

This [arrest](#) goes to the integrity of the entire plan examination process which time and time again allowed buildings that many community members questioned. Clearly, many new and altered structured and the plan determinations require an independent review.

<http://yournabe.com/articles/2009/12/03/queens/queensnhvqekl12032009.txt>

Queens DOB official arrested in bribery case

By Jeremy Walsh

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Flushing architect Sung Ho Shin designed these townhouses in Maspeth several years before prosecutors said he bribed a plan reviewer for the city Department of Buildings. Photo by Jeremy Walsh

The city Department of Investigation has arrested the city Department of Buildings' chief plan examiner for Queens on suspicion of accepting bribes from a Flushing architect, authorities said Monday.

James Cheng, 55, who was the chief plan examiner in Queens until he resigned this month, was charged with receiving reward for official misconduct and official misconduct. The man who allegedly bribed him, 49-year-old Sung Ho Shin, was charged with giving unlawful gratuities.

If convicted, Cheng faces up to four years in prison and Shin faces up to a year in jail, the DOI said.

A chief plan examiner meets with architects and engineers and reviews project records for compliance with the city Building Code and assigns them to be reviewed by plan examiners.

“As charged, these defendants betrayed their professional responsibilities and brazenly disregarded the rules,” DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said in a statement. “Everyone should know that offering and accepting money in exchange for a city employee giving preferential service is a crime that will end in arrest and prosecution.”

Between July 1 and 14, 2008, Cheng allegedly reviewed zoning analysis for building plans that had not yet been submitted to DOB in exchange for Shin’s giving him money, Hearn said. Cheng allegedly told Shin he was not allowed to engage in this type of activity, the DOI said.

Cheng, a registered architect, started in June 1997 as a plan examiner but resigned in February 2001 to work at a similar job with the city School Construction Authority, the DOI said.

He returned to the DOB in 2003 to become chief plan examiner in the Queens office, receiving an annual salary of \$99,149 when he resigned, the DOI said.

Shin was the designer of the Maspeth Mews townhouses on Flushing Avenue near the intersection with Grand Avenue and of several home renovations in Bayside, though there was no indication these plans had anything to do with the bribery case.

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