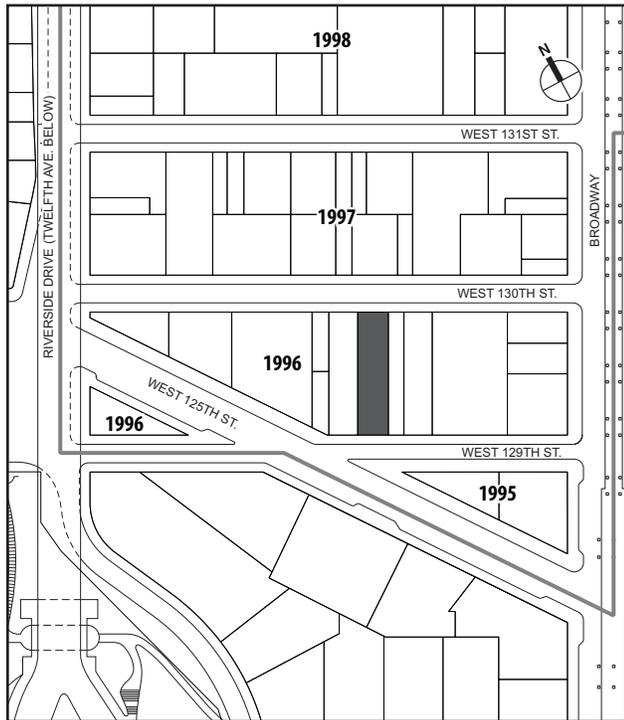


## Block 1996 Lot 18

**SITE CONDITION: CRITICAL**



### LOCATION, USE, ZONING, AND OWNERSHIP

Lot 18 is located in an M1-2 zoning district at 627 West 129th Street between Twelfth Avenue and Broadway. Acquired by the Trustees of Columbia University on December 15, 2004, it is a three-story public parking garage with lot area fronting both West 129th and West 130th Streets (see Photographs A and B, respectively). In addition, there is an auto body shop in the northern half of the first floor. The 29,757-gsf building was constructed circa 1920. No renovations have been recorded.

### PHYSICAL AND STRUCTURAL CONCERNS

Lot 18 was evaluated by Thornton Tomasetti, Inc. to be in critical condition overall due to a combination of structural distress, deficient interior and exterior building conditions, and

other hazardous site conditions.

Long-term water infiltration is causing significant deterioration of the structural elements throughout the building. In some areas, the deterioration is critical. The timber joists and timber decking are water damaged in various locations on all levels (see Photograph C). Steel framing that supports the sidewalk and driveway slab to the auto body shop is severely corroded from water intrusion and may no longer be adequate to support the vehicular traffic for the auto paint shop above (see Photograph D). Brick masonry walls have cracks, flaking paint, and signs of water intrusion (see Photographs E and F). Significant cracks and flaking paint were also observed on the stairwell walls (see Photograph G). Additional water infiltration could be the result of corroded window frames on the north façade, a deteriorated waterproof coating on the inside face of the parapet, and cracked glass panes in the skylight.

Vertical cogged cracks on the east and west exterior masonry walls appear to be the result of the north and south façades' separation from the rest of the building caused by either temperature-induced movement, differential settlement, or the adjacency of load-bearing and non-load-bearing building components (see Photograph H). This is evidence of structural distress occurring in the affected areas. In addition, long-term use as a parking garage and car body paint shop, and associated activities with these uses, such as exposure to vehicle exhaust, drips from motors, spray painting, and car washing operations have caused deterioration, including cracks on the concrete slabs due to vehicle access (see Photographs H and I). A large opening was created in the walls on the second floor between this building and the neighboring building on Lot 16 (see Photograph J), as a means of moving cars between the two spaces, however no structural distress was observed.

## **Block 1996 Lot 18**

Other site concerns include: deteriorated window frames in the airshaft on the west side of the building (see Photograph K), the washing of cars in the building without proper drainage, and significant pigeon infestation. Long-term exposure to pigeon droppings has caused some timber joists to lose their bearing support (see Photograph L). Sidewalks and curb cuts along West 129th Street and West 130th Street are in poor condition, with cracks and uneven construction joints (see Photograph M).

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS**

There are several unsafe conditions in the building, which include: a spray paint booth that does not have a proper ventilation system, as the booth walls have significant holes and an open duct leads from the booth into the rest of the first-floor space (see Photograph N); haphazard electrical wiring on the exterior of the south façade (see Photograph O); accumulation of debris and/or haphazard storage of items in the second-floor corridor to the exit stair, blocking a means of egress; severe cracking and spalling of the sidewalks; a boarded-up exit door from the stairwell to West 129th Street, rendering the means of egress non-effective and creating a fire safety hazard; and an unsafe drive-in elevator that lacks protective railings at the slab edges on all floors and has unguarded moving mechanical parts in the elevator cabin. As discussed in the next section, this elevator has three open hazardous DOB violations.

In addition, a vault under the sidewalk at West 130th Street that adjoins the basement area is currently supported by two steel beams and timber joists. These steel beams are severely corroded, evidently from long-term water intrusion, and may no longer be adequate to support the vehicular traffic above (see Photograph D). Some timber joists are almost completely rotted away, leaving parts of the driveway slab practically unsupported. The concrete slab above shows signs of significant deterioration (see Photograph P). This structural damage is clearly a safety concern.

### **BUILDING CODE VIOLATIONS**

Lot 18 has 10 open building code violations. The most recent violation, issued in 2005, is for exit lighting that fails to meet building code standards or is defective. ECB issued three hazardous violations. One hazardous violation was issued in 1995 for work without a permit and failure to maintain the elevator. Two hazardous violations, which were considered to be of high severity by ECB, were issued in 1992 and 1998 for failure to maintain the elevator. Additional violations are for the elevator: three violations were issued by DOB between 1991 and 2001 for the elevator, and one violation was issued by ECB in 1991 for failure to maintain the elevator. The remaining two violations were issued in 1985 and 1986 for unknown reasons. No additional information is provided by the DOB Building Information System.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

The Phase I ESA identified the following environmental issues on the site: current and former use as an auto repair shop, former and possibly current gasoline UST, possible fuel oil tank, and floor plates that may be associated with an oil-water separator or USTs. No Phase II investigation was performed on this property.

**Block 1996 Lot 18**



**Photograph 1996-18-A**



**Photograph 1996-18-B**

**Block 1996 Lot 18**



**Photograph 1996-18-C**



**Photograph 1996-18-D**

**Block 1996 Lot 18**

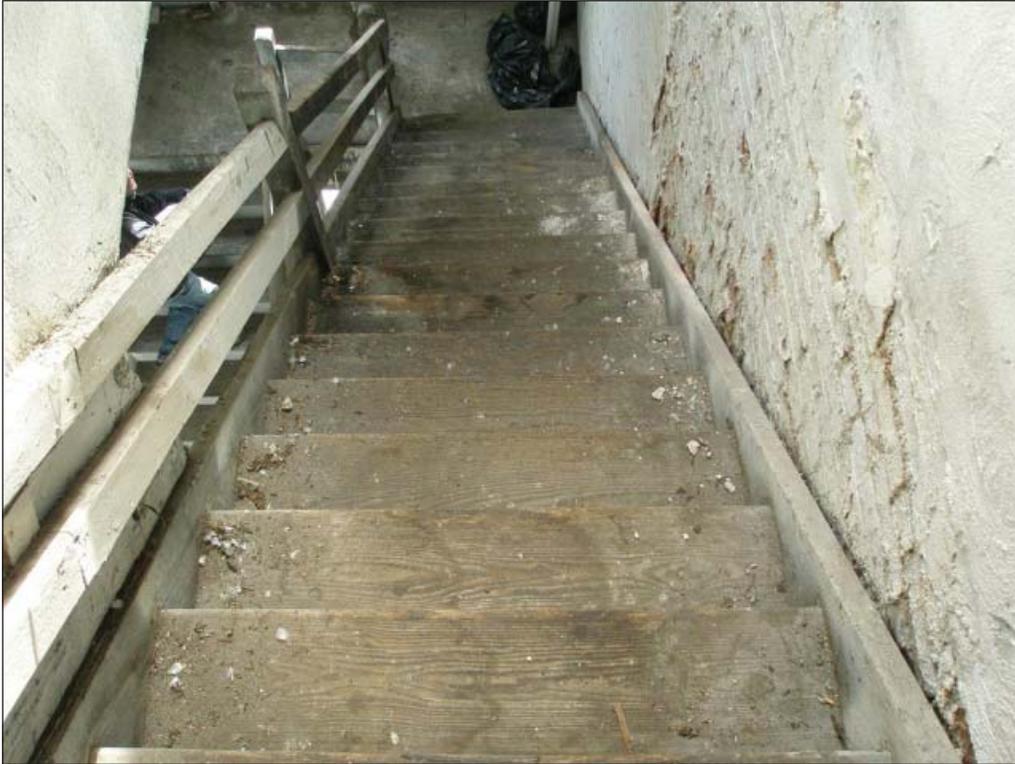


**Photograph 1996-18-E**



**Photograph 1996-18-F**

**Block 1996 Lot 18**



**Photograph 1996-18-G**

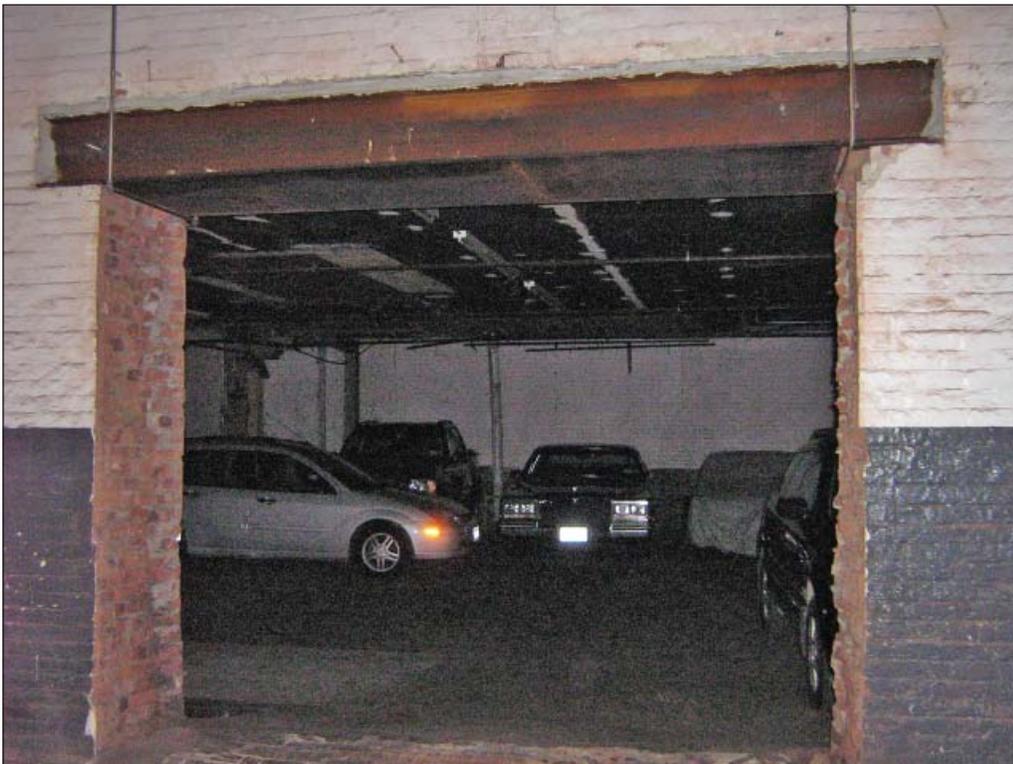


**Photograph 1996-18-H**

**Block 1996 Lot 18**



**Photograph 1996-18-I**



**Photograph 1996-18-J**

**Block 1996 Lot 18**



**Photograph 1996-18-K**



**Photograph 1996-18-L**

Manhattanville Neighborhood Conditions Study

**Block 1996 Lot 18**



**Photograph 1996-18-M**



**Photograph 1996-18-N**

Manhattanville Neighborhood Conditions Study

**Block 1996 Lot 18**



Photograph 1996-18-O



Photograph 1996-18-P