



The City of New York
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Release #122-2009
nyc.gov/html/doi

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2009**

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**DOI ARRESTS FORMER CHIEF PLAN EXAMINER WITH CITY BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT AND
A REGISTERED ARCHITECT ON CHARGES OF MISCONDUCT AND GIVING UNLAWFUL GRATUITIES**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), announced today the arrest of JAMES CHENG, a former Chief Plan Examiner with the City Department of Buildings (“DOB”), on charges of accepting cash payments from SUNG HO SHIN, a New York State Registered Architect, in exchange for reviewing building plans prior to the plans being submitted to DOB. The office of Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting the case.

CHENG, 55, of North Woodmere, N.Y., was charged with Receiving Reward for Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a class E felony, and Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor. SHIN, 49, of Syosset, N.Y., has been charged with Giving Unlawful Gratuities, a class A misdemeanor. Upon conviction, a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison and a class A misdemeanor by up to a year’s incarceration.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, “As charged, these defendants betrayed their professional responsibilities and brazenly disregarded the rules. Everyone should know that offering and accepting money in exchange for a City employee giving preferential service is a crime that will end in arrest and prosecution.”

SHIN is owner of Sung Ho Shin, Architect, P.C., which is located in Flushing, N.Y.

CHENG, who is also a New York State Registered Architect, began working at DOB in June 1997 as a Plan Examiner, resigned in February 2001 to work at a similar job with the New York City School Construction Authority (“SCA”). He left SCA in March 2003 to return to DOB, where he was a Chief Plan Examiner in DOB’s Queens Borough Office in Kew Gardens and was receiving an annual salary of approximately \$99,149 when he resigned in November 2009. A Chief Plan Examiner meets with the public, including architects and engineers; reviews project records such as building plans for compliance with the Building Code; and assigns them to be reviewed by plan examiners.

According to the criminal complaints, between July 1 and 14, 2008, CHENG reviewed zoning analysis for building plans that had not yet been submitted to DOB, in exchange for SHIN giving him money. DOI’s investigation found that CHENG knew and told SHIN that he was not allowed to engage in this type of activity.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown and DOB Commissioner Robert D. LiMandri and their staffs for this assistance on this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI’s Office of the Inspector General for DOB.

Criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

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