

Records obtained through FOI point to collapsed condo in Welland not being inspected by city since November

Twenty-three of 33 inspections since 2021 are related to site servicing

By [Kris Dubé](#) Tribune Reporter
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The Upper Vista Welland condominium project had not been inspected by City of Welland staff for nearly three months prior to the first of two partial collapses in February, records show.

Through a Freedom of Information request, The Tribune sought records related to the five-storey, 266-unit development at 350 Prince Charles Dr. as far back as 2018.

Within city files are 33 site inspection records, the earliest having taken place Nov. 18, 2021, when a footing inspection received a partial pass after forming and rebar were put in place. The most recent inspection, according to the list, was on Nov. 23, 2022, when work related to sewers was checked out.

Of the 33 inspections at the site, 23 dealt with water and sanitary servicing.

Brad Taylor, the city's deputy chief building official, said inspections for building construction are regulated by the Ontario Building Code, and that "the person to whom a permit is issued shall notify the building department at different stages of construction." The municipality then carries out an inspection.

He said when an inspector is on site, "the inspection is not limited just to the notice but anything code-related."

He said there's not an "easy answer" as to why the city hadn't visited the site for an inspection since late November before the first collapse on Feb. 18, but added things slowed down during the Christmas season, which could be a reason.

Taylor said “every project is different,” and on “bigger projects, months can go by while they’re doing a certain aspect of it.”

Taylor, who has only been in his role with the city for two months, also said “if it was a year, that’s a little different.”

He also said the project’s engineers and architects have their own responsibilities to monitor progress.

Another footing inspection occurred Dec. 23, 2021, and was given a “partial” pass after the forming of raft slab was completed with rebar in place, said the report.

A structural inspection took place on Sept. 23, 2022. It received a partial pass. What was inspected was work proceeding on a centre stairwell between the third and fourth floors. Forms and steel were in place, making it ready for the pouring of concrete, said the inspection result.

There has been one inspection on an exterior sewer, and four on inside drains.

A fire separation inspection took place Nov. 1, 2022.

“What has been completed at this time appears acceptable,” said the inspection result, which examined walls being studded, a “resilient channel” being installed, as well as two layers of dense glass on both sides of walls.

On Aug. 23, 2022, a foundation inspection passed and involved a “link/lockers area,” at the east and west walls.

Chief building official Jack Tosta, recently said the city doesn’t comment on details of individual building permit applications, and that once a permit is issued the scope of work is listed on it and is required to be posted at the site.

Also through the FOI request granted by the city, The Tribune has obtained a list of project engineers, builders and architects.

On March 31, Ministry of Labour said 18 orders and requirements had been given to the project’s builder, Evertrust Development. On Tuesday, spokesperson Anu Dhar said there were no updates that could be provided, citing an ongoing investigation.

An application with the city has been made for what Joyce Morocco, a contracted spokesperson for Evertrust Development, called a rebuild permit. This will “encompass the rebuild of the lost portion of the building as well as any reinforcing as needed throughout the building.”

She said a “rebuild permit” does not mean the developer is starting over on the building, but that the “project is being extensively reviewed by multiple engineers and all necessary precautions and remedies are being taken.”

She recently said ground cleanup at Upper Vista Welland has been completed.