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New York City's Inventory of Stalled Construction Sites Down 12 Percent Over Past Year

Manhattan Leads the Way in Project Revivals Followed by Brooklyn, Which Remains the Home of Most Stalled Sites.

Thanks to the revival of residential projects in Manhattan and Brooklyn, the number of stalled construction sites throughout New York City dropped by 12 percent, from 690 in November 2012, to 610 in November 2013, according to a New York Building Congress analysis of New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) inspection records.

The number of stalled sites citywide peaked at 709 in November of 2010. The number of stalled sites in Manhattan dropped 26 percent over the past 12 months – from 122 in November 2012 to 90 in November of this year. The Manhattan total dropped to 98 in late June, which marked the first time in more than three years that the number of stalled sites had dropped below 100.

The list of newly restarted projects is highlighted by a number of luxury residential developments in Lower Manhattan, including the Renwick Modern in Hudson Square, as well as two large-scale condominium projects at 56 Leonard Street tower and 5 Franklin Place in Tribeca. In addition, construction of Silverstein Properties' Four Seasons Hotel and Residences at 30 Park Place is expected to resume construction in December.

"In our annual construction forecast report released in October, we estimated that residential construction spending will double between 2012 and 2015," said New York Building Congress President Richard T. Anderson. "That rosy outlook was based largely on the fact that a number of luxury developments, which were shelved during the Great Recession, have come roaring back to life."

While Brooklyn remains the overall leader with 267 suspended projects, the borough's tally has declined by 17 percent since last November.

Queens, which placed second among all boroughs, saw its overall number tick down from 169 to 165. Staten Island now has 45 stalled sites, which is down from 50 in November of 2012.

The Bronx was the only borough that experienced an increase in the number of delayed developments – from 26 in November 2012 to 43 in November 2013.

Stalled Site Characteristics

Residential projects continue to dominate the list. Of the projects where work was started and subsequently halted, 67 percent are residential (232 total sites). Within the residential category, 115 were identified as multi-family apartments, while 94 were one- or two-family homes. Another 23 sites are mixed-use projects that contain residential components.

The Building Congress also found that 43 percent of the stalled sites citywide remain vacant, meaning that developers have obtained land and construction permits but have yet to commence work.

Of the 610 projects on the DOB list, more than half have been on hiatus for at least three years (166 sites joined the list in 2009 and another 143 were added in 2010). A total of 88 construction projects have been added to the list in 2013.

"While the numbers are certainly moving in the right direction citywide, there's still plenty of work to do in terms of activating construction at hundreds of long-dormant sites, especially in the City's outer boroughs," added Mr. Anderson. "Mayor-Elect Bill de Blasio has vowed that housing will be a priority for his administration. This list of stalled sites might be the perfect place to begin. These sites offer the potential to increase the City's housing stock, revitalize neighborhoods, create good jobs and grow New York's economy."