



Engineers  
Planners  
Surveyors  
Landscape Architects  
Environmental Scientists

400 Valley Road  
Suite 304  
Mt. Arlington, NJ 07852  
T: 973-398-3110  
F: 973-398-3199  
[www.maserconsulting.com](http://www.maserconsulting.com)

January 19, 2016

Mr. Paul Renaud  
Construction/Zoning Official  
Borough of Norwood  
455 Broadway  
Norwood, NJ 07648

Re: Structural Inspection Report  
521 Livingston Street  
Norwood, NJ 07648  
MC Project No. 16000141A

Dear Paul:

As requested, Maser Consulting performed an inspection of the buildings and the site at the above-referenced address. The purpose of the inspection was to assess the condition of the building and observe the effects of the partially demolished roof framing and the structural integrity of the entire strip mall.

A visual inspection of the above property was performed by Maser Consulting on January 15, 2016. Representatives from the Borough of Norwood were present during the inspection.

Photographs were taken of points of interest, and some are included in this report.

#### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The subject structure is a single-story, steel framed commercial building with CMU walls and a brick veneer. The commercial building was a "Cost Cutters" store before being abandoned. The roof framing consists of a metal roof deck supported by steel bar joists on steel beams. The roof beams are supported by steel pipe columns. According to the town representatives, a portion of the roof began to rust and collapse, so a large portion of the roof was demolished before a major collapse would occur.

The abandoned building is adjacent to an active strip mall with smaller stores. There is a block CMU separation wall between the two buildings. The roof framing of the active strip mall is similar to, and possibly connected to, that of the abandoned building.



## **OBSERVATIONS**

The following observations were made during the inspection:

### *Abandoned Building:*

1. The roof framing consists of steel bar joists and beams (see photograph 1).
2. The steel beams run into the separation wall between the abandoned building and the rest of the strip mall.
3. The steel beams are supported by columns within the separation wall (see photograph 2).
4. The demolished portion of the roof has left all of the interior framing exposed to the elements (see photograph 3).
5. Removing a large portion of the framing has left the back wall and two rows of columns laterally unbraced (see photograph 3).

### *Strip Mall:*

6. The framing of the rest of the strip mall consists of steel bar joists and beams (see photograph 4).
7. The framing of the active strip mall is lower and separate from the framing of the abandoned building with the exception of the common wall between both structures (see photograph 4 & 5).

### *Site Conditions:*

8. The existing sidewalk, curbing, pavement, drainage and lighting on the site adjacent to the abandoned building and the strip mall are in poor condition.
9. The existing utility connections to either building could not be verified for a location or condition.
10. This site contains piles of debris and other hazardous items.
11. The existing fence in the rear of the property is in poor condition.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Leaving the back wall and multiple columns unbraced presents unsafe conditions inside and outside of the abandoned building. Although the back alleyway is blocked off, it is still accessible and the unbraced wall presents a safety concern for anyone around the building if it were to collapse due to a wind gust.

Since the roof is now open, many of the steel members are now exposed to the elements. This can lead to deterioration of the steel elements and weakening of the abandoned building's framing. Additionally, the remaining interior members are now exposed to the wind loads, which they were not originally designed for.



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Therefore, we recommend immediate demolition of the entire abandoned building. Due to the fact that the abandoned building shares a common wall with the strip mall, the demolition would now compromise the structural integrity of the strip mall, thereby causing the need for the strip mall to be demolished also.

Please note that demolition of the framing, embedded into the separation wall, (between both buildings) i.e. beam ends and columns, will affect the framing of the active strip mall. It is the opinion of this office that this disturbance of the common wall may trigger the need for partial demolition of the active strip mall structure. It is also the opinion of this office that trying to investigate, brace and stabilize the common wall along with the partial demolition and reconstruction of the active strip mall structure, adjacent to the common wall, would be cost-prohibitive.

Based on all of the above-referenced observations, the current site as it exists poses an unsafe condition to both the businesses operating on the site and the patrons using those businesses. We recommend closing this site immediately to public access.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to call our office at (973) 398-3110.

Very truly yours,

MASER CONSULTING P.A.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'ARH', is written over the printed name.

Andrew R. Hipolit, P.E., P.P., C.M.E.  
Borough Engineer

**Disclaimer**

Maser Consulting P.A.'s (Maser) scope of work was limited to conducting an inspection of the above-referenced property in order to visually observe the property's physical condition as of the date of the inspection. Maser assumes no liability or responsibility for the condition of the property or for conditions arising out of, resulting from, or based on the Structural Inspection Report prepared by Maser. It is understood that Maser's conclusions are based upon its professional opinion as a design professional familiar with the construction industry and that Maser makes no representations or warranties with respect to its professional opinions. Any reliance, use, or reuse of Maser's Structural Inspection Report will be at the user's sole risk and without any liability or legal exposure to Maser and such reliance, use, or reuse will be deemed acceptance of these terms.

cc: Lorraine McMackin, Norwood Borough Clerk  
Alex Itkin, Maser Consulting, Bridges and Structures

ARH/dw



← Separation Wall

Photograph 1 – Abandoned Building, Roof Framing



← Separation Wall

Photograph 2 – Column in Separation Wall



Photograph 3 – Unbraced Back Wall and Two Rows of Columns



Separation Wall

Photograph 4 – Strip Mall, Roof Framing



Abandoned  
building

Active strip mall

Photograph 5 – General View of Roof