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"The Building
That Wouldn't Go
Away"

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BLOCKS

The Building That Wouldn't Go Away

By DAVID W. DUNLAP

THE dismantling of the Deutsche Bank building will begin this fall and—after careful, systematic deconstruction—it will be gone next year.

The speaker was Gov. George E. Pataki. The next year was 2005.

He's gone. The building isn't. After a long while in which the demolition deadline at the badly contaminated former Deutsche Bank building at 130 Liberty Street seemed to be elastic, officials now say its deconstruction by the end of this year is critical to progress at the rest of the World Trade Center site.

"Any delay impairs the overall time schedule that we've established," Deputy Mayor Daniel L. Doctoroff said yesterday.

That means that the 41-story tower will have to start coming down at the rate of almost one floor a week, leaving little margin for further delay.

"We have been given assurances that the building will be down by the end of this year," said Stephen Sigmond, a spokesman for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. "Assurances we are trusting since that is absolutely the latest we can accept in order to meet the Port Authority's aggressive and accountable timetable."

Gov. Eliot Spitzer is "confident that the demolition will proceed according to schedule," his press secre-

tary, Christine Anderson, said. She added that the state "will take every precaution while the search for human remains continues."

To date, 766 remains have been recovered from the building. The first through fifth floors remain to be searched.

Charles J. Malkish, the executive director of the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center, which has taken over the deconstruction project on what he called an "interim basis" from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, sounded optimistic.

"The planning, the engineering, the sequencing, the deconstruction method, the environmental controls have all been approved by the regulators and the work is going forward," he said last week. (In fact, one could look over Mr. Malkish's shoulder in his 29th-floor office at 1 Liberty Plaza and watch as workers removed aluminum sheathing from the columns at the top of the former bank tower.)

"A floor a week is achievable," Mr. Malkish said.

But there is at least one big impediment. The state is negotiating with Bovis Lend Lease, the construction manager for the demolition project, and its subcontractor, the John Gilt Corporation. The companies are seeking more money to cover expenses they had not anticipated when

they submitted their bid, since the decontamination has proved far more complex and demanding than had been envisioned.

At issue is roughly \$30 million in extra expenses and how much of that should be borne by the contractors.

For a few days beginning on Dec. 11, only 15 or 20 of Galt's workers, about 10 percent of the usual complement, were on the job. The Lower

Officials say a demolition cannot be put off any longer.

Manhattan Development Corporation called this a walkout and said negotiations would not resume until it ended. By Dec. 15, a full crew was back at work.

About the negotiations, Mary Castello, a senior vice president of Bovis, said yesterday, "Bovis believes that the parties, exercising good faith, can resolve the issue."

At first glance, it may be hard to see why the fate of the main trade center is so closely linked to an old bank tower one block south. But the sites are tightly linked—underground—through the Vehicular Se-

curity Center that the Port Authority plans to build on the south side of Liberty Street, an area now partly occupied by 130 Liberty Street. A series of ramps in this center will lead to the network of subterranean roadways tying the new trade center together.

Before the authority can build the center, it must first construct a reverse bathtub, contained by large slurry walls, to keep the groundwater out. And before it can construct the bathtub, the authority must move a large sewer line that is now under Liberty Street.

The relocated sewer line and part of the slurry wall run about 180 feet through the 130 Liberty Street parcel. To compress work time as much as possible, the authority plans to begin building the sewer line and the slurry wall before the tower is completely demolished, then finish the work once the tower has been razed.

In 2010, a year before the Vehicular Security Center is scheduled to be complete, its ramps are to be used for trucks serving the final phase of construction at Silverstein Properties' Tower 3 and Tower 4 on the main trade center site. That access is guaranteed by an agreement with Silverstein, which must, in turn, finish the towers by Dec. 31, 2011.

The timetable is tight. So no matter how confident officials sound in public, there are more than enough tenterhooks to go around.