Moreover, it could have readily created a hazardous condition inside the house due to the poor ventilation of smoke and fumes and potentially could have caused serious injury or death of any occupants.

According to charges filed in the case, Moheshwar Chandarpal, the expediter for the construction of the house, was present at the time of the inspection and admitted that he – and not the licensed engineer whose certification and seal are required under the law – did the inspection of the foundation for the project. According to Building Department records, Hanasa Persaud, PE, whose office is located at 128-18 Liberty Avenue in Richmond Hill, had certified with his seal and signature that he personally inspected the foundation and its construction was in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. A month later, on October 12, 2006, a search warrant was executed on Persaud's office and a review of his files indicated that the footing plans for the 119<sup>th</sup> Street location were missing, in spite of the fact that engineers are required to keep all construction plans for seven years.

During the execution of the search warrant, Persaud allegedly stated that he realized that he was in trouble and indicated that he had falsely certified the plans, applications and/or inspections for at least 15 other buildings. Chandrapal and Persaud each also allegedly admitted that they had a financial relationship regarding the construction of numerous houses in Queens County and that Chandrapal further admitted that he drafted approximately 100 construction plans and inspections certification forms to which Persaud would later affix his seal and signature.

### **3) Satroghaun Singh, general contractor**

The criminal complaint charges that RS Construction and Expediting Services, Inc., which is owned and operated by Satroghaun Singh, used the forged signature and seal of an engineer to approve building plans without the engineer's knowledge and file those plans with the Department of Buildings. Between September 2006 and April 2007, Singh allegedly forged the engineer's signature and seal on 286 documents pertaining to 18 construction projects.

It is further charged that Singh had previously offered to illegally buy the engineer's seal and that when the engineer, who was cooperating with authorities, confronted Singh about using his seal, Singh paid the engineer \$5,000 to compensate him for any problems he may have experienced with the Department of Buildings for the unauthorized use of the seal. During the same meeting, which was recorded, Singh allegedly made tentative arraignments for Singh to purchase an original seal from the engineer for \$10,000.

A review of the plans and site inspection by the Department of Buildings resulted in a vacate order and closure of a Curves Gym, located at 129-01 Merrick Boulevard because Singh never obtained a certificate of occupancy for the property and ignored repeated demands from the Buildings Department to correct multiple zoning violations.

#### **4) Dong Whang, professional engineer**

According to the criminal complaint, an undercover Buildings Department investigator and a DOI investigator posing as expeditors met with Dong Whang, a licensed professional engineer, at his office, located at 15-41 125<sup>th</sup> Street in College Point, Queens, on two occasions between December 11, 2006, and January 10, 2007, and presented him with a total of 37 sets of documents – among which were 37 building plans, construction plans and asbestos exemption certification letters – which the investigators indicated were going to be filed with the Department of Buildings. It is alleged that Whang immediately signed and affixed his seal to the documents – certifying that he designed and/or fully reviewed the plans for accuracy and that the planned structures met any and all applicable laws, codes, rules and regulations – without reviewing them. The investigators allegedly paid Whang \$500 at their first meeting, and \$600 at their second meeting as payment for signing off on the documents. The documents were specially prepared with glaring errors which should have been corrected before filing and which would have caused the plans to be rejected if filed with the Buildings Department. Whang is alleged to have kept a set of the documents in his office, while the investigators took a duplicate set so that they could purportedly be filed with the Department of Buildings.

#### **5) Robert Mardca, contractor**

A criminal complaint charges Robert Mardca with filing two certificate of occupancy applications with the Department of Buildings on November 14, 2006, which indicated that construction of a second-story addition to houses located at 223-12 147<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 221-05 134<sup>th</sup> Road conformed with Building Department plans and with all applicable laws and were ready for occupation. However, an inspection of the properties by the Buildings Department determined that the design and construction required for the construction of new roofs were never done.

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District Attorney Brown expressed his appreciation to the New York City Police Department and the New York State Department of Education's Office of Professional Discipline for their assistance and cooperation during the investigation. The District Attorney also noted that Whang and Persaud matters would be referred to the State Office of Professional Discipline for a review of their engineering licenses.

The investigation leading to today's arrests was conducted by DOI's Inspector General for the Department of Buildings John Woods, First Deputy Inspector General Joseph Ferraro, Assistant Deputy Inspector General Kim Ryan and Investigators Sadie Lopez and John DelValle, by Assistant Chief Investigator James McElligott, Investigators Amanda Ogborne and Vitaly Zubry and Investigative Inspector Edward Curtis, of the Department of Buildings's Special Investigations Unit, by Detectives Dominick Digennaro, Joseph Diaz, and David Gilbert of the District Attorney's NYPD Squad under the supervision of Sergeant Frank Horvath and the overall supervision of Captain John M. Zanfardino and by Assistant District Attorney Charles Balvin and Legal Intern Scott Mendelsohn, of the District Attorney's Special Proceedings Bureau.

Assistant District Attorney Andrew H. Kaufman, of the District Attorney's Special Proceedings Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Anthony M. Communiello, Bureau Chief, and Oscar W. Ruiz, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org)

**SEE ATTACHED ADDENDUM ON FOLLOWING PAGE FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON DEFENDANTS**

**ADDENDUM**

- 1) HANSA PERSAUD, 51, lives at 102-17 129<sup>th</sup> Street in South Richmond Hill, Queens, and is the owner of Hansa Architectural and Engineering Services, PC, which is located at 128-18 Liberty Avenue in Richmond Hill. He is charged with:
  - 7 counts of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree
  - 7 counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree
  - 7 counts of Falsifying Business Records in the Second Degree
  
- 2) MOHESHWAR CHANDARPAL, 29, lives at 110-20 160<sup>th</sup> Street in Jamaica, Queens, and is the owner of MLC Developer LLC, which he operates from his residence. He is charged with:
  - 4 counts of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree
  - 4 counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree
  - 4 counts of Falsifying Business Records in the Second Degree
  
- 3) SATROGHAUN "RAVI" SINGH, 30, lives at 87-20 175<sup>th</sup> Street in Jamaica, and is the owner of RS Construction and Expediting Services, Inc., located at 124-20 101<sup>st</sup> Avenue in Richmond Hill. He is charged with:
  - 286 counts of Forgery in the Second Degree
  - 286 counts of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree
  - 286 counts of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree
  - 286 counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree
  - 1 count of Conspiracy in the Fifth Degree.
  
- 4) DONG S. WHANG, 67, lives at 15-14 125<sup>th</sup> Street in College Point, Queens, and is the owner of High Tech Engineering, which he runs from his residence. He is charged with:
  - 37 count of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree
  - 37 counts of Attempted Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree
  - 37 counts of Attempted Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree
  
- 5) ROBERT MARDCA, 50, lives at 444 Middle Neck Road in Great Neck, Long Island and owns a contracting business at 8 Church Street, also in Great Neck. He is charged with:
  - 1 count of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree
  - 1 count of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree
  - 1 count of Falsifying Business Records in the Second Degree