

For Information

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
PANEL ON PLANNING, LANDS AND WORKS**

**COLLAPSE OF INDUSTRIAL BUILDING  
AT 19 SZE SHAN STREET, YAU TONG**

**INTRODUCTION**

This paper informs Members of the latest position regarding the tragic collapse of a 30-year old 6-storey industrial building, Asia Trade Centre (the building) under demolition at 19 Sze Shan Street in Yau Tong on Monday, 29 October 2001. The casualty toll now stands at 4 dead and 8 injured, with another 2 still missing.

2. Buildings Department (BD) approved the demolition plan (submitted and prepared by a Registered Structural Engineer [RSE]) for the building in June this year. After an inspection of the building together with the RSE in mid-October this year, BD gave consent for commencement of work to demolish the building on 19 October. Actual commencement of work started on Friday, 26 October. A BD officer made a visit to the building on the same day.

3. It should be noted that BD examine and approve demolition plans in accordance with the Building (Demolition Works) Regulations of the Buildings Ordinance. BD also issued a comprehensive code of practice on demolition

work in 1998 after extensive consultation with the engineering profession, for use or reference by RSEs.

## **SEARCH AND RESCUE**

4. The Fire Services Department (FSD) has been conducting the search and rescue operation on a 24-hour basis, with expert advice and support of the BD. The bodies of two missing workers were seen under the fallen rocks though it had not yet been possible to extricate them from the rubble. The rough location of the two other missing persons was identified but firemen had yet to reach and unearth them. Sadly, at the time of writing (evening of 1 November 2001), FSD's life detectors indicated that there was no sign of life under the wreckage.

5. Owing to the large amount of debris and hanging dismembered parts of the collapsed building, rescue work has been proceeding at a slow pace. As more debris is removed from the site, the remaining standing parts of the building are increasingly exposed to the danger of tumbling down, thus putting rescue workers at serious risk. In the circumstances, the Director of Buildings decided, after consulting the Director of Fire Services, to suspend the rescue work temporarily in the afternoon of 31 October to allow time for removing the dangerous standing structures so as to ensure that rescue work can be carried out under safe conditions. Rescue work was, however, resumed intermittently as and when some of the dangerous bits of the collapsed building were removed. In any event, the rescue work will continue until every person involved is accounted for.

6. An overview of the site where the building collapsed is at photograph 1. Photograph 2 shows the standing though damaged structure at the corner of Sze Shan Street and Shung Shun Street with hanging concrete members. This structure shows signs of tilting towards the centre of the site. Photographs 3, 4 and 5 show the damaged structures remaining at the three other corners of the site.

## **INSPECTION OF OTHER DEMOLITION SITES**

7. On the day following the accident i.e. 30 October, BD initiated and completed a round of immediate inspection of all the 48 sites where the department has given consent for commencement of demolition work. Of these, there are 34 sites where demolition work has already been completed, 11 sites where demolition is in progress, and 3 sites where demolition work has yet to start. While we did not detect any problem at these sites, BD will monitor the situation closely to ensure that any work being carried out would strictly adhere to the approved plans and work procedures so as to safeguard safety of the public.

## **INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENT**

8. On 30 October 2001, the Director of Buildings announced the appointment of a 3-member investigation team headed by an Assistant Director of Buildings, who has overall responsibility for structural engineering matters.

The investigation would aim to identify the causes of the incident and whether any one had committed an offence under the Buildings Ordinance. The team will also make recommendations to prevent similar incidents in the future. It will aim to finish the investigation in about 3 to 4 weeks time.

9. It is not possible at this point of time to draw any conclusion on the cause of the accident. Notwithstanding that, based on our initial observations, the investigation team will focus on the following seven areas:

- a. Structural condition of the building before demolition;
- b. Whether there were any alterations and addition works carried out during the life of the building, which might affect its structure;
- c. Whether the building had been overloaded with unacceptable amount of debris and machines in the demolition operation;
- d. Whether any temporary propping had been tempered with in the course of demolition;
- e. Whether demolition work had been carried out in the manner specified in the approved demolition plans;
- f. Whether adequate supervision on the demolition work has been provided; and
- g. Whether any column had been subjected to heavy impact or mistakenly removed before and during the demolition operation, which might affect its structural adequacy.

## **PARTIAL CLOSURE OF NEARBY BUILDINGS**

10. As a result of the collapse of the building, the external wall of an immediately adjacent building (Sunnex Products Ltd) was slightly damaged. The industrial building directly opposite to the collapsed building (Safer Industrial Building) is in danger of being hit if the standing damaged structures at the two corners of Sze Shan Street topple over. BD has therefore applied for a court order to close these two buildings. However, in order to minimise disruption to the industrial operators and those working in those two buildings on one hand and to safeguard public safety on the other, BD made special arrangement to close only 1/8 of Sunnex Products Ltd and 1/3 of Safer Industrial Building. BD will, however, do its utmost to demolish the damaged parts of the collapsed building still standing at the site as quickly as possible. Given the precarious and unstable conditions of these structures, however, we estimate the task will take 4 to 5 days.

### **CO-ORDINATION OF WORK**

11. A command centre set up by the FSD near the site of the collapsed building is serving as a co-ordination point on the ground. Staff of Labour Department has been active in contacting and helping families of the affected workers with compensation and other matters. They have also maintained contact with the employers concerned regarding their legal obligations. Immediate relief was provided to the affected families. Social Welfare Department has also contacted the affected families to offer assistance, and the Home Affairs Department has assumed the role of overall co-ordinator. The United Christian Hospital in Kwun Tong set up a special team to receive and

treat the injured persons. Special hotlines have been established and publicised. BD has also endeavoured to keep the public informed of developments on the ground.

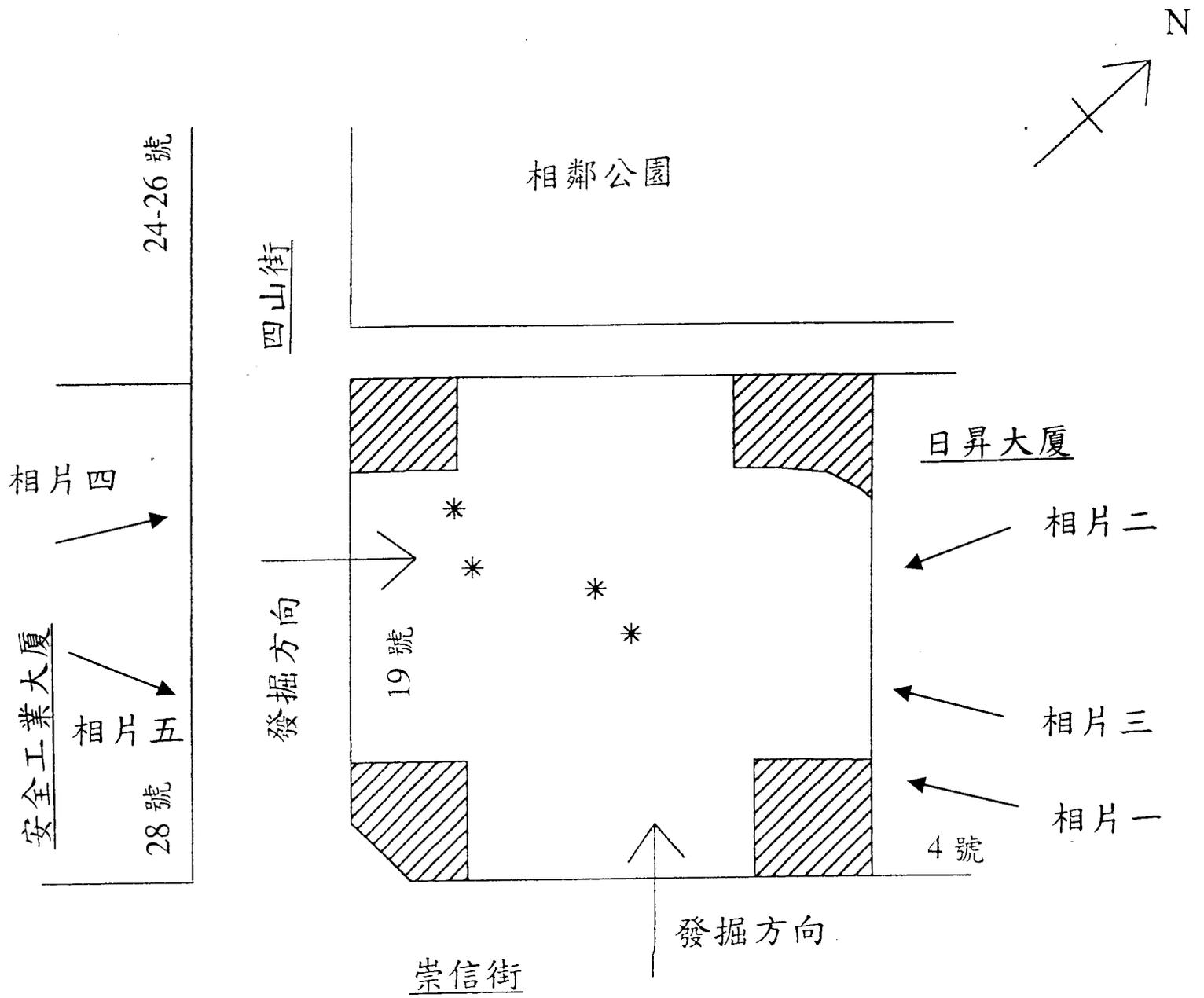
## **WAY FORWARD**

12. Together with departments concerned, particularly FSD, BD will carry on its support for the search and rescue operation. It will also clear up the entire site at a later stage. Meanwhile, the investigation team has already started their work by undertaking some preliminary studies. Any culprit identified to be responsible for this accident will be dealt with firmly and prosecuted under the law.

13. We will keep the Panel informed of developments as and when necessary.

Buildings Department

1 November 2001

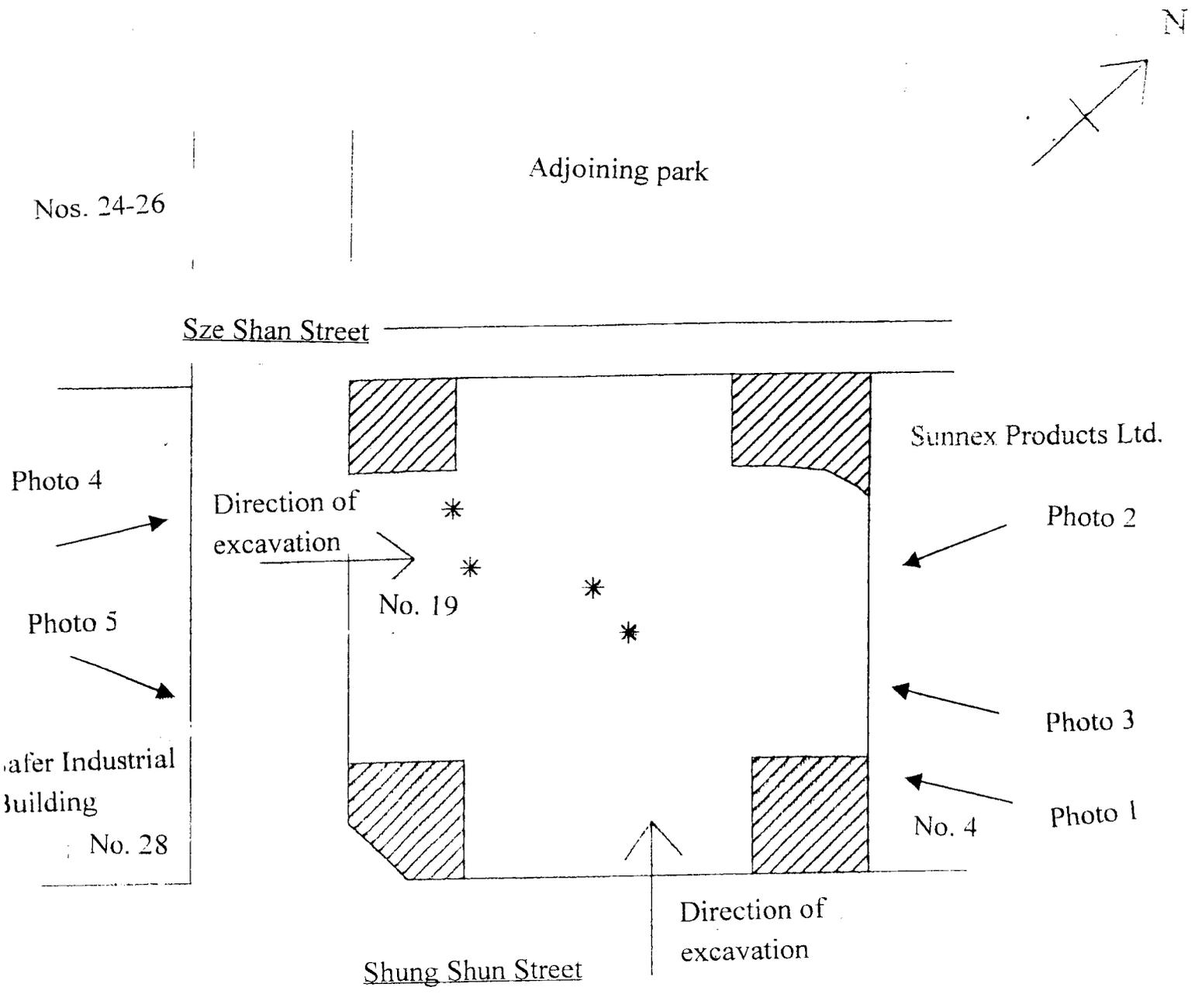


地盤平面圖

圖例

\* 懷疑工人位置

▨ 未倒塌部份

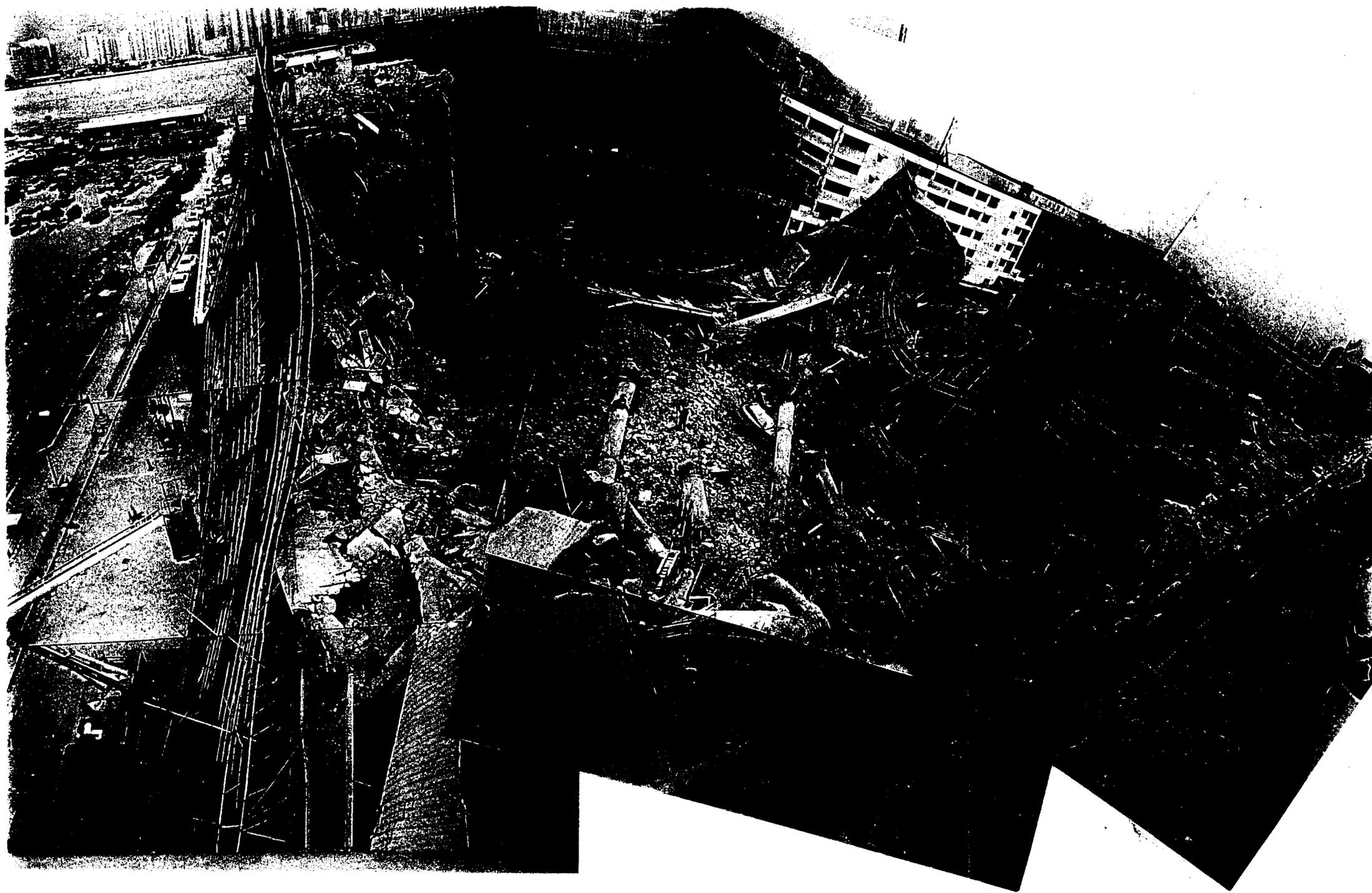


Site Plan

Legend

\* the suspected positions of the workers

▨ uncollapsed parts



相片一



相片二



相片三



相片四



相片五