

Fiery Meteorite That Blasted Through 2 Stories of Family's Home Is Worth \$100k, Also Contains 'Building Blocks of Life'

Who knew that we'd find the potential "building blocks of life" from other planets in New Jersey, of all places?

That's where a couple found a meteorite worth roughly \$100,000 that crashed through their ceiling earlier this month. NASA confirmed it was the remnants of an asteroid.

Most of it burned up on entry on July 16, but what was left over displayed evidence of "prebiotic chemical compounds," The New York Times reported.

In addition, scientists have found evidence that the elements and compounds in the rock show signs of being altered by salty water, an indication that it broke off from a larger body.

While NASA and Japan's space agency have found similar compounds from samples taken off asteroids during space missions in recent years, the meteorite is still a major find.



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"It's what we always dream about," Ashley King of the London Natural History Museum, who is a meteoriticist, said. "It's really cool; it's really exciting."

Yet, after the meteor screamed across the northeastern United States in the morning hours of July 16, with reports of the fireball from Rhode Island to Pennsylvania, NASA thought that

the rock was “incapable of surviving all the way to the ground.”

And then it crashed through the roof of a house in Hillsborough, New Jersey, at 11:20 a.m.

“I heard an immense crash and felt the house shake,” the owner, who did not wish to be identified, told The New York Times. “I open the door, and I see a hole in the ceiling above my bed.”

“Good thing I didn’t sleep in,” he added.

PRESS RELEASE

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– The SETI Institute (@SETIInstitute) July 15, 2026

It certainly sounds like it was not something a person wanted to be sleeping through.

“The air smelled like rotten, sulfurous eggs, mingled with a fine dust. There appeared to be black soot on every horizontal and vertical surface. When the man glanced at his pillow, he saw several onyx-colored rocks,” The New York Times reported.

However, the couple knew how to handle the situation, ensuring the meteorite was in a condition to be collected by scientists.

“They had secured the crime scene, if you like,” Peter Jenniskens of the SETI Institute said, noting that the

compounds they found made “this meteorite very special.”

Or, as Mike Hankey – an amateur astronomer with the American Meteor Society – told the homeowners on a phone call: “At least \$100,000 just came through your roof.”

And, as a SETI Institute media release noted, they ended up finding “primitive CM1/2 carbonaceous chondrite, making it one of the most scientifically valuable meteorites ever recovered” – only the second observed fall with that compound in it “following the Kolang meteorite that fell in North Sumatra, Indonesia, in 2020.”

“Thanks to the homeowner’s quick reaction, these are the most pristine CM1/2 meteorites we know of,” Jenniskens said in the media release.

Furthermore, the interaction with saltwater could mean that this will give additional clues as to how life might have developed on earth and whether it developed elsewhere.

“The high concentration of salt in briny fluids can potentially create molecules crucial to life on Earth. Brines allow phosphate to remain in solution and can catalyze chemical reactions between organics and precipitate minerals,” the SETI Institute’s report read.

After it’s studied, fragments of the meteorite will be housed at the American Museum of Natural History.

“We are thrilled that nature delivered such a precious asteroid sample on our doorstep,” museum curator Denton Ebel said.

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