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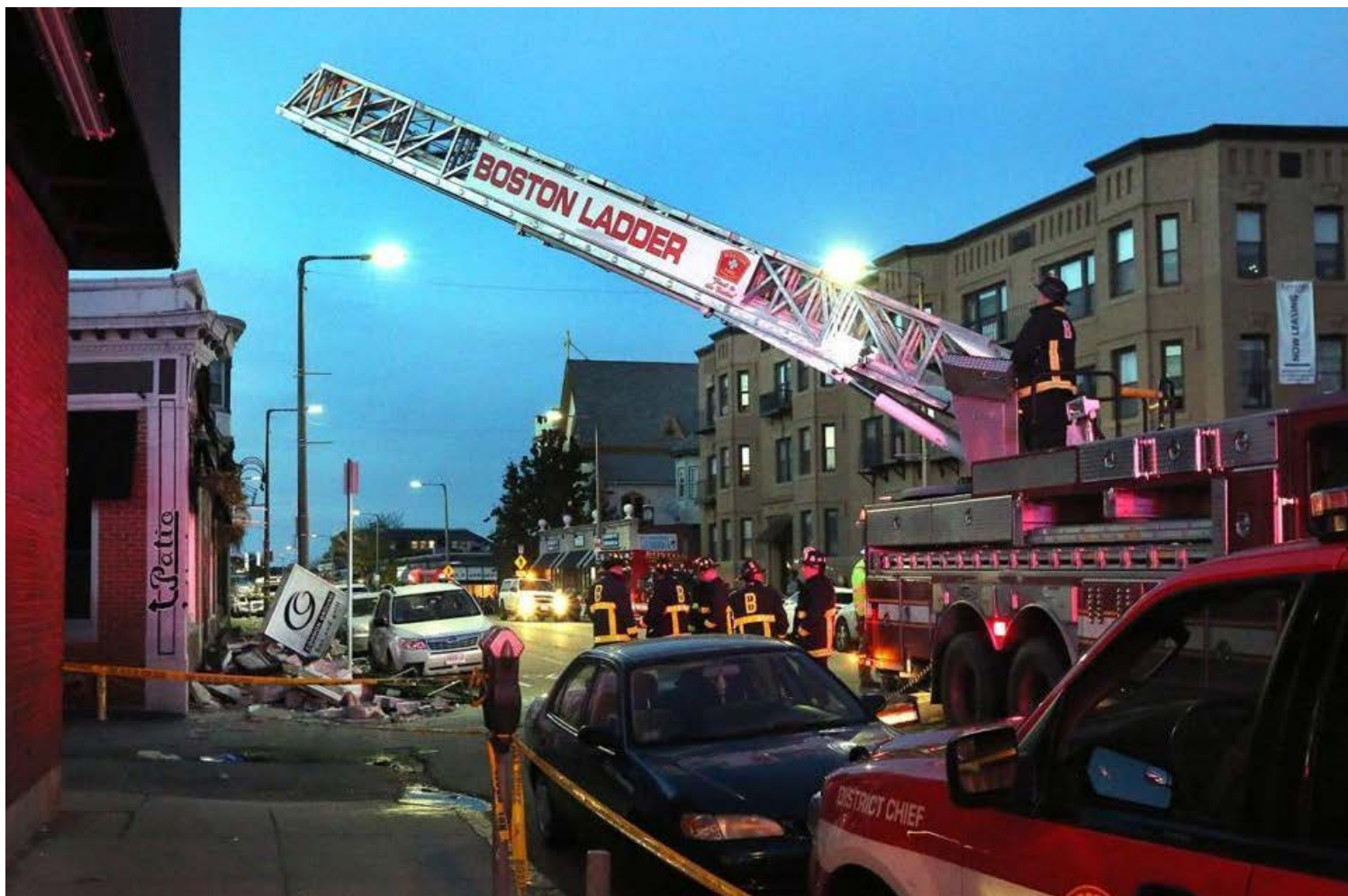
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Decay, stormy weather blamed for collapse of Allston facade



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PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF

Long-term deterioration and stormy weather were blamed for the sudden collapse of the facade of an Allston building Sunday afternoon that injured two people.

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

GLOBE STAFF NOVEMBER 09, 2018

Long-term deterioration and stormy weather were blamed for the [sudden collapse](#) of the facade of an Allston building Sunday afternoon that injured two people, according to a report by structural engineers that the city released Friday.

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The report by engineers at Hanover-based R.J. Freel Associates, who conducted an onsite inspection the day after the collapse, found evidence that the building's facade had deteriorated, a problem that "could have been caused by water infiltration and expansion caused by the freeze/thaw cycle."

Strong winds and rain that hit the area during the weekend of the collapse and the weekend prior may have triggered the incident, the report said. It suggested the parapet was strained as winds blew into a large sign anchored into it above the Common Ground restaurant.

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The city [requires](#) facades to be inspected on buildings that are 70 feet or taller every five years.

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But the single-story Allston building at 75-87 Harvard Ave. was too short to trigger such inspections. For smaller buildings, it's up to the owners to inspect their properties and make repairs when needed.

City records list the property's owner as Moss Realty LLP and the property's manager as Myer Dana and Sons, based in Newton. Officials at those entities and at the Common Ground restaurant did not respond to requests for comment Friday.

The engineering firm's report noted the deterioration of the building's facade may have been difficult to see because "a good portion of these parapets are covered with flashing and some form of waterproofing," the report said.

City officials declined to comment, including about whether there should be more scrutiny of building facades.

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On Sunday, the facade of the Allston building plummeted without warning to the sidewalk, trapping one woman under the rubble and seriously injuring her, wounding a man who was with her, and damaging several cars.

Officials have estimated the collapse caused about \$500,000 in damage.

The 12,600-square-foot building was assessed for tax purposes this year as being worth more than \$1.5 million, city records show. It was built in 1920.

City officials said Friday that steps have been taken to clean up debris and remove damaged portions of the building.

More repair work was ongoing. Once that's complete, the building will need another inspection by city officials to determine its structural integrity before it gets approval to reopen.

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Officials have not provided updates about the medical condition of the woman who was injured and hospitalized, but a report Boston police filed Sunday said that the initial prognosis was that while she suffered “substantial damage to her hand and legs,” her injuries “were not critical.”

One witness, Susanne Maher, a nurse practitioner from Needham who helped pull the woman from the rubble, [told the Globe previously](#) the woman remained conscious and alert until EMTs arrived.

But Maher said the woman’s right hand had been crushed by the debris, and a man who was with the woman said she is a pianist.

“He kept asking if she’s going to be able to play again,” Maher recalled. “He was clearly heartbroken.”

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