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CITY RELEASES FINAL INVESTIGATION REPORT INTO 2023 FATAL PARKING STRUCTURE COLLAPSE

Major Structural Collapse Attributed Primarily to Unsafe Demolition Work on the 98-Year-Old Building

Investigators Offer Recommendations for Potential Revisions to Construction Codes to Help Prevent Future Incidents

New York, NY – Buildings Commissioner Jimmy Oddo today announced the official release of the cause and origin investigation report into the deadly 2023 parking garage collapse at 57 Ann Street in Manhattan, revealing that a combination of factors led to the collapse, critically the dangerous demolition of a structural brick pier inside the building performed without construction approvals or permits. After an extensive multi-agency investigation, it was determined that employees of the parking garage business improperly removed bricks and mortar from a load-bearing brick pier just below the third floor of the nearly 100-year-old building without implementing proper shoring. It was further determined that this dangerous demolition work, in combination with additional contributing factors, including a flawed engineering assessment of a deteriorated brick pier, poor maintenance, and an apparent design and construction deficiencies during the original construction of the building, led to the collapse. The critical role of the unauthorized and dangerous demolition work performed on that brick pier in this tragic incident highlights the importance of strict compliance with the city's construction regulations.

This in-depth incident report was created in collaboration with LERA Consulting Structural Engineers (LERA), the NYC Department of Investigation (DOI), and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office is being made available to the public in the interest of transparency. In addition to a detailed timeline of events that led to the collapse, and a comprehensive overview of the multi-year investigation, the report also includes recommendations for potential changes to existing city regulations to help prevent similar incidents from happening in the future.

[Read the Full Report Here](#)

"The city's construction regulations are in effect to keep people safe. The tragedy at Ann Street reminds us that every time un-permitted work occurs, it could literally lead to loss of life," said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Jeff Roth**. "Owners of the million-plus buildings in New York City must maintain their buildings, and ensure that work is safe and legal. The DOB's new predictive analytics department will soon be on the look-out, seeking unsafe work environments to stop tragedies like this one before they happen."

"The extensive multi-agency investigation into this catastrophic collapse makes one point abundantly clear: this tragedy in the heart of Lower Manhattan was entirely preventable," said **Buildings Commissioner Oddo**. "The reckless direction of these workers to remove bricks from the pier, together with the failure to report the issue to DOB, obtain the required construction permits, and install critical structural shoring, caused this building to come down. We have stringent regulations in our codes intended to prevent collapses like this from occurring, but those regulations aren't keeping anyone safe if they are not being followed. That's why we are staffing up a brand-new unit at DOB dedicated to a new proactive enforcement strategy, with the goal of finding and stopping these unsafe construction operations before a potential collapse can occur."

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "The deadly 2023 Ann Street parking garage collapse resulted from a repair project that proceeded without DOB approval and permits, notification to DOB of the deteriorating conditions of the garage, and appropriate protections to the structure under repair. The tragic consequences of these failures by the property owners, engineers, and garage operator were preventable, had the parties involved complied with the City's building regulations. I thank the DOB and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office for their partnership on this investigation and their commitment to regulatory change intended to improve public safety and to holding wrongdoers accountable."

"In Manhattan, a borough with numerous older structures, many over 100 years old, adhering to proper procedures is all the more important," said **District Attorney Bragg**. "This horrific tragedy demonstrates the grave and unacceptable risks of performing demolition work without following DOB regulations and without appropriate professional supervision. My heart goes out to the family of the worker who died and everyone else who was injured or displaced from their homes that day. Alongside DOB and our other investigative partners, my office's Worker Protection Unit is at the forefront of ensuring safe construction sites for workers and residents alike."

"This tragedy highlights how important it is for property owners and managers to be aware of and comply with all City regulations, and for the design professionals hired to assess and design repairs and alterations to existing buildings to exercise care in identifying and addressing unsafe conditions in a timely and appropriate manner," said **Benjamin M. Cornelius, Partner at LERA**.

In the minutes after this building collapsed on April 18, 2023, DOB forensic engineers and investigators from our partner agencies rushed to the scene to secure the collapse site and conduct emergency structural stability inspections of neighboring buildings throughout the area to protect the public from any secondary collapses. The joint investigation, spearheaded by DOB, DOI, and the Manhattan DA's Office, was launched immediately, and private engineering firm LERA was brought on board as an official city contractor to conduct their own independent analysis of the collapse as well.

The investigation found that during the initial construction of 57 Ann Street in 1925, certain load bearing piers were not properly connected to the adjacent party wall, which left the piers more vulnerable to deterioration. Over the course of decades, this long-term progressive deterioration of the brick pier caused significant cracks in the masonry. With an eye towards making repairs, the parking garage operator, Little Man Parking, hired professional engineering firm Experion Design Group, who inspected the garage multiple times in 2022 and 2023, and developed repair plans for the brick pier and other areas of the building that had also deteriorated. At no time did the responsible parties notify DOB about the deteriorating condition of the structural pier.

During their multiple inspections of the building, Experion Design Group failed to properly identify the piers as load-bearing and the deterioration as an unsafe condition. Starting in March 2023, over the course of several weeks, employees of Little Man Parking were directed to remove damaged bricks and mortar from the load-bearing pier, so that they could later be replaced. The workers did not install any shoring around their work. This dangerous work was performed without approved engineering plans or DOB permits, both of which are required for these types of repair projects. On two separate occasions, engineers from Experion Design Group conducted field inspections of the garage, where they witnessed the unsafe and unpermitted removal of bricks from the pier yet failed to stop the work and notify DOB of the immediately hazardous conditions.

On April 18, 2023, the day of the collapse, workers employed by Little Man Parking removed additional bricks from the load-bearing pier just below the Third Floor. This additional work significantly reduced the strength of the pier to the point of failure, and when another parking garage employee on the roof drove a vehicle directly above the pier, the additional weight caused the floor above to come crashing down, setting off a chain reaction that resulted in a collapse of the three-story building. The collapse led to the tragic death of one employee of Little Man Parking and injuries to seven others. The Manhattan D.A.'s Office assisted with this extensive investigation and did not find evidence of criminality.

As a result of this joint investigation, DOB has taken multiple civil enforcement actions against the parties involved with this building collapse. A total of seven civil OATH violations have been issued to the property owners. DOB has also issued a Commissioner's Order requiring that any parking structure inspections in New York City associated with Experion Design Group or Little Man Parking undergo a third-party review from an independent engineering firm prior to being accepted by DOB. Finally, DOB has recently conducted a new enforcement sweep of all parking structures

associated with both Little Man Parking and Experion Design Group. These sweeps of over 100 unique locations were conducted in the interest of public safety, and are a repeat of previous sweeps conducted in 2023 directly after the collapse occurred. DOB is issuing additional enforcement actions to the responsible parties, when appropriate, as a result of these sweeps.

The investigation report includes several recommendations for revisions to the New York City Construction Codes and Rules that would improve public safety in New York City. These recommendations were developed by LERA in collaboration with DOB. DOB will work with our partners in the City Council to implement the recommendations enumerated in the report, including:

- Require that each Qualified Parking Structure Inspector (“QPSI”) engaged to perform a parking structure inspection review all drawings of all affected existing structures at the property available from both the DOB Records Offices and the property owner;
- Require that each QPSI in charge of a parking structure inspection visit the site at least once prior to designing the condition assessment program, in addition to the current requirement for final inspections;
- Require that each Registered Design Professional (“RDP”) engaged to design structural repairs of any existing building review all drawings of all affected existing structures at the property available from both the DOB Records Offices and the property owner;
- Require that each RDP in charge of the design of structural repairs, or another RDP under the direct supervision of the RDP in charge, visit the site during the detailed assessment that will form the basis of the design and preparation of construction documents for those repairs;
- Require that each RDP in charge of the design of structural repairs of an existing building prepare drawings for all probes; and require that the drawings be kept on site at all times during probing work and while probes remain open;
- Require that each RDP in charge of the design of structural repairs identify in their drawings the structural elements of the building that require shoring prior to commencement of probing work;
- Require that each RDP in charge of the design of structural repairs of an existing building, or another RDP under their direct supervision, be on site at all times during all structural probing work;
- Require that work requiring a permit be accomplished by a contractor licensed with the City of New York; and
- Require annual registration with DOB for all QPSIs, Qualified Exterior Wall Inspectors, and Qualified Retaining Wall Inspectors.

To prevent similar incidents like this from happening in the future, DOB has also created a new proactive enforcement unit focused on inspecting buildings that have been allowed to fall into disrepair by negligent owners and bad actors within the construction industry. Thanks to a new law passed by the City Council, and a significant investment of \$4.7 million from Mayor Eric Adams, DOB is currently staffing up this new unit, which

will utilize predictive analytics to identify derelict buildings and unsafe contractors, in order to take appropriate interventions in the interest of public safety before a major collapse occurs. This new unit will be operational later this year.

Current city regulations require all parking structures in the city to be inspected by a Qualified Parking Structure Inspector (QPSI) contracted by the property owner on a periodic cycle, as part of the city's [Periodic Inspection of Parking Structures \(PIPS\) program](#). The law requires all inspection reports to be submitted to DOB for review, and for the privately contracted QPSI to immediately notify DOB of any unsafe conditions as soon as they are discovered. Since August 1, 2024, the owners of every parking structure covered under this program across the five boroughs have been legally required to have filed either a full PIPS engineering report, or an initial observation report, on the structural stability of their buildings. Owners who have failed to submit these required safety reports are subject to enforcement actions, including violations and targeted sweeps by DOB inspectors. Members of the public can find out which buildings have submitted their [PIPS engineering reports](#) or their [Initial Observation Reports](#) on DOB's regularly updated citywide parking structure maps.

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