

Episcopal Church Headquarters Forced to Evacuate

The New York City headquarters for the Episcopal Church was forced to evacuate on July 7 after multiple floors started sagging in a nearby tower.

The 37-story building on East 42nd Street between 2nd Avenue and 3rd Avenue in Manhattan – an active construction site that was once home to the headquarters for Pfizer – also witnessed two structural columns buckle.

The Fire Department of New York said in a statement that they received reports of the “structural issue” around 8 a.m. on July 7.

“FDNY units, as well as representatives from the Department of Buildings and NYC Emergency Management, responded and found structural issues on the 21st floor,” the statement said.

“Two structural columns buckled, and there were multiple cracks and sagging floors.”

FDNY Chief John Esposito said that “it’s a very serious situation because the box beams – the steel beams – have started to bend and deflect from the weight.”



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“We evacuated the building and started evacuations of surrounding buildings. The building has continued to move since we have been on the scene,” he added.

The high rise is being converted from a commercial office building to a residential building.

The FDNY used drones to obtain technical information and visuals.

About 150 fire and emergency medical personnel responded to the report.

Images shared by the FDNY indeed showed structural beams bending at severe angles, as well as the building appearing to lean.

As for the Episcopal Church facility, a report from Episcopal News Service noted that the staff were evacuated.

"Our building staff learned of the nearby incident around 8:30 a.m. and instructed all building staff and tenants to shelter in place," a church representative said in a statement.

"Shortly after, our staff followed FDNY orders to evacuate the building out of an abundance of caution."

Less than half of the 146,000 square feet of the 12-story building was being used by church staff.

The other space remains vacant or is rented by other organizations.

The Episcopal Church is currently marketing the headquarters for sale or redevelopment – a decision that comes as the church, which is known for theological and political progressivism, hemorrhages members and congregations across the country.

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