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SOME THOUGHTS ON FACADE INSPECTIONS

Portions of the New York City Facade Ordinance Code

The information provided is general in nature and should not be relied upon as fact. It is provided as an example of the standard of care and procedures recommended by Bero Architecture for a facade certification. Persons requiring specific information on the New York City Facade Ordinances should contact the New York City Department of Buildings.

§§ 32-03 Periodic Inspection of Exterior Walls and Appurtenances of Buildings.

Definitions.

Critical examination. Critical examination means an examination conducted to review the exterior of a building and all parts thereof to determine whether the exterior walls and the appurtenances thereto are safe, unsafe, or safe with a repair and maintenance program and whether, in the judgement of a Registered Architect or Professional Engineer, they require remedial work.

Unsafe condition. Unsafe condition means a condition of a building wall, any appurtenances thereto or part thereof that is dangerous to persons or property and requires prompt remedial action. In addition, any condition which was reported as safe with a repair and maintenance program in an earlier report and which is not corrected at the time of the current inspection shall be reported as an unsafe condition.

Safe. Safe means a condition of a building wall, any appurtenances thereto or any part thereof not requiring repair or maintenance to sustain the structural integrity of the exterior of the building and that will not become unsafe during the next five years.

Safe with a repair and maintenance program. Safe with a repair and maintenance program means a condition of a building wall, any appurtenances thereto or any part thereof that is safe at the time of inspection, but requires repairs or maintenance during the next five years in order to prevent its deterioration during that five year period into an unsafe condition.

Inspection procedures.

- (i) Before any exterior wall for any building is critically examined, the Registered Architect or Licensed Professional Engineer (hereinafter referred to as "professional") employed by the owner of the building shall carefully review any previous available reports.
- (ii) Such examination shall be conducted and witnessed by or under the supervision of a professional retained by or on behalf of the owner of the building. It shall be done to the best of his/her knowledge and belief.

(iii) The professional shall determine methods employed in the examination, but he/she need not be physically present at the location where the examination is made. Under the professional's supervision, technicians, tradesmen, contractors, and engineers-in-training may be delegated selected inspection tasks. These individuals need not be in his/her employ.

(iv) The methods used to examine the building shall permit a complete inspection of same. Except as herein required, the use of a scaffold or other observation platform is preferred, but the professional may use other methods of inspection as he/she deems appropriate. A physical examination from a scaffold or other observation platform is required for a representative sample of the exterior wall. The professional shall determine what constitutes a representative sample. The representative sample must include at least one physical examination along a path from grade to top of an exterior wall on a street front using at least one scaffold drop or other observation platform configuration.

(v) The known history of the building, the nature of the materials used and the conditions observed will dictate the extent of the critical examination.

The registered architect or licensed professional engineer shall utilize a professional standard of care to detect splitting or fracturing of terra cotta on buildings, cracking of masonry and brick faced buildings, loosening of metal anchors and supports, water entry, movement of lintel angles, etc., and shall ascertain the cause of these and such other conditions detected. The professional shall order any special inspections and/or tests that may be required.

(vi) During the course of the critical examination, photographs shall be taken and/or sketches made to properly document the location of all conditions observed that are either unsafe or safe with a repair and maintenance program.

(vii) Upon discovery of any unsafe condition the professional shall immediately notify the owner of the building by letter or by fax.

Report requirements

(i) The professional shall submit to the Owner of the building a written report as to the result of such examination, clearly documenting all conditions not classified as safe.

(ii) The report shall include:

(A) The address, any a.k.a. addresses, the location from the nearest cross street, and Block and Lot numbers;

(B) The landmark status of the building;

(C) The name, mailing address, and telephone number of the owner of the building, his agent or the person in charge, possession or control of the building;

(D) (a) The description of the building including number of stories, height, plan dimensions, Certificate of Occupancy number if available, usage, and age and type of exterior wall construction;

(b) Brief history of any settlements, repairs, revisions to exterior enclosures, if available;

(E) A detailed description of the procedures used in making the critical examination;

(F) A detailed description of the extent and location of all physical examinations performed;

(G) A report of all conditions including significant deterioration and movement observed as well as a statement concerning the apparent water-tightness of the exterior surfaces, and the

deleterious effect of exterior appurtenances, including exterior fixtures, flagpoles, signs, parapets, copings, guard rails, window frames (including hardware and lights), window guards, window air conditioners, flower boxes, etc. The report shall classify each such condition as safe, unsafe, or safe with a repair and maintenance program;

(H) The causes of the reported conditions;

(I) The status of the exterior maintenance;

(J) Comparison of observed conditions with conditions observed during previous examinations, including status of the repairs or maintenance performed with respect to the prior conditions;

(K) Recommendations for repairs or maintenance, if appropriate, including the recommended time frame for same to be performed;

(L) Date of start and completion of the critical examination;

(M) The seal and signature of the professional under whose supervision the critical examination was performed shall be on the written report.

(N) If there are no unsafe conditions and no conditions that are safe with a repair and maintenance program, then the building shall be classified as safe.

(O) If there is at least one unsafe condition, then the building shall be classified as unsafe.

(P) If there is (are) a(ny) condition(s) that is (are) safe with a repair and maintenance program and there are no unsafe conditions, then the building shall be classified as safe with a repair and maintenance program.

(Q) Photographs and/or sketches documenting the location or any conditions that are either unsafe or safe with a repair and maintenance program.