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New York Construction

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DOB Registration Requirements to Change in July

Exemptions for one- to three-family homes to expire. Also, Williamsburg arts scene reaches residential sector

New Requirements to Take Effect in July

Since January 1, 2008, the NYC Department of Buildings has only issued permits for new building or demolition applications with a registered construction superintendent listed, excluding applications for one- and three-family buildings. As of July 1, 2008, those permits for one- to three-family dwellings will require a registered construction superintendent.

"Construction superintendents carry an overwhelming amount of responsibility on the construction site . . . supervisors will be held accountable to ensure that the necessary precautions are taken to protect the safety of the public and the workers on site," said Buildings Commissioner Patricia Lancaster in the release announcing the new rules.

To register, the DOB requires an individual meet one of the following:

- Be a licensed architect or engineer and within the past three years completed a seven-hour hour Site Safety Manager course or 10-hour OSHA course; OR
- Have been a Construction Superintendent for 5 of the past 10 years and within the past three years completed a seven-hour Site Safety Manager course and 10- hour OSHA course; OR
- Have been a carpenter, mason or building inspector for five of the past 10 years and within the past three years completed a 40-hour Site Safety Manager course and 10-hour OSHA course.

The new rule taking effect on July 1, 2008 is part of an initiative started last July, when the New York City Department of Buildings announced a regulation requiring construction superintendents to register when supervising a job at a site under 15 stories. DOB said this rule will ensure construction sites are maintained by qualified individuals with the adequate knowledge of construction and risk-prevention, altogether upgrading public safety. Those excluded from registration are licensed site safety managers.

In addition to promoting public safety through superintendent registration, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has also included new requirements for general contractors, which he predicts, will allow the DOB to better monitor the general contracting industry.

"While the great bulk of contractors are responsible and comply with safety regulations and the Building Code, there unfortunately are some who do not build according to plans and who engage in unsafe practices that put workers, the public and adjacent properties at risk," said Bloomberg.

At a City Council meeting in February, Commissioner Lancaster voiced her support for the mayor's inclusion and recommended addition legislation to make concrete contractors register and to have concrete safety manager oversee concrete operations on high-rise construction sites.

"It is surprising that in this day and age, of the 29 trades licensed by the Buildings

Department, general contractors are not one of them," she said at the hearing. "Requiring a general contractor to register would empower the Buildings Department with a tool to track a contractor's performance across job sites and hold him accountable for his actions."

On November 1, 2008 general contractors will need to be named on a permit application. Registration begins in April.

The Art of Construction

Developers of a new 130,000-sq-ft residential development in the Williamsburg area of Brooklyn are looking to incorporate the neighborhood's burgeoning art scene into the building's design.

New York-based construction managers Ryder Construction broke ground on the project in May 2006.

The 86 units will be separated into two, six-story buildings connected by an outdoor garden featuring sculptures by Williamsburg-based artist, Paul Divone. The developer of the project, Savanna Partners of New York, also plans to sponsor a local artists' competition to bring the influential Williamsburg style to the buildings. "Williamsburg is second to Chelsea as one of the biggest art displays in New York," said Shep Wainwright, a principal with Savanna Partners. "We wanted celebrate the local art theme and have various artists displaying materials and models made locally."

New York-based architect Anthony Cucich together with interior designer Andres Escobar & Associates designed the one-, two- and three bedroom homes to feature walk-in closets, 10-ft-plus ceilings, integral heating/cooling, high-tech Unitone security systems, a billiards lounge, a multimedia room and two fully furnished rooftop decks. "We didn't sacrifice amenities like 10-ft ceilings to squeeze in more units. We have 55 unique floor plans," said Wainright.

A fitness center, yoga room and children's playroom will also be part of 125 North 10th Street's amenities. A refrigerated storage area for Fresh Direct deliveries, a 24-hour concierge and a secure underground parking area will also be included.

"We are really trying to generate a community feel within the building," explained Wainwright. "125 North 10th is not a high rise and it fits in with the neighborhood."

The building also plans to include sustainable green amenities such as highly durable 3/4-inch Brazilian "Ipe" walnut floors sustainably grown in Brazil, fully LEED certified Icestone kitchen countertops made with 100% recycled glass manufactured in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and bathrooms with natural stone floors.

"We've taken the best of Williamsburg and Brooklyn and infused every detail of this building with creativity, art, green elements and functionality to meet the needs of the most demanding buyers," said Wainwright.

The project is currently on schedule for an October 2008 completion.

L'Oreal Gets a Makeover

A recent topping out ceremony marked continued progress on L'Oreal USA's new \$40 million headquarters underway in Berkeley Heights, New Jersey. The project is now a third of the way to completion.

The new headquarters, located in the Connell Corporate Park, will consolidate approximately 400 employees currently housed in various locations throughout New Jersey.

"These new offices represent our commitment to providing our employees with an

atmosphere that is open, respectful and that fosters creativity and innovation," said Laurent Attal, president and CEO of L'Oreal USA. "L'Oreal's success relies on our ability to build for the future in a way that meets the needs of our people."

L'Oreal wanted its new building to integrate with the four surrounding office buildings in the complex.

"It was our intent to make the buildings similar. We are using a limestone exterior, which matches the look and feel of the surrounding buildings in the complex," said Steven Kern, project executive at Turner Construction, who is responsible for the core and shell of the building. Also included in the project team are architects HLW International, mechanical/electrical engineer RDK Engineers and site/structural engineer CMX.

The 4-story, 180,000 sq-ft building will also incorporate a number of sustainable features and is aiming for LEED-Gold certification, Kern explained. The building will include waterless urinals, furniture and finishes made of recycled materials, energy-saving systems and an abundance of natural light. The new headquarters will also include a white-roof, which reflects light and reduces heat-absorption, according to Kern, which will help mitigate heat-island effect.

The project, which officially broke ground in September 2007, is slated for completion in December of this year. Construction has moved along at a steady pace without delays, and the team anticipates continued on-schedule progress.

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