

# GRAMS ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS



## BUILDING INSPECTION REPORT

**Prepared for:** Purchaser  
**Property:** 335-67 Street, West New York, NJ 07093  
**Inspection Date:** July 12, 1999  
**Report Number:** NJ-061299-1

The Purchaser, its successors or assigns, understands and agrees that Grams Engineering Building Inspection Report, all content, material, plans and drawings contained herein, including all exhibits and attachments thereto are unique and provided for the sole purpose of the single transaction of evaluating the condition of the home, building, structure or premises listed on the cover of this Report, and that the Purchaser shall use the same only for such purposes. The Purchaser, its successors or assigns, agrees it will treat this report as strictly confidential and will not directly or indirectly use, give, sell, exchange, show, display, exhibit, copy or reproduce this Inspection Report, including all exhibit and attachments thereto to any person, party, or entity, except the real estate agent representing the Purchaser, attorney of the Purchaser, and mortgage banker of the Purchaser without having first obtained the written consent of Grams Engineering.

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# Engineer's Certification

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We certify that the building and all appurtenances constituting part of the property located at the address identified on the cover of this report, and listed and evaluated in this report, were inspected by a Licensed Professional Engineer.

Further, we certify that we invested reasonable effort in conducting this limited walk-through inspection and in preparation of this report.

Further, we certify that this report does not omit any material fact and does not contain any untrue statement.

This certification is not valid without Professional Engineer's original inked signature and raised seal.

Gary Shed, P.E.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Limited Warranty

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Although reasonable care has been taken in the preparation of this report, Grams Engineering extends no warranty and makes no representation as to the suitability of the information contained herein for the user's intended purpose or for the consequences of its use. Each individual should make a determination as to the suitability of the information for their particular purpose(s).

This report is not a guarantee or warrantee nor is it the implication that the inspected premises construction and electrical, plumbing and heating, and cooling systems comply with all applicable federal, state and local building, electrical, environmental and zoning codes, regulations and ordinances.

Grams Engineering warrants to the original Purchaser of this report that we will re-inspect a home, building or structure, and revise and reissue the report for a period of one (1) year after the original report has been issued, at no cost to the Purchaser upon notification and verification of typographical errors or omissions. A re-inspection will be made if requested by original Purchaser and a new report issued, at any time at a fee not to exceed half the fee charged for the original inspection.

Grams Engineering agrees to defend original Purchaser of this report in any action against Purchaser to the extent that such action is based on a charge or allegation that the findings listed in this report are incorrect, and further agrees to indemnify Purchaser for any final damages award, or actual damages or costs that may be entered against Purchaser in any such action, but in no event shall Grams Engineering financial obligations hereunder exceed the inspection fee paid to Grams Engineering by the Purchaser.

# Introduction

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The engineering inspection is conducted by qualified and experienced registered professional engineer and is intended to provide the Purchaser with a non-biased engineering evaluation of a home, building or structure. This is a limited access walk-through inspection requiring obtaining the current owner's permission. The inspection includes examination of the heating and cooling systems, electrical system, plumbing system, the condition of roofing and siding, windows and doors, and the structural integrity evaluation as well as many other items which make part of a home or building, from the roof to the basement.

The purpose of the Building Inspection Report is to present specific findings to the Purchaser step-by-step in clear and simple language and to provide the Purchaser with a concise, practical advice based on the knowledge and sound engineering judgment of experienced engineer. Having all the facts enables the Purchaser to make an informed decision about the purchase.

The nature of the inspection limits engineer from inspecting many items which are hidden inside the walls, under floor, and other inaccessible areas, or obstructed by furniture, floor coverings, and wall decorations. These items include but are not limited to pipes, wires, structural members, etc. Inspecting these items can often result in minor damage to the premises and requires obtaining the current owner's permission and indemnification well in advance and in writing.

This inspection does not include checking inaccessible areas. The inaccessible areas include: underlying soil, underground utilities, crawl spaces, steep-sloped roofs, upper siding, attic spaces without subflooring, interiors of walls, ceilings and fireplaces, locked rooms, and areas obstructed by debris and personal property. The inspection also does not include: determination of efficiency and adequacy of appliances and heating and cooling systems, telephone and alarm wiring and jacks, sampling and analytical testing of air and water quality, chemical composition testing of building material

Although the condition of the premises and the systems may be acceptable on the date and the time of the original inspection, the condition may change after the inspection due to seasonal changes, heavy rains, miss-use, negligence, etc. We recommend that you and/or the engineer of your choice conduct a pre-closing inspection immediately prior to closing.

# About This Report

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This report is organized into ten sections and an appendix. Each of the sections contains information relevant to condition of the premises and the systems that it contains. The paragraphs below present each of the sections and a brief comment on its contents.

## **Section 1: General Considerations**

This section provides important information regarding your responsibilities as a Purchaser. The Purchaser should fully understand this section.

## **Section 2: Brief Summary of Findings**

This section provides inspection summary at a glance.

## **Section 3: Structure**

This section provides the summary of detailed findings regarding the condition of building or structure.

## **Section 4: Windows and Doors**

This section provides information about windows and doors installed in this building and their condition.

## **Section 5: The Plumbing System**

This section provides information about the building's plumbing system and its condition.

## **Section 6: The Electrical System**

This section provides information about the building's electrical system and its condition.

## **Section 7: Heating and Cooling Systems**

This section provides information about the type of heating and cooling systems installed in this building and their condition.

## **Section 8: Major Appliances**

This section provides information about appliances installed in this building and their condition.

## **Section 9: Fire and Burglar Alarm Systems**

This section provides information about the building's fire and burglar alarm systems .

## **Section 10: Miscellaneous Observations**

This section provides the summary of miscellaneous observations about condition of the building and appurtenances.

## **What is Not Covered in this Report**

This report does not cover: condition of underground foundation and utilities - drains, piping, wiring, oil tanks, wells, and septic tanks; condition of crawl spaces, interiors of walls, ceilings and fireplaces, inaccessible electrical wiring and plumbing; specific determination of efficiency and adequacy of appliances and heating and cooling systems; determination of air and water quality; chemical analysis of building materials and finishes.

## Warnings

Warnings like the sample shown below are inserted throughout the report to bring to the reader's attention hazardous conditions which exist in this building and could cause personal injury if not eliminated.

### **WARNING!**

*The duplex electric outlets located in bathrooms, kitchens and basement are not fitted with ground fault circuit interrupters. In this regard, this building does not comply with NEC (NFPA 70) requirement. We recommend that GFCI receptacles be installed in all bathrooms, kitchens and basement.*

# General Considerations

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It is your responsibility as a purchaser to verify the following:

- a) The Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) is on file with your local Building Department, and confirms that the building was constructed in accordance with the building code and zoning regulations in force at the time of construction, that it is up to date and covers any subsequent alterations or additions, and that the dimensions and number of rooms, bathrooms, garages, etc. as they exist today correspond exactly to the plans on file.

If the Certificate of Occupancy does not exist on file with your local Building Department or is not up to date, you risk incurring a considerable expense for obtaining it or making it current.

- b) The up to date Certificate of Compliance (C of C) exists on file with your local Building Department for furnace or boiler hookup(s), sewer hookup, fireplace (if installed), outdoor structure(s) (if installed), etc.

If the Certificate of Compliance does not exist on file with your local Building Department or is not up to date, you risk incurring a considerable expense for obtaining it or making it current.

- c) There are no outstanding building violations. Obtain an up to date building violations report from your local Building Department.

You risk incurring a considerable expense for satisfying any outstanding building violations.

- c) The lot is zoned for your intended use, and the property address corresponds exactly with the address on file at your local Building Department.
- d) The fire detection and protection devices (smoke and heat detectors, and fire sprinklers) are installed and operational.

You risk injury or death in case of fire if fire detection and protection devices are not operational.

- e) The carbon monoxide (CO) detectors are installed and operational.
- f) The building is termite-free. In many instances your mortgage bank will require termite inspection as a prerequisite to loan approval.

The termite damage is not always obvious and can often result in significant damage to the structure. You risk incurring a considerable expense if you purchase the building without conducting the termite inspection.

- g) The building is lead paint-free.

You risk a serious health damage from lead poisoning if the building has ever been painted with the lead containing paint.

- h) The building is radon gas-free. You risk a serious health damage if radon gas is a problem in this area.
- i) Arrange for water test and install water purification equipment if required.

## Brief Summary of Findings

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The building at 335-67 Street, West New York Township, Hudson County, New Jersey, 07093 is a 50 to 60-years old, four story, masonry/steel construction, twelve-apartment residential multiple dwelling with basement and hookups to city water and sewer. The building has been designated as No. 0912-12979 on Certificate of Registration dated July 1, 1998 posted in the building lobby.

The building is designated as Block 15 Lot 8 on the City map and is located at the intersection of 67 Street and Palisade Ave., with the main lobby facing the 67<sup>th</sup> street on its Northerly side. Along Palisade Ave. it is bordering on one side with a lower height residential dwelling. The property contains no front or back yards. There is an elevated alleyway in the back of the building with brick steps to the at-grade level.

There are twelve principal apartments: three on the first level; and three each on the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> levels. The twelve apartments each contain: two bedrooms, dining/living room, one full bath, and eat in kitchen. Only ten apartments are currently occupied while the other two are in process of being renovated. The basement apartment, currently occupied by the building superintendent, is not listed on the certificate of registration, and contains: two bedrooms, kitchen/dining/living room, and a full bath.

There are four principal means of egress from the building: through the main lobby doorway at the at-grade level facing 67 Street; through the doorway directly opposite of the main lobby doorway and leading to the back alleyway; and through the two fire-escapes facing 67 Street. There are two principal ways of egress from the basement: through the front entry door to basement apartment, and through the door in the back of the building. The eleven apartments each have a doorway leading into the stairwell with a further means of egress through the main lobby doorway or the back doorway to the at-grade level. One of the first level apartments has a separate doorway leading directly to the street.

There are several principal levels:

1. The basement. Basement is not finished and is principally used as utilities, storage and living space. It contains the following utilities: the electrical service panel, thirteen electrical meters, twelve natural gas meters, water meter, telephone distribution panel, and clothes washer. The storage and utilities areas of the basement are accessible through the descending brick stairs located in the back of the building at the alleyway level. The basement apartment is accessible through the descending stairs at the at-grade level in the front of the building facing the 67 Street. The utilities, the storage and the living space are separated by a sheet-rocked wood frame construction wall.
2. The at-grade level containing: entrance to the lobby and stairs to first floor, and a separate entrance off a Palisade Ave. to one of the first level apartments.

3. The first level containing: entrance to the two first level apartments, the exit doorway to the alley way in the back of the building with the connecting hallway, and the stairs leading to the upper floors.
4. The second level containing: entrance to the three second level apartments, the connecting hallway, and the stairs leading to the lower and upper floors.
5. The third level containing: entrance to the three third level apartments, the connecting hallway, and the stairs leading to the lower and upper floors.
6. The fourth level containing: entrance to the three fourth level apartments, the connecting hallway, and the stairs leading to the roof.
7. The roof. The roof contains stairway shaft and is accessible through a fire door.

All of the building's twelve legal apartments contain: eat-in kitchen with electric water heater and gas stove, combination living/dining room, bathroom, two bedrooms, and a connecting hallway.

There is a small courtyard on the right hand side of the building facing the 67 Street. It is principally used for storing trash containers. There is no landscaping either in the front or in the back of the building. The building blends in well with the other properties in the area.

- This building is rated as being **STRUCTURALLY SOUND**. The condition of the accessible concrete foundation and basement walls, at-grade concrete slab, the load carrying walls, the roof rafters and floor joists, and all walls and floors is **NORMAL** for the building of this construction type, size and age, and is **ACCEPTABLE**. The exterior walls of this building are steel, brick and mortar construction. The basement walls are steel, stone and mortar construction.
- The roof of this building is a traditional low-sloping roof consisting of a framework of rafters supporting a roof deck weatherproofed with coal-tar. The roof has three screened and hooded vents, several no-longer used chimneys facing the Palisade Ave., and a black iron pipe downspout. The roof is in **ACCEPTABLE** condition. It should be noted that the coal-tar weatherproofing appears to have obvious signs of past repairs, and features some cracking in several places which are likely to develop a leak in the near future. The owner(s) of the building should plan to resurface or repair their buildings' roof in the near future. It should also be noted that the mortar around chimneys bricks is cracked and crumbling in several places, and may result in falling bricks if not replaced.
- On the interior, most walls are painted gypsum wallboard. In the bathroom areas, walls finish is a combination of paint and ceramic tile. In all twelve apartments, the floor in the kitchen, living/dining room and bathroom is vinyl tile. The floor in the bedrooms and connecting hallways is carpeted hardwood. Most tile and carpeting are in **WORN** condition. The basement walls and floor are not finished.
- The siding is a combination of brick, brick veneer, stucco, and minor wood veneer paneling. All siding is in **ACCEPTABLE** condition. It should be noted that some brickwork show signs of chipping and drilling. This should be repaired to prevent further deterioration.

- The windows in this building are either aluminum or aluminum/vinyl frame windows, except for the new vinyl windows in the apartment(s) currently under renovation. All older windows are in **WORN BUT FUNCTIONAL** condition. It should be noted that the second floor stair landing window is missing one sash, and the aluminum capping is missing around several of the windows on the side and in the back of the building, with the wood framing having visible signs of deterioration. The missing aluminum capping should be replaced to prevent further deterioration. All doors and door locks are in **ACCEPTABLE** condition, with the exception of the rooftop access door, which, at the time of the inspection, had been removed and did not appear to have a door lockset.
- The plumbing and drainage systems are in **ACCEPTABLE** condition. The toilets and the shower heads in the apartments are inefficient by today's standards and contribute to higher than necessary water use.
- All apartments have individual convective electric heating system. The heating system itself, and the dated thermostats controlling heat level in the apartments, are inefficient by today's standards and contribute to higher than necessary heating costs.
- The electrical system is **NOT IN COMPLIANCE** with the relevant codes and regulations pertaining to the use of ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) in bathrooms, kitchens, and basements.
- The electric water heaters in the two inspected apartments were found to be in **GOOD** condition.
- Most of the smoke detection devices installed throughout the building appear to be malfunctioning. In this regard, this building is **NOT IN COMPLIANCE** with the relevant Fire Department regulations.

# Structure

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**WARNING!**

*This limited time walk-through inspection was conducted in all directly accessible and observable areas. This limits the ability of the engineer to detect certain structural problems. It should be expected that there are cracks, which were not observed during this inspection, that exist in both accessible and inaccessible beams and structural members.*

## Foundation and Flooring

This building is situated on a concrete slab foundation with a sub-level basement which serves as a supporting structure for the building. The basement floor is at-below-grade concrete slab supported by packed earth and concrete footings underneath. All other levels flooring is hardwood floor laid over a sub-floor supported by joists and beams, which in turn are supported off basement walls at the edges. There are metal rod tie-ins laid at regular intervals running front-to-back for side wall brick work support, which also serve as lateral supports for the upper floors.

**NOTE**

*Some sagging observed in accessible areas of concrete slab and basement walls is normal for this type of construction and age of the building and is not structurally significant.*

*Minor floor creaks were heard throughout the building. The creaks are not deemed to be of any significance and are expected for the building of this type, size and age.*

**WARNING!**

*Suspect asbestos used in some older flooring material. This may present problems in the future due to EPA requirement for proper disposal.*

## Roofing and Ceilings

The roof of this building is a traditional low-sloping roof consisting of a framework of rafters supporting a roof deck weatherproofed with coal-tar. There are three screened and hooded vents, and several no-longer used chimneys facing the Palisade Ave. The roof surface is appropriately graded away from the raised side walls towards the rain water drain trench leading to a black iron pipe downspout at a low point.

**NOTE**

*The coal-tar weatherproofing appears to have obvious signs of past repairs, and features some cracking in several places which are likely to develop a leak in the near future. The owner(s) of the building should plan to resurface or repair their building's roof in the near future.*

*The mortar around chimneys bricks is cracked and is crumbling in several places. This may result in falling bricks if not corrected.*

Most ceilings throughout the building have prefabricated ceiling tiles. All ceiling in the basement and some ceilings in the stairs shaft are painted gypsum wallboard.

**WARNING!**

*Due to the age of the building, it is likely that lead containing paint may have been used in the past in painted ceilings throughout the house, and specifically behind ceiling tiles.*

**NOTE**

*Many ceiling tiles show the effect of water damage. This could be due to a faucet in the kitchen or the bathroom inadvertently left open and overflowing in one of the apartments, however, the proliferation of the water damaged ceiling tiles through the house points to a leaking plumbing. There is also some evidence of past water leaks on the basement ceiling (signs of repair on basement ceiling sheet rock). The cause of past water leaks has, apparently been eliminated, and the affected area covered with plaster and painted over.*

## Walls

All interior walls of this building are wood frame construction with gypsum wallboard (sheet rock) as a backing for interior wall treatments. The building's outer walls are brick and mortar construction with painted gypsum wallboard on the inside, with the exception of the basement outer walls which are stone and mortar construction.

**NOTE**

*Several visible cracks were found in the accessible areas of the stairs shaft walls. These cracks are not structurally significant and are expected for the building of this type, size and age.*

*The bathrooms in the two apartments inspected had some loose and cracked ceramic wall tiles. The grouting and caulking was mostly missing. A common cause of loosening is moisture under the tile. Before the loose tiles are refastened, the substructure behind the tiles has to be checked for good condition and any problems eliminated. It is recommended that damaged tiles be replaced or repaired and re-grouted, and the tub-wall joints re-caulked to prevent any future damage caused by moisture or water leaks.*

*There is always a possibility of rot or other damage in the inaccessible areas behind finished walls. The extent of such damage, if any, is impossible to inspect using non-destructive methods.*

## **Siding**

The siding is a combination of brick, brick veneer, stucco, and some wood veneer paneling. All siding is in good condition for the building of this age. It should be noted, however, that some brickwork showed signs of chipping and drilling. This should be repaired to prevent further deterioration.

## **Stairs**

All exterior scales are brick/stone construction with the exception of basement apartment stairs which are poured out of concrete. The interior stairs are either metal/stone or wood construction. All stairs other than the wood stairs leading to the roof are in satisfactory condition. All metal and wood banisters are sturdy. The stairs leading to the roof have some worn and loose steps and railing, and should be repaired to prevent further deterioration.

# Windows and Doors

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## Windows

The building features a combination of aluminum and aluminum/vinyl frame windows, except for the new vinyl windows in the apartment(s) currently under renovation. All older windows are in worn but functional condition. It should be noted that the second floor stair landing window is missing one sash and most of the windows in the building are missing screens. The aluminum capping is missing around several of the windows on the side and in the back of the building, with the wood framing having visible signs of deterioration. The missing aluminum capping should be replaced to prevent further deterioration.

**NOTE**

*We recommend replacing inefficient single pain windows in the common areas with new thermal efficient vinyl or aluminum windows. Over the life of new windows, this investment will result in significant heating costs savings to the renters as well as possible tax breaks and rent revenue increases to the owners.*

## Doors

This building features a combination of hinged wood and steel doors. All doors and door locks are in acceptable condition, with the exception of the rooftop access door, which, at the time of the inspection, had been removed and did not appear to have a lockset.

# The Plumbing System

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This building features black iron and copper/brass water lines, 4" PVC/black iron drain piping, and black iron main gas lines. The plumbing system is in generally good condition with only minor corrosion/oxidation in certain areas. It should be expected that piping is lined up with corrosion in at least some areas due to the age of the building, and that some valves have tightened.

**NOTE**

*Although there is a sump pump in the basement, there is evidence of water leaks (standing water) on the basement floor in the proximity of the water meter. This is most likely due to a leak from the adjacent water main, and should be checked and corrected.*

*The toilets and the shower heads in the apartments are inefficient by today's standards and contribute to higher than necessary water use.*

# The Electrical System

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## Service Entrance Panel(s)

This building has “three-wire service” providing both 120-volt and 240-volt capabilities. There is one service entrance panel located in the basement of the building. The electric service to each apartment is individually metered and protected. There is a separate electric power meter for the common areas lighting and heating.

The electrical system in this building is in generally good condition. However, it should be expected that electrical insulation on the wires in at least some areas has frayed (became more brittle) due to the age of the building.

**WARNING!**

*There is an unconnected conduit with the conductor wires exposed in the proximity of the electrical service panel. The conductors must be appropriately terminated in compliance with NFPA 70 and other relevant codes.*

## Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter(s)

The ground floor circuit interrupter (GFCI) is a special kind of circuit breaker. If there is a current leakage, or “ground fault”, the GFCI opens the circuit instantly, cutting off the electricity. The National Electrical Code (NEC) NFPA 70 Sec. 210-8, requires ground fault circuit interrupter to be installed in bathrooms, kitchens, basements, outdoor and garage locations. Not complying with this NEC requirement may cause personal injury and result in damage to the electrical circuit and potentially, fire.

**WARNING!**

*The duplex electric outlets located in bathrooms, kitchens and basement are not fitted with ground fault circuit interrupters. In this regard, this building does not comply with NEC requirement. We recommend that GFCI receptacles be installed in bathrooms, kitchens and basement.*

# Heating and Cooling Systems

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## Heating System

This building uses a convective electric heating system. A resistance-heated elements are mounted in a wall, ceiling or the floor, and are wired directly into the individual apartments' electrical service meters. This is fast and reliable, although expensive and not very efficient, heat delivery system. It should be expected that heating equipment has become less effective due to the age of the building.

**NOTE**

*The heating system, and the dated by-metal element thermostats controlling the heat level in each apartment and the common areas, are inefficient by today's standards, and contribute to higher than necessary heating costs. The building has some old and thermally inefficient windows. We recommend that the building be tested for energy efficiency and any problems corrected. This investment will greatly improve comfort and will result in significant heating costs savings for the renters, as well as possibly significant tax breaks for the owners.*

## Cooling System

This building has no central air conditioning system. Some apartments feature window air conditioners (total of 7 window air conditioning units).

## Major Appliances

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Each individual apartment in the building features a 41 gallon electric water heater of average efficiency. This capacity water heaters are sufficient to meet the demand for hot water in a single-family apartment. The water heaters probably have 4 to 6 years of their useful life remaining.

In the two inspected apartments, the kitchen appliances appear to be old and worn but still functioning.

# Fire and Burglar Alarm Systems

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## Fire Protection System

The provisions of the BOCA National Building Code 920.3.2 and Fire Department regulations require smoke or fire detection devices to be installed in each apartment, as well as in each story within a multiple-dwelling building, including basements.

Most of the smoke detection devices installed throughout the building were found to be malfunctioning upon testing.

**WARNING!**

*The BOCA National Fire Prevention Code Sec. 514.7 and the Fire Department regulations require smoke detectors to be inspected in place at twelve month intervals. Most of the smoke detection devices installed throughout the building were found to be malfunctioning upon testing. In this regard, this building does not comply with the Fire Department regulations.*

## Burglar Alarm System

The inspected apartments did not appear to have a burglar alarm system.

# Miscellaneous Observations

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- **Certificate of Occupancy (C of O):** ..... Check with West New York building department and confirm that C of O for this building exists, is up to date and covers basement apartment. At the minimum, there must be variance on file at the
- **Variance to C of O:** ..... If the updated C of O for this building does not exist, or is not up to date and does not cover basement apartment, check with the building department for the variance to C of O.
- **Siding:** ..... Shattered glass at at-grade level, facing 67 Street
- **Windows gratings:** ..... The first floor windows grating are hinged to accommodate window air conditioning units installation. The gratings are not secured and are free to move. This is a potential safety issue for pedestrians.
- **Sidewalk pavement:** ..... Cracks in several areas. Satisfactory as surface to walk on.
- **Street curbing:** ..... Normal
- **Grading:** ..... Acceptable
- **Evidence of water penetration:** ..... There is evidence of water leaks on the basement floor in the proximity of the water meter. This is most likely due to a leak from the adjacent water main but could also be as a result of water seepage through the basement walls or the foundation. The water penetration into the basement appears to be a long-standing problem which is evident by a strong mildew smell.
- **Exit signs:** ..... The BOCA National Building Code Sec.

1023.0 and the Fire Department require visible Exit signs located at exit doors or exit access areas. Each sign shall be illuminated at all times by a source providing not less than 54 lux at the illuminated surface, or be a self-luminous signs which provide continuous illumination independent of external power source. In this regard, this building is not in compliance with relevant fire prevention codes and Fire Department regulations.

- **Evidence of termites infestation:** ..... None detected
- **Evidence of rodents infestation:** ..... None detected

