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Progressive Collapse Analysis of the Champlain Towers South in Surfside, Florida / Pellecchia, Cosimo; Cardoni, Alessandro; Cimellaro, GIAN PAOLO; Domaneschi, Marco; Ansari, Farhad; Khalil, Ahmed Amir. - In: JOURNAL OF STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING. - ISSN 0733-9445. - 150:1(2023), pp. 1-13. [10.1061/JSENDH.STENG-12485]

Availability:

This version is available at: 11583/2983065 since: 2023-11-23T21:27:14Z

Publisher:

ASCE

Published

DOI:10.1061/JSENDH.STENG-12485

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Progressive Collapse Analysis of the Champlain Towers South in Surfside, Florida

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ABSTRACT

Since the Ronan Point collapse in the UK in 1968, the progressive collapse analysis of
residential buildings has drawn the attention of civil engineers and the scientific
community. Recent advances in computer science and the development of new numerical
methodologies allow us to perform high-fidelity, collapse simulations. This paper assesses different
scenarios which could have hypothetically caused the collapse of the Champlain Tower South Condo

24 in ! "r side, Florida, in 2)21, one o the most catastrophic pro\$ressi0e collapse e0ents e0er occ"rred.
25 &he collapse anal ,sis 9as per ormed "sin\$ the latest de0elopments in the Applied %lement Method.
26 A hi\$h: idelit, n"merical model o the ' "ildin\$ 9as de0eloped accordin\$ to the act"al str"ct"ral
2. dra9in\$. !e0eral di erent collapse h ,potheses 9ere e4amined, considerin\$ ' oth col"mn ail"res
2/ and de\$radation scenarios. &he anal ,ses sho9ed that the ail"re o deep 'eams at the pool dec7 le0el,
2* directl , connected to the perimeter col"mns o the ' "ildin\$, co"ld ha0e led to the col"mns; ail"re
3) and s" 'se<"ent collapse o the eastern 9in\$ o the ' "ildin\$. &he sim"lated scenario hi\$hli\$hts the
31 di erent sta\$es o the collapse se<"ence and appears to 'e consistent 9ith 9hat can 'e o'ser0ed in
32 the oota\$e o the act"al collapse. &o impro0e the per ormance o the str"ct"re a\$ainst pro\$ressi0e
33 collapse, t9o modi ications to the ori\$inal desi\$n o the ' "ildin\$ 9ere introd"ced. From the anal ,ses,
34 it 9as o"nd that disconnectin\$ the pool dec7 'eam rom the perimeter col"mns co"ld ha0e 'een
35 e ecti0e in pre0entin\$ the local collapse o the pool dec7 sla' rom propa\$atin\$ to the rest o the
36 ' "ildin\$. Moreo0er, these anal ,ses indicate that enhancin\$ the torsional stren\$th and sti nness o the
3. core co"ld ha0e pre0ented the collapse o the eastern part o the ' "ildin\$, \$i0en the ass"mptions and
3/ initiation scenarios considered.

3* Ke, 9ords= 6 "merical !im"lation, Pro\$ressi0e Collapse, !tr"ct"ral Fail"re, Applied %lement
4) Method.

41 **PRATICAL APPLICATIONS**

42 # "ildin\$ catastrophic collapses can ca"se si\$ni icant li0es and economic losses. Poor desi\$n and
43 maintenance, in com'ination 9ith a\$in\$, 9ill more li7el , increase, in the ne4t ,ears, the n"m'er o
44 ' "ildin\$s potentiall , 0"lnera'le to the ris7 o collapse, d"e to either seismic, accidental, or
45 de\$radation actions. &his research oc"ses on the anal ,sis o the Champlain &o9er !o"th condo
46 collapse, 9hich occ"rred in the Cit, o ! "r side in 2)21. Di erent h ,pothetical collapse scenarios
4. 9ere sim"lated, comparin\$ the anal ,sis res"lts 9ith the act"al e0idence o the collapse. &he anal ,ses

4/ ha0e sho9n that the de\$radation o the pool dec7 sla', d"e to corrosion, ma, ha0e contri ' "ted to the
4* collapse o the ' "ildin\$. Finall,, t9o di erent minor re0isions o the ori\$inal desi\$n o the ' "ildin\$
5) 9ere anal,(ed to red"ce the ris7 o ail"re and "nderstand ho9 the collapse o similar residential
51 ' "ildin\$s co"ld 'e pre0ented.

52 INTRODUCTION

53 50er the last decades, the n"m'er o p" 'lications on themes related to the pro\$ressi0e collapse
54 o ' "ildin\$s has e4ponentiall, increased >Gerasimidis and %llin\$9ood 2)23?. &he attention to the
55 disproportionate e ect o a local ail"re dates 'ac7 to 1*..), 9hen the first re\$"lation related to
56 accidental load 9as introd"ced in the 1 K code, as a conse<"ence o the partial collapse o the 8onan
5. Point ' "ildin\$ in 2ondon >@ro"9en0elder 2)21?. Ao9e0er, it 9as a ter the tra\$ic terroristic attac7
5/ on the 3 orld &rade Center in 2))1 that the pro\$ressi0e collapse o str"ct"res capt"red the interest o
5* the academic comm"nit, >2al7o0s7i and !tarosse7 2)22?. !e0eral de initions o Pro\$ressi0e Collapse
6) 9ere proposed ', di erent a"thors o0er the last decades. A!C% .:)5 >A!C% 2))5? de ines
61 pro\$ressi0e collapse as *the spread of an initial local failure from element to element resulting,*
62 *eventually, in the collapse of an entire structure or a disproportionately large part of it".* &hree
63 common points can 'e identi ied amon\$ the di erent proposed de initions= the initial ail"re is local,
64 the ail"re spreads to other str"ct"ral mem'ers, and the inal collapse is disproportionate to the initial
65 ail"re >Kia7o0o"ri et al. 2)21?. *In the last decades, several countries introduced specific regulations*
66 *to address the risk of progressive collapse. +n the 1!, the General !er0ice Administration >G!A?*
6. code >G!A 2)13? 9as de0eloped or \$o0ernment ' "ildin\$s, 9hile the 1 FC 4:)23:)3 code >DoD
6/ 2)16? 9as introd"ced or militar, ' "ildin\$s. +n %"rope, Anne4 A in %"rocode 1 9as introd"ced
6* acco"ntin\$ or the first time or Accidental Actions >C% 6 2))6?.

.) +n contrast 9ith the seismic desi\$n o str"ct"res, 9hich is lar\$el, addressed in 9orld9ide
.1 re\$"lations thro"\$h a more prescripti0e code compliance approach, pro\$ressi0e collapse desi\$n o ten

.2 re<"ires a performance: 'ased approach, ', considerin\$ a series o C9hat i E scenarios >Fiorillo and
.3 Ghosn 2)22?.

.4 Given that the o'bjective o pro\$ressive collapse desi\$n is to ens"re that a str"ct"re can
.5 withstand a certain level o local dama\$e and avoid collapse propa\$ation, it is "nderstanda'le ho9
.6 the prediction o the initial dama\$e e ffects and its possi'le propa\$ation can 'e cr"cial as well as
.7 numerically, challenge\$. 50er the past decade, several researchers 9or7in\$ on pro\$ressive collapse
.8 desi\$n s"\$ested the introd"ction o ro'"stress inde4es. &he, can either 'e 'ased on anal,tical or
.9 simplified numerical approaches, s"ch as alternate load:path methods and p"sh:down anal,ses
/0 >Pr4edes and Fran 2)21?. 3 hile 'oth these approaches can 'e e ffective in assessin\$ the ris7 o
/1 pro\$ressive collapse o relative, symmetric and homogeno"s str"ct"ral s,tems, the pro\$ressive
/2 desi\$n o comple4 str"ct"ral s,tems ma, re<"ire a more ad0anced methodolo\$,, s"ch as the creation
/3 o high: fidelity, numerical models >!ade7 et al. 2)22?. 3 hile this approach 9as considered prohi'itive
/4 in the past, 'eca"se o the re<"ired comp"tational e ffort, non:linear d,ynamic anal,ses o high: fidelity,
/5 numerical models are no9 easi'le than7s to the latest ad0ancements in hard9are comp"tational
/6 capabilities and numerical methodologies >!t, lianidis and 6ethercot 2)21? >2e and #a(ant 2)22?.
/. Among the numerical approaches to pro\$ressive collapse anal,sis, Finite %lement Method, F%M, is
// widely adopted in several p"lished st"udies. &he F%M method can 'e e ffective, "sed in pro\$ressive
/* collapse anal,sis o same str"ct"res, especiall, in code: 'ased proced"res >Kia7oDo"ri et al. 2)2)?.
*) However, 'eca"se the F%M solver is 'ased on e<"ili'ri"m e<"ations, the sol"tion cannot
*1 automatically implement element separations. #eca"se o that, the capability, to sim"late the entire
*2 collapse o the str"ct"re is limited. 6e0ertheless, several strategies 9ere de0eloped in recent ,ears to
*3 overcome F%M limitations in the anal,sis o large displacement pro'lems. For e4ample, the smeared
*4 crack techni<"e 9as de0eloped to allo9 or crack propa\$ation in F%M anal,ses >Petran\$eli and
*5 G'olt 1**6?. F%M application to pro\$ressive collapse anal,sis o entire str"ct"res o ten considers
*6 'i:dimensional same elements to red"ce the comp"tational ' "rden >Alash7er et al. 2)11?. Ao9e0er,

*. researchers also developed a component-level, and multi-scale models approach as the refined
*/ 3D model in 2001, a portion of the structure (Di and Aar 2013), (Mpidi #ita et al. 2022). 2astl,,
** the recent development of FEM computational methodology, (2" et al. 2020)*?, and refined numerical
1)) procedure for element removal, such as the degree of freedom (DOF) release (H" et al. 2017),
1)1 overcome the FEM limitations to progressive collapse simulation.

1)2 The Discrete Element Method, DEM, was also employed in progressive collapse analysis (2"
1)3 et al. 2017). Based on the compatibility of displacement, the DEM solver can account for element
1)4 separation and rigid body, collision (Aa7"no and Me\$"ro 1**3?B ho9e0er, DEM requires large
1)5 computational efforts, in particular when dealing with a comprehensive numerical model of the entire
1)6 structure. To reduce analysis time and increase the accuracy, of the results, several FEM:DEM
1). methodologies were also developed over the years (2" et al. 2020)*?.

1)/ Among the numerical methodologies for structural analysis, the Applied Element Method
1)* (AEM) is considered one of the most efficient numerical approaches to collapse analysis and
1)1 simulation (Gr"n9ald et al. 2017). The methodology can automatically account for the formation of
111 plastic hinges, development, and propagation of cracks, 3D load redistribution, as well as yielding
112 and failure of reinforcement bars until element separations occur (Domaneschi et al. 2020)?.

113 This work focuses on the progressive collapse analysis of the Champlain Towers North
114 condominium using the AEM method. The 2021 collapse of the Champlain Towers North side,
115 Florida was one of the most catastrophic collapses that ever occurred to reinforced concrete (RC)
116 residential buildings. Built in 1980 as a part of a three-building complex, the Champlain
11. Towers North, North, and East, the Champlain Towers North consisted of an L-shaped, 19-story,
11/ RC structure with flat slabs and a basement floor covering the entire footprint of the building area.
11* What makes this event particularly interesting from the point of view of progressive collapse analysis,
12) is that the evidence indicates that the collapse was caused by a localized failure of a singular structural

121 element. Specifically, the failure of a slab due to punching shear would spread to the center of the
122 column first, and then to the eastern edge 9 seconds later (2) (21).

123 To simulate collapse scenarios and investigate the behavior of the column, a high-fidelity,
124 ABAQUS numerical model was developed. Several sensitivity analyses and different collapse scenarios
125 were replicated to study the collapse behavior of the column and evaluate the most probable reason
126 for its collapse. Finally, the progressive collapse performance of the structure was enhanced by
127 introducing different modifications to the original design, which could have prevented the
128 collapse, under the studied hypotheses.

129* It should be noted that the causes of the collapse are currently unknown and a comprehensive
130 failure investigation is underway, and the government is under a duty to provide a definitive answer
131 as to its causes. The present report is based only on publicly available material, which mostly refers
132 to the original drawings of the structure without considering potential discrepancies in the final
133 realization of the column. In addition, the analyses presented in this report are based on assumed
134 loads, and degradation conditions which have not been verified.

135 THE APPLIED ELEMENT METHOD

136 In the ABAQUS, the structure is discretized in a series of six-degree-of-freedom rectangular node
137 elements connected by, (zero-order) membrane springs representing both the linear and non-linear behavior of
138 the constitutive material (Fig. 1, a). The interface springs, normally distributed along the element's
139* surfaces, describe stresses and deformation of a certain volume δV . A geometrical relation is
140 determined between the centroid of the element and the contact point in which the surface
141 spring is located (Fig. 1, b). The axial stiffness, k_n and shear stiffnesses, $k_{s,1}$, $k_{s,2}$ of the interface
142 springs are determined based on the Poisson elastic modulus E and G , and the area A and length l
143 of the represented volume, as per the following equations:

$$k_n = \frac{EA}{l} \quad k_{s,1,2} = \frac{GA}{l} \quad \nu < 0.1$$

16* o the longitudinal columns and shear walls were designed with strength f_{cr} , in f_{cr} from 41 MPa (6))
 1.) psi to 2/ MPa (4)) psi, while the slabs were designed with compressive strength f_{cr} , in f_{cr} from 2/
 1.1 MPa (4)) psi to 21 MPa (3)) psi, f_{cr} . 2, a. The longitudinal reinforcement of columns is
 1.2 provided from size M36 mm (N11) at the lower floors to M25 mm (N7) at the upper floors. The
 1.3 reinforcement of the shear walls includes the columns at each edge and a reinforcement M13
 1.4 mm (N4) mesh, spaced at 3) cm (12). M13 mm (N4) stirrups were used for M36 mm (N11) longitudinal
 1.5 reinforcement while M1) mm (N3) stirrups were used for the rest of the bars (see, f_{cr} . 2, ').

1.6 f_{cr} . 2. Color map of concrete strength in columns, shear walls, and slabs f_{cr} (MPa (*ksi*)),
 1.. and diameter of reinforcement bars implemented in the numerical model f_{cr} (mm)
 1./

1.* & Figure 1 shows the concrete properties considered for the AEM numerical model.

1/) & Figure 1. Concrete material properties introduced in the AEM numerical model (stresses in
 1/1 MPa (*ksi*), elastic Modulus in GPa (*Mpsi*))
 1/2

1/3 The bottom reinforcement of the slab consists of a uniform rebar mesh of M13 mm (N4)
 1/4 spaced at 3) cm (12) in the basement and 2o' , floors, and 33 cm (13) at the 2nd and typical floors.
 1/5 The punching shear reinforcement at the top side of the slab consists of M16 mm (N5) rebars with
 1/6 variable spacing. The area covered by the punching shear reinforcement also varies based on the
 1/. column's section and location. Rebars have a diameter of M13 mm (N4) and different spacings were
 1// provided, in one direction only, at the top side of the slabs, in the transition (ones between the areas
 1/* covered with punching shear reinforcement f_{cr} . 3).

1*) f_{cr} . 3. AEM numerical model view of the punching shear reinforcement in the 1o' , slab,
 1*1 basement, 2nd floor, and typical floor.
 1*2

1*3 RC members can be found in the 2o' , and 2nd floor only. In the 2o' , floor, 3) cm (12)
 1*4 width members with various depths are connecting the 2o' , RC slabs at different elevations also
 1*5 referenced as slab drops in the original drawings of the structure. In the 2nd floor, (141) . cm

1*6 columns extend from the 2nd floor
1* to the roof.

1*/ As specified in the specifications, William M. Friedman & Associates Architects

1** reinforcement bars meet ASTM A615 Grade 60 criteria, with a yield strength equal to 414 MPa

2)) $>60 \text{ ksi}$, and a f_c .

2)1 and a f_c . Steel material properties introduced in the ABAQUS numerical model (stresses in MPa
2)2 $>ksi$), Elastic Modulus in GPa ($>Mpsi$)

2)3

2)4 The final developed model, employing 5 million elements, resulted in 1.5

2)5 million elements representing the different concrete materials and additional 1.5 million

2)6 elements representing the different reinforcement (or more than 100,000) degrees of

2). freedom.

2)/ The nonlinear dynamic analyses were performed considering a time step equal to 0.01 s,

2)* using a 3.5 GHz (12 cores processor and 32 GB of memory). With the 100

21) hardware, the ABAQUS solver produced the analysis output of 1 sec in approximately 3 hours of

211 calculations, resulting in overall 48 hours needed to complete one entire collapse simulation of the

212 duration of approximately 16 sec.

213 **Loads**

214 The dead load of the structural elements explicitly introduced in the numerical model is

215 automatically accounted for in the analysis based on the volume and density of the concrete. In

216 addition, the weight of non-bearing walls, finishes, partitions, and other elements not directly

21. introduced in the numerical model was assumed as distributed on the floor area. As this report aims to

21/ compare the numerical results with the actual evidence of the Champlain 1977 collapse, no

21* code-based load combinations are considered in the analysis. In fact, with respect to the DoD and

22) GSA provisions, in which a factor of 1.2 is applied to the prescribed live load, only a reaction

221 of 1.422 is assumed to be in place at the moment of the collapse. The assumption is consistent with

222 A!C% .:22 Commentar , &a' le C4.3:2, 9hich s"\$ests a mean s"stained 2i0e 2oad o) .376km² (≈ 6
 223 lb/ft^2), >A!C% 2)21?. +n addition, 'eca"se o "ncertainties on apartment; inishes, 9alls and ceilin\$
 224 composition and materials, and o0erall act"al loads at the moment o the collapse, sensiti0it, anal , ses
 225 9ere carried o"t 9ith di erent loadin\$ ass"mptions, considerin\$ a c"m"lati0e distri "'ted load
 226 >D2R22? 0ar, in\$ rom 1.5 76km² $\approx 30 lb/ft^2$ to 3.) 76km² $\approx 60 lb/ft^2$. +n this 9or7, onl , the anal , ses
 22. 9ith the load ass"mptions reported in &a' le 3 are considered or the sa7e o 're0it, .

22/
 22* &a' le 3. 2oads 076km² $>lb/ft^2$)P

23) For the &,pical Floor, the ollo9in\$ loads 9ere ass"med 'ased on the t,pical 9ei\$hts o the
 231 "'ildin\$ materials >#re, er et al. 2)2)?:- dead load in addition to sla' sel :9ei\$ht, 1 76km² $>20lb/ft^2$,
 232 acco"ntin\$ or the loor inishes, ceilin\$, aSade elements, 9indo9s, doors, railin\$, M%P s, stems,
 233 and an, additional load not e4plicitl, introd"ced in the modelB dead load o 9alls Q partitions,).5
 234 76km² $>10lb/ft^2$?B li0e load,).5 76km² $>10lb/ft^2$?B the total considered distri "'ted load res"lts 2 76km²
 235 $>40lb/ft^2$.

236 +n addition to the distri "'ted load, an ornamental plant load, estimated on a soil densit, e<"al
 23. to 16 76km² $\approx 100 lb/ft^3$, 9as introd"ced in the n"merical model at the pool dec7 le0el 'ased on the
 23/ act"al plant arran\$ements at the time o the collapse.

23* **NON-LINEAR DYNAMIC ANALYSES AND COLLAPSE SCENARIOS**

24) &9o o the most credited h,potheses raised ', media in the a termath o the collapse o the
 241 Champlain &o9ers !o"th attri "'te the ca"se to either di erential settlement in the o"ndations or
 242 locali(ed str"ct"ral ail"re. +n the first sta\$e o this 9or7, se0eral col"mn remo0al scenarios 9ere
 243 carried o"t to e0al"ate the sensiti0it, o the str"ct"re to col"mn ail"re and its conse<"ent load
 244 redistri "'tion capacit, .

245 **Column removal scenarios**

246 Column removal scenarios were implemented at the locations where the initial failure was
24. observed, considering both perimeter and inner column removal scenarios. To simulate a hypothetical
24/ foundation settlement, columns are removed at the foundation pile level, below the basement slab.
24* Hence, the basement slab contributes to the load redistribution until punching shear failure occurs. Hence
25) column removal is performed in a non-linear static analysis, so the overload determined, the
251 column loss is redistributed incrementally to the surrounding structural elements. Hence two
252 considered scenarios, loss of center columns and loss of perimeter columns, were defined to identify
253 the most probable area where the initial failure occurred. Each of the two scenarios was repeated
254 considering the loss of one column first, and an adjacent one later, keeping removal of columns till
255 collapse is reached.

256 The column removal analyses revealed that the building was more sensitive to the removal of
25. perimeter columns >F_i. 4, scenarios C and D? rather than inner columns >F_i. 4, scenarios A and B?
25/ In fact, under the loading assumption and considering the original properties of steel and concrete,
25* without accounting for material degradation, the building was able to redistribute the loads and avoid
26) progressive collapse, even when three inner columns were removed >F_i. 4, scenario B?
261 Nevertheless, the removal of two perimeter columns was enough to initiate the progressive collapse
262 of the building >F_i. 4, scenario D?.

263 F_i. 4. Inner top? and perimeter bottom? column removal scenario, vertical deflection.
264

265 A load sensitivity analysis was also carried out showing that the scenario of perimeter column
266 removal remains the most critical one regardless of the extent of load.

26. **Localized degradation scenario**

26/ General media discussed evidence of extensive degradation of the pool deck slab in the
26* immediate aftermath of the collapse. Indeed, the area was partially covered, ornamental plants,
2.) which, on top of the additional weight, might also have caused corrosion of the slab steel

2*. Fi\$. . sho9s a comparison 'et9een the crac7 distri ' "tion res"ltin\$ rom the t9o considered
2*/ scenarios, o"ndation settlement in the center o the ' "ildin\$ >Fi\$. . , a? and de\$radation o the pool
2** dec7 sla' >Fi\$. . , '?.

3)) Fi\$. . 2o' ' , le0el, comparison 'et9een crac7s distri ' "tion in case o o"ndation
3)1 settlement scenario >le t? and pool dec7 de\$radation scenario >ri\$ht?, Principal strains in Dir.1 0:P
3)2

3)3 Crac7s are sho9n 'ased on the plot o principal normal strains, 0ar, in\$ rom εJ).) to εJ).1.
3)4 Considerin\$ a mesh dimension e<"al to appro4imatel, 3)cm >T1 t?, it corresponds to a ma4im"m
3)5 crac7 openin\$ o a'o"t 3cm >T1in?. +t can 'e noticed ho9 a di "se o"ndation settlement, 9hich
3)6 sho"ld ha0e in0o10ed at least o"r col"mns to res"lt in the disproportionate collapse o the ' "ildin\$
3). >see CCol"mns remo0al scenariosE?, 9o"ld ha0e ca"sed 9idespread crac7in\$ and concrete spallin\$
3)/ at the 'asement le0el that ' , ar e4ceeds 9hat is descri 'ed in the reports a'o"t the str"ct"re >Fi\$. . ,
3)* a?. %0idence o linear crac7in\$ at the Pool dec7 sla' , o"tside the act"al ootprint o the ' "ildin\$, 9as
31) instead reported ' , some media and o"nd in the de\$radation anal ,sis scenario also >Fi\$. . , '?.

311 +n addition, it 9as noticed that, 9hen appl ,in\$ the de\$radation to 'oth the spans pertainin\$ to
312 the t9el0e:stor, ' "ildin\$ and the pool dec7 sla' , the pool dec7 sla' area 9o"ld ha0e sho9n m"ch
313 more di "se e0idence o crac7s compared to the t9el0e:stor, ' "ildin\$ co"nterpart, 'eca"se o the
314 inherent lo9er resid"al capacit., deri0in\$ rom ornamental plant s"perimposed load and lar\$er spans.

315 Another aspect 9orth noticin\$ is that the pool dec7 str"ct"re, desi\$ned to carr , onl , one loor
316 rather than t9el0e stories, 9hile also s" 'Dect to additional s"perimposed loads and deterioration, 9as
31. ri\$idl , connected to the main str"ct"re thro"\$h three 'eams 9ith a depth o 46cm >18"?.

31/ &hese 'eams 9ere \$enerall , "sed at the pool dec7 sla' le0el to co0er or di erent ele0ations
31* and steps, and in act, called Csla' dropsE.

32) &he three pre0io"sl , mentioned Csla' dropsE 9ere ori\$inall , desi\$ned to 'e 5*cm >23"? , and
321 then red"ced to 46cm >18"? in a second desi\$n re0ision >3 illiam M. Friedman Q Associates
322 Architects 1*.*?. &he de\$radation anal ,sis o the pool dec7 sla' sho9s ho9 the depth o the three

323 \$irders, res"ltin\$ rom the sla' drops, co"ld ha0e pla,ed a si\$ni icant role in propa\$atin\$ the collapse
 324 o the sla' to the rest o the "'ildin\$. #eca"se the "'ildin\$ 9as partic"larl, sensitioe to the loss o
 325 perimeter col"mns, 9hen the sla' and connectin\$ 'eams ail, a concentrated 'endin\$ moment is
 326 trans erred to the three perimeter col"mns, leadin\$ to col"mn o0erload and conse<"ent collapse o
 32. the "'ildin\$ >Fi\$. /?.

32/ Fi\$. /. % ect o deep 'eams in ca"sins\$ the insta'ilit, o the perimeter col"mns at 2.)s,
 32* Principal strains in Dir.1, !cale color red e<"al to).1 !train 0:P, and de ormed shape scaled ', a
 33) actor o 2 >le t?
 331

332 **Arch and catenary actions: from the failure of the pool deck slab to the**
 333 **disproportionate collapse of the building**

334 &his section descri'es the identi ed collapse mechanism, startin\$ rom the dec7 ail"re,
 335 ollo9ed ', the ormation o an arch action and s" 'se<"ent catenar, action, "ntil reachin\$ the ail"re
 336 o the perimeter col"mns.

33. Fi\$. * sho9s a time:lapse o the ail"re at di erent seconds, descri'in\$ 'oth the 0ariation o
 33/ compressioe stresses in the concrete, normal stresses in the rein orcin\$ 'ars, and the 0ariation o
 33* internal orces in col"mns and 'eams, as the ail"re pro\$resses. &he di erent instants are identi ed
 34) in the timeline at the 'ottom o the Fi\$"re. &he compressioe stresses in the concrete are sho9n in the
 341 top ro9. Also, the stresses in the rein orcin\$ 'ars are sho9n in the middle ro9, to\$ether 9ith the
 342 related chromatic scale. the compressioe stresses in the Finall, , the internal orces, 'endin\$ moment,
 343 M, >positioe in red and ne\$atioe in 'l"e?, and normal orce, 6, >in ma\$enta? are sho9n on the 'ottom
 344 ro9.

345 Fi\$. *. Col"mn 11.1:2, Compressioe stresses in the concrete 0MPa (Ksi)P >top?, normal
 346 stresses in 'eams; and col"mns; rein orcement 0MPa (Ksi)P, normal orces 076 (kips)P in the
 34. col"mn and 'endin\$ moments in the 'eams 076 Vm (kips*inch)P >'ottom?, at di erent sta\$es o the
 34/ collapse.
 34*

35) 3 hen de\$radation is introd"ced, steel re'ars start ,ieldin\$. &he sla' starts de lectin\$
 351 do9n9ards and the concrete in the perimeter col"mns reaches its ma4im"m compressioe stren\$th at

352 the connection with the pool deck beams (Fig. 1). After the concrete fails, as a consequence of
 353 the yielding of the longitudinal reinforcement in the pool deck beams, the bending moment in the
 354 column increases till reaching the ultimate capacity of the section or the simultaneous combination of axial
 355 forces and moment (Fig. 1.3). At this point the column loses its load-bearing capacity, initiating
 356 an initial arch action, as can be gathered from the increase of compressive stresses at the top of the
 357 perimeter beams (Fig. 1.5). Consequently, the column-beam connection fails, generating a
 358 catenary action in the perimeter beams that results in both top and bottom longitudinal reinforcement
 359 stressed to tensile stresses (Fig. 2). At this point, the original degradation introduced in the slab
 360 has progressed through the slab and the subsequent column failure, with the only catenary action
 361 opposing the propagation of the collapse. In contrast, the amount of reinforcement in the beams
 362 is not enough to withstand the catenary forces, ultimately leading to the progressive collapse of the
 363 building (Fig. 1).

364 Fig. 1). Distribution of Principal Strains: After column failure, and punching shear
 365 failure at pool deck slab height?

366 **Side-by-side comparison of the collapse**

367 Fig. 11 shows a side-by-side comparison between the simulation and the outcome of the
 368 collapse (later 2021). The comparison shows a good agreement between the simulations and the
 369 actual collapse, both during the initial failure of the central portion of the building between A4es G
 370 and M, Fig. 6, and the initial torsion of the remaining eastern portion of the building, a few instants
 371 later. Moreover, a lateral failure at mid-height of the eastern end of the structure can be observed
 372 only, in the numerical analysis, occurring when the remaining portion of the structure starts hitting the
 373 ground (same as in Fig. 11).

374 Fig. 11. Side-by-side comparison between the outcome of the collapse and the numerical
 375 analysis in nine different time steps, or later 2021.

3./ This ail"re, which takes place approximately, at the middle height of the structure, results
3.* in more than half of the eastern core of the "ildin\$ leaning toward the east in the final de'ris
3/) distribution obtained from the numerical analysis. Moreover, this mechanism is not observed in the
3/1 actual video of the ail"re, where the eastern gin\$ collapses in on itself, leaning toward the west. The
3/2 difference in the observed collapse behavior could be explained, a possible difference of the
3/3 mechanical properties of the materials, due to either degradation or construction defects, which are
3/4 not considered in the model.

3/5 Fig. 12 shows a comparison between the reconstruction of the actual de'ris distribution
3/6 resulting after the collapse and the de'ris resulting from the analysis.

3/. Fig. 12. Comparison between actual de'ris distribution and analysis results. The reconstructed, the Authors based on available media pictures.

3*) In both cases, the collapse of the "ildin\$ did not spread over the west core of the structure.
3*1 The initial torsion of the eastern gin\$ is also captured, the numerical analysis, as it can be gathered
3*2 from the orientation of the slabs, pointing towards the south side. Moreover, because of the lateral
3*3 ail"re mechanism described earlier, which was observed in the numerical simulation only, the final
3*4 position of the east shear wall core differs, with the half eastern core leaning east rather than west.

3*5 **PROGRESSIVE COLLAPSE ANALYSIS UNDER ALTERNATIVE DESIGN SCENARIOS**

3*6 An estimation of the ail"re propagation could have been prevented, could help avoid similar
3*. catastrophic events in the future. To avoid the disproportionate collapse of the "ildin\$, two
3*/ alternative designs were defined.

3** The first alternative design scenario considers that the pool deck slab is not connected to the
4)) main structure through deep beams. Thus, the deep beams connecting the slab to the perimeter
4)1 columns were removed. Fig. 13, a, b. As it was previously noted in this report, the three deep beams
4)2 were provided in the design as slab dropE, to cover the different elevations at the pool deck area.

4)3 the slab reinforcement in this area was the same as the surrounding spans, having similar span lengths
 4)4 and loads with no deep beams. Therefore, the scenario only pertains to the removal of the slab
 4)5 drops and related differences in elevation, without modifications to the original design of the slab.
 4)6 In this configuration, when assuming high degradation of the pool deck slab, perimeter
 4)7 beams, and columns, the failure of the slab did not affect the rest of the structure. Because
 4)8 the slab has a substantially smaller depth compared to one of the deep beams, the bending moment
 4)9 induced to the column joint is considerably smaller. Therefore, when the slab fails, punching shear
 4)10 failure occurs and the slab detaches from the perimeter columns without compromising their load-
 4)11 bearing capacity, Fig. 13, d).

4)12 Fig. 13. Original design, and alternative scenario, assuming the absence of beams
 4)13 connecting perpendicular to the pool deck to the perimeter column of the structure, Analysis results,
 4)14 vertical displacement (cm) in P, and Principal strains at slab failure (0:P
 4)15

4)16 In terms of progressive collapse design, it is clear how the structural separation between the
 4)17 main structure, middle and the secondary structure, i.e., one-story, basement, could be an
 4)18 effective strategy, in avoiding collapse propagation, especially, when the secondary structure is
 4)19 natural, subject to deterioration, e.g., terraces, pool decks, etc.

4)20 The second alternative design scenario considers the introduction of additional shear walls in
 4)21 the east core of the middle Fig. 14, a, c). The objective is to reduce the torsional behavior of the
 4)22 eastern core of the middle and avoid its failure Fig. 14, e).

4)23 The reason for this, after the collapse of the central portion of the middle, the collapse
 4)24 propagated to the eastern core only, is related to the different torsional stiffness from the
 4)25 structural layout. While the east core of the middle consisted of 8C shear walls oriented both in
 4)26 the north-south and east-west directions, the east core of the structure was composed of only
 4)27 one shear wall oriented in the north-south direction. Therefore, the torsional capacity of the eastern
 4)28 core was significantly larger than the one of the eastern core. When the central part of the middle
 4)29 starts failing, it was observed that slabs were detaching from the eastern and eastern cores at the

43) inter face o the shear wall. As a result, the eastern wall fails, due to the lack of torsional capacity. In addition
431 highlighted that, two additional shear walls were introduced in the east-west direction. Figure 14, cases 8 and 9 show
432 that the change in the design is effective in avoiding the collapse of the eastern wall. Figure 14,
433 d, e. The difference in terms of rotation observed both in the original model and in the new design
434 configuration can be evaluated from, Figure 14, e, f.

435 Figure 14. 5 original design and alternative scenario highlighted, assuming the presence of two
436 additional shear walls
437

438 In terms of progressive collapse design, these results highlighted that providing RC cores with
439 enhanced torsional capacity can be effective in preventing collapse propagation between different parts
440 of the structure.

441 CONCLUSIONS

442 In this work, a series of progressive collapse analyses were performed to analyze the collapse
443 of the Champlain Towers North in 2021 in Miami, Florida. An AEM high-fidelity numerical model
444 was developed and employed to investigate the possible causes of the collapse. Different column
445 removal scenarios were modeled to simulate foundation settlement, while structural degradation was
446 modeled progressively, reducing the reinforcement cross-section area. Column removal analyses
447 revealed that the building was particularly sensitive to the loss of perimeter columns, whose failure
448 could easily propagate to the central core, due to the lack of load redistribution capacity, at the
449 perimeter of the structure. In addition, the degradation analysis at the pool deck level showed that the
450 initial failure of the pool deck slab could have caused relevant damage to the connection between the
451 perimeter columns and the pool deck beams, leading to the failure of the perimeter columns. Indeed,
452 the global static analysis revealed that the one-story structure of the pool area was subjected to higher
453 deflections and stresses than those found in the main building. The side-by-side comparison between

454 the simulated collapse through nonlinear dynamic analysis and the actual outcome of the event showed
455 a reasonable match.

456 Variations to the original design were introduced aiming at avoiding the collapse
457 propagation from the pool deck to the main structure and the collapse of the eastern girders of the
458 building. It was found that the removal of the deep beams connected to the perimeter columns at the
459 pool deck level was effective in preventing the initial failure of the pool deck slab from propagating
460 to the rest of the building. In addition, increasing the torsional capacity of the eastern girders,
461 introducing shear walls oriented in the east-west direction, was proven to be effective in
462 preventing its collapse. The overall separation between structures of different natures, such as one:
463 stor, basements and telestore, buildings, and RC cores consisting of shear walls oriented along
464 the two principal directions, are the main lessons learned from the progressive collapse analysis of
465 the tragic Champlain Towers North collapse.

466 DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

467 Some or all data, models, or codes that support the findings of this study, are available from
468 the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

469 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

470 The authors would like to acknowledge the assistance and technical support provided by,
471 Applied Science International LLC, in the use of the employed AEM: used so far are extreme
472 loading or structures, 2018. Dr. Aatem Abdel-Din, Ph.D., for the support to the
473 theoretical aspects and related applications of the AEM, and Aman M. El Orl, P.E., and Miliano De
474 Alessi, P.E., for the assistance with the modeling and analysis of the structure. Finally, the authors
475 would like to acknowledge the support of the City of New York for providing the original building
476 structural drawings of the building > William M. Friedman & Associates Architects LLP and of And,

4. . . later or provide the permission to use some shots from the video showing the collapse of the Champlain Center North Condo (later 2)21?.

4. * **NOTATIONS**

4/) *The following symbols are used in this paper:*

4/1 E J elastic modulus >GPa?

4/2 f_c J compressive strength of concrete >MPa?

4/3 f_t J tensile strength of concrete >MPa?

4/4 G J shear modulus >GPa?

4/5 G_i J element's centroid

4/6 $\gamma_{c,n}$ J normal stiffness of concrete spring

4/ . $\gamma_{c,s}$ J shear stiffness of concrete spring

4// $\gamma_{r,n}$ J normal stiffness of reinforcement spring

4/* $\gamma_{r,s}$ J shear stiffness of reinforcement spring

4*) θ J reinforcement angle

4*1 θ_i J element's degree of freedom

4*2 ϵ_s J ultimate strain of steel

4*3 μ J friction coefficient

4*4 σ_s J yield stress of steel >MPa?

4*5 σ_u J ultimate stress of steel >MPa?

4*6 τ_s J shear strength of concrete >MPa?

4* .

4*/ **SUPPLEMENTAL DATA STATEMENT**

4** Fi\$. !1W!14 are available online in the A!C% 2i'rar, >asceli'rar, .or\$?.

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5)5 A!C% >2))5?. XMinim"m Desi\$n 2oads or #"ildin\$s and 5ther !tr"ct"res : A!C%K!%+ .:.)5.X

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5//

>ksi?, elastic Moduli in GPa >Mpsi?P /

5/*

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5*)

>ksi?, elastic Moduli in GPa >Mpsi?P *

5*1

3. Loads (7.6 km² >1'K t²?P 1)

5*2

5*3 &a'le 1. Concrete material properties introd"ced in the A%M n"merical model 0!tresses in
 5*4 MPa >ksi), %lastic Mod"l"s in GPa >Mpsi)P

Concrete	f_c	$f_t^{a?}$	$\tau_s^{>'?}$	μ 0:P	$\%>c?$	$G^{>d?}$
6))psi	41 >6)	4 >0.6)	13 >1.9))/	32 >4.7)	13 >1.9)
5))psi	34 >5)	3 >0.5)	12 >1.8))/	2* >4.3)	12 >1.8)
4))psi	2/ >4)	3 >0.4)	11 >1.6))/	26 >3.8)	11 >1.6)
3))psi	21 >3)	2 >0.3)	1) >1.5))/	23 >3.3)	* >1.4)

6ote= ^a $f_t J f_c (1) B$ ^b $\tau_s J 3. / f_c$.33 ^c $\%_c J 5$))V> ^{c7]} >1K2??, 0MpaPB ^d GJ $\%K>2>1Rv??, vJ$).2

5*5 &a'le 2. !teel material properties introd"ced in the A%M n"merical model 0!tresses in MPa
 5*6 >ksi), %lastic Mod"l"s in GPa >Mpsi)P
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!teel	σ_s	σ''	ϵ''	%	G
Grade6)	414 >60)	5.* >84)	1	2)) >29)	/) >12)

5*/ &a'le 3. 2oads 07 6K² >lb/ft²)P
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Floor	Dead load in addition to slat' sel : 9ei\$ht	Dead 2oad o 9alls Q partitions	2i0e 2oad	&total per loor
&, pical	T1.) >20)	T).5 >10)	T).5 >10) ^(a)	T2.) >40)
2o' ',	T2.) >40)	T).5 >10)	T1.) >20)	T3.) >60)
#asement	:	:	T1.) >20) ^(b)	T1.) >20)

6ote= ^a 1K4 o 2.)76K² ($\approx 40lb/ft^2$)? desi\$ n load or residential ' "ildin\$\$B ' 1K2.5 o 2.576K² $\approx 50lb/ft^2$? desi\$ n load or \$ara\$es.

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