



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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**FORMER DOB INSPECTOR PLEADS GUILTY TO ACCEPTING \$500 IN CASH TO  
OVERLOOK CONSTRUCTION WORK COMPLETED CONTRARY TO APPROVED PLANS**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), announced that a former Construction Inspector with the City Department of Buildings (“DOB”) pled guilty today to accepting a cash payment of \$500 in exchange for approving construction work that did not follow the DOB-approved plans for the construction. This investigation began after DOI received allegations from a member of the public and DOB that the defendant had solicited cash payments in exchange for approvals of construction work he inspected. DOI investigated this matter with the office of Queens County District Attorney Melinda Katz, which is prosecuting the case.

IAN CROOKS, 60, of Queens, N.Y., was arrested and charged on April 19, 2023 with Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, a class D felony, and Official Misconduct, a class A misdemeanor. He was presented with a Desk Appearance Ticket to return for his arraignment today in Queens County Criminal Court, where he pled guilty to Official Misconduct and was sentenced to a conditional discharge. Pursuant to the plea agreement, CROOKS resigned from DOB earlier today.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “The cornerstone of this former Buildings Inspector’s job was to ensure that completed construction work was consistent with the approved plans. This defendant not only failed to do his duty as an inspector, he accepted payment to ignore the rules. I thank the member of the public and the Department of Buildings for reporting this matter to DOI for investigation. DOB’s rules and approval process are intended to maintain the safety and structural integrity of construction work in this City and the corruption alleged here undercuts that important effort. I thank the Queens County District Attorney’s Office for their partnership on this investigation.”

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz said, “The duties of a building inspector are critical – they ensure that our structures are safe and inhabitable. This man’s conduct undermined public confidence in government and its ability to competently and fairly protect and serve all New Yorkers. I applaud the Department of Investigation for its outstanding work on this case.”

DOB Commissioner Jimmy Oddo said, “We have zero tolerance for this behavior at DOB, which is why our Office of Internal Affairs and Discipline immediately began working with the Department of Investigation to investigate this allegation and act upon it. Working together with our partners in law enforcement, we have made tremendous progress in promoting a safer construction industry and upholding the highest levels of integrity within the agency.”

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According to the criminal complaint, plans were submitted to, and approved by, DOB to replace rusted lintels above the front three windows at a residence located at 173-19 Jamaica Ave. in Queens. Lintels provide extra support for the top of windows and doors. A DOI undercover investigator posed as the property owner when the defendant inspected the work. The investigation found that the windows were filled with concrete blocks and mortar, which were not indicated on the approved plans and obstructed the view of the lintels. Despite this failure to adhere to the plans, on January 12, 2023, the defendant agreed to approve the work for \$500 in cash provided by the DOI undercover investigator posing as the property owner. Once the defendant received the \$500 cash payment he left the property.

The defendant was suspended from DOB upon his arrest on April 19, 2023. CROOKS began working at DOB as a Construction Inspector in 2017 and was receiving an annual salary of approximately \$66,825 when he resigned pursuant to today's guilty plea.

Commissioner Strauber thanked Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz for prosecuting this matter, which is assigned to Deputy Chief Christine Oliveri of the Public Corruption Bureau under the supervision of Bureau Chief Khadijah Muhammad-Starling. Commissioner Strauber also thanked DOB Commissioner Jimmy Oddo, DOB First Deputy Commissioner Kazimir Vilenchik, and DOB Assistant Commissioner of Investigations and Compliance Mark Sanabria for reporting this matter to DOI and their cooperation in this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Assistant Inspector General Syed Ali Ameer, under the guidance of First Deputy Inspector General Kim Ryan-Flores, Deputy Inspector Ed Zinser and Senior Inspector General Gregory Cho of DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Buildings, under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

*DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. 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. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.*

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