

EXCLUSIVE This photo taken just months before the death wall collapse reveals major flaws

DECEMBER 12, 2012



Probe: Cracks are clearly visible in the wall and (below) an inspector checks the scene yesterday. Picture: JES RICHARDSON



BRIDGET JONES



ALEXANDER JONES



MARIE-FAITH FLAWOO

CRACKED

THE brick wall that collapsed killing three people was riddled with cracks, photographs taken just four months before the tragedy reveal.

Photographs obtained by the *Herald Sun* are now expected to form a crucial part of investigations into last week's tragedy.

Engineering experts have said the "significant" cracking would have made the wall unable to resist Thursday's

Stephen Drill
 strong winds. The photographs, taken on December 12 last year, are the only images in the public domain that show the condition of the wall before its collapse.

The tragedy claimed the lives of three pedestrians on Swanston St — Melbourne siblings Bridget and Alexander Jones and French woman Dr Marie-Faith Flawoo. Grocon knocked down the

remaining sections of the wall under instruction from authorities in the hours after the incident.

WorkSafe also confirmed it had visited the Grocon building site in 2011 to monitor work practices, but could not say whether the wall was inspected.

Dr Con Adam, senior research fellow in the school of civil engineering at Monash University, said the cracks caused the wall's collapse.

"That picture tells us a lot about the wall. The wall as a whole was under sheer failure, this renders the wall unable to resist wind loads," he said.

"The wall, if it was designed properly, should flex with the wind and go back without collapsing.

"If there is a crack in the bottom of the wall it just couldn't resist the wind load. That crack at the base of the wall was the weakest point."

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