

# The Star-Ledger

## **Building collapse in East Orange prompts multi-town response**

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A five-story building that recently had been undergoing construction collapsed Saturday evening in East Orange.

The entire center of the brick structure at 89 North Arlington Ave., at the intersection with Williams St., caved in at approximately 5:45 p.m, East Orange spokeswoman Connie Jackson wrote in an email.

No injuries were reported as of Sunday morning.

At least 50 cops, firefighters and other first responders spread throughout the intersection, while lights flashed from more than a dozen vehicles. Floodlights illuminated the wreckage, a wave of brick, metal and wood that spilled across the street several feet deep. A fire escape dangled from a chain.

The front of a four-door sedan was crushed underneath the rubble, while a red Toyota behind it had turned partially gray from the dust.

East Orange Fire Chief Andre Williams said they were searching the area as a precaution but were not aware of anyone buried.

Three dogs bounded up concrete slopes, sniffing the concrete. After PSE&G shut off the power, lines of firefighters manually removed pieces of rubble in assembly lines. Tripods set around the surrounding block measured vibrations in the ground because of the building's "precarious position," Williams said.

He added that it was too soon to know why the building collapsed.

Nearby, people inside 352 and 356 William St. and 81 North Arlington Ave. were evacuated as a precaution, Jackson wrote. NJ Transit provided warming stations as temperatures dipped to near freezing.

Residents said they could hear the crash from several buildings away.

Theresa Wright, 53, who lives across the street, said she heard a deep grinding sound and saw a plume of smoke rise across the street immediately after the collapse.

Adriana Rojas, who has lived in the city for 20 years, said she felt a rumble while she was home with her daughter. She heard a crack followed by a bang.

"It's a mercy that this happened when there were not crowds on the street," Rojas told NJ Advance Media.

Many of the building's windows were boarded up. It did not appear that people had been living there for years, Rojas said, but construction crews had worked in the structure overnight in recent weeks.

Men and women from East Orange, Hoboken, Newark, Jersey City, Paterson and many other areas responded.

Online property records list TBG 89 N. Arlington LLC as the owner, but a TBG representative shared documentation with NJ Advance Media showing that they sold the building to another group, 89 N. Arlington LLC, on March 15, 2019.