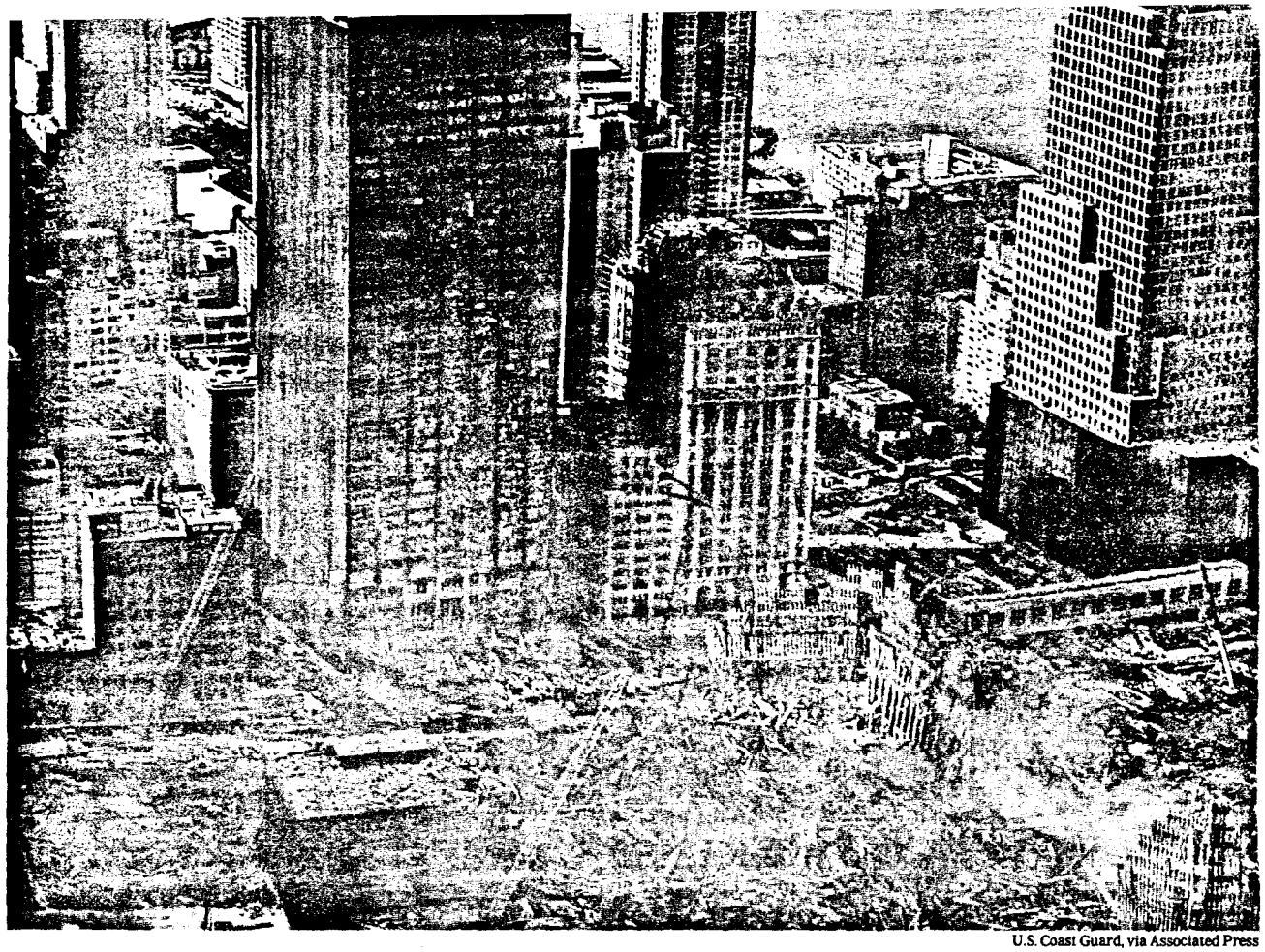
NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document



U.S. Coast Guard, via Associated Press

An aerial photograph of the damage left by the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, with the Deutsche Bank building on the left. Below, a gash in the Deutsche building made by a falling piece of facade from 2 World Trade Center.

A Survivor Faces A Slow Death, Piece by Piece

Building Endured 9/11, Badly Contaminated



Deutsche Bank

By DAVID W. DUNLAP

One Bankers Trust Plaza has been dressed for its own funeral since 2001. Now the time is at hand.

On Tuesday, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation board authorized a contract with the Gilbane Building Company to dismantle 1 Bankers Trust Plaza at 130 Liberty Street, also known as the Deutsche Bank building.

Later this year, if all goes according to plan, the monolithic 40-story office tower immediately south of ground zero — shrouded in black netting and far too like a 536-foot-high tombstone for many New Yorkers' tastes — will be coming down.

Piece by piece.

While 130 Liberty Street will not be the tallest building ever dismantled in New York (the 612-foot Singer Building claims that distinction), it may be the most polluted.

"A combination of contaminants known to be hazardous to human health, unparalleled in any other building designed for office use, permeates the entire structure," said a damage report prepared last year for Deutsche Bank, the owner. These include asbestos, lead, mercury, dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons and World Trade Center dust.

For many reasons — the presence of contaminants, the nearness of other buildings and utility lines, and the trauma that would surely result from the sight of another dust plume downtown — there is no talk of imploding 130 Liberty Street.

Instead, the 1.4 million-square-foot structure, unused since Sept. 11, 2001, is to be cocooned and taken down painstakingly. One engineer likened the process to a videotape of construction, run in reverse.

Interiors and machinery will be removed. The aluminum and glass facade will be stripped off. The steel and concrete skeleton will be bared. Beams and columns will be cut by

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Facing Slow Death, Piece by Piece

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workers with torches to be lowered by crane to the ground. And then the floor slabs will be broken apart until nothing remains.

Some of what will be dismantled is almost new. Late last year, to stabilize the structure against heavy winds, Deutsche Bank filled in an enormous gash between the eighth and 24th floors in the north facade that had been created by falling debris from 2 World Trade Center.

Another team will now take apart this remedial work. And much more.

Among the challenges faced by the wrecking crews will be enclosing the structure and removing potentially toxic materials. They will also have to grapple with the fact that 130 Liberty Street, like the trade center, sits in a concrete bathtub in landfill. As the load of the structure is lessened during demolition, some counterweight or fill will be needed to relieve the pressure from the surrounding water table.

But the basic dismantling process will be familiar to anyone who recalls the razing of the Singer Building at Liberty Street and Broadway 36 years ago or the New York Coliseum four years ago.

Like the Singer Building and the Coliseum, 130 Liberty Street does not have to be demolished, at least, not in the eyes of some engineers familiar with the structure and not in the eyes of two of Deutsche Bank's insurers, the Allianz Global Risks U.S. Insurance Company and the AXA Corporate Solutions Insurance Company.

"It was remarkable the way it survived," said Guy J. P. Nordenson of the structural engineering firm Guy Nordenson & Associates. "It's a shame that it isn't recognized and acknowledged and the thing actually rehabilitated."

Deutsche Bank, however, regards the property as a total loss. In a lawsuit against Allianz and AXA, it said the structure was embedded with "a unique cocktail of highly hazardous substances" that would defy attempts at cleaning and imperil future occupants.

Planning psychology and politics also dictate demolition. State officials call the building a blight and a grisly memento, an impediment to progress. They envision a 1.6 million-square-foot replacement under the master plan by Studio Daniel Libeskind, fronting a half-acre of new landscaped open space called Liberty Park.

"Looming over us, over the entire site, is a painful reminder of what happened Sept. 11," Gov. George E. Pataki said on Feb. 27 as he announced a settlement brokered by former Senator George J. Mitchell between Deutsche Bank and the insurers. "It was extremely important, both for the long-term vision of the Libeskind plan, and for today, to get rid of that painful reminder; that the Deutsche Bank building come down."

This, after only three decades of existence.

One Bankers Trust Plaza was developed by Fisher Brothers, engineered by the Office of James Ruderman and designed by Peterson & Brickbauer, in association with Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, the firm responsible for the Empire State Building. It was built from 1973 to 1974, just after the trade center, to which it was joined by a pedestrian bridge. It remained an operations center after Deutsche Bank acquired the Bankers Trust Corporation in 1999 and had what the bank called a sophisticated trading floor.

On Sept. 11, 2001, the building was buffeted mercilessly. An entire section of 2 World Trade Center fell into the building, opening a 15-story gash, severing one of the column lines and almost instantly destroying 158,000 square feet of floor space.

Two bank employees, Sebastian Gorki and Francisco Bourdier, were killed. Mr. Gorki was at the trade center; Mr. Bourdier was last seen at 130 Liberty Street.

A 20,000-gallon diesel fuel tank in the basement ruptured and burned. Falling debris crushed the plaza and fountain at 130 Liberty Street, which had been the setting of Ophelia's drowning in a version of "Hamlet" released a year earlier by Miramax Films.

Subjected to earthquakelike shaking and tornado-force winds, 130 Liberty Street lost 1,700 windows. In poured clouds of dust, penetrating the structure through ventilating ducts, elevator shafts, stairwells and wall cavities. Damage continued for months, as mold grew throughout the building. In 2003, working with the structural engineering firm Cantor Seinuk, the Tishman Construction Corporation and Helmark Steel, the bank filled in the gash with new columns, beams and floor decks.

"The building was not in danger of collapsing," said Rohini Pragasam, a spokeswoman for the bank. "However there was a concern how the damaged structure would perform in high-wind conditions. Regardless of the building's future, it needed to be stabilized."

The bank is now disposing of computers, other electronic equipment and furniture, Ms. Pragasam said, and expects to complete this work by the end of June. Materials are placed in sealed containers, decontaminated and removed. Ms. Pragasam said the air quality around the building was being monitored around the clock.

Cleaning and contaminant removal at 130 Liberty Street is expected to begin as early as summer, said a spokeswoman for the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation. Demolition — or deconstruction, as state officials call it, to distinguish it from implosion — is to begin as early as the fall and be completed in mid-2005.

"Taking down the building is an important symbol of Lower Manhattan's rebirth," said Kevin M. Rampe, president of the development corporation. It expects to pay up to $164 million to acquire and clear the site, using a grant from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Of that, $90 million is being paid to Deutsche Bank, which is also to get $140 million from Allianz and AXA, and up to $45 million to the Gilbane Building Company of Providence, R.I. The corporation expects to spend up to $29 million for pollution liability insurance, community outreach, a contingency for litigation, a demolition manager and additional environmental review, testing and monitoring. Controlled Demolition Inc., which was responsible for tearing down the remains of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, is working with Gilbane. The Louis Berger Group is an environmental consultant.

Among those watching warily are residents of 125 Cedar Street, a block away, who have asked the development corporation to provide assurances that buildings as large as 130 Liberty Street have been torn down safely with neighbors in place and to inform the public what would happen if dust or contaminants exceeded safe levels. The corporation responded in the environmental statement that the cleaning and deconstruction of 130 Liberty Street would be "subject to all applicable laws and regulations" and that the corporation "would keep the community, including area residents and businesses, informed."

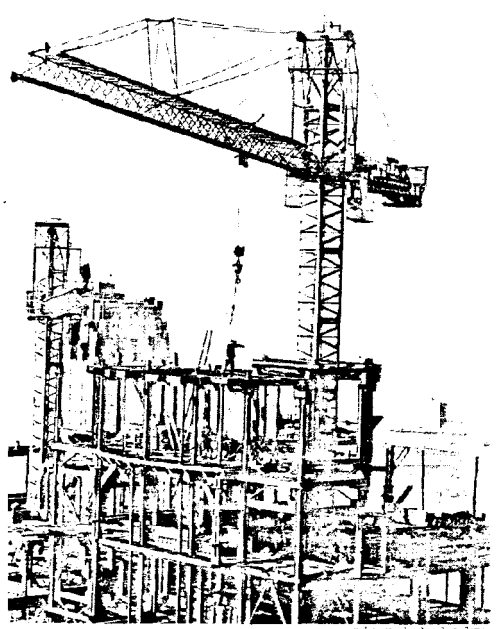
Acknowledging the testing performed for Deutsche Bank, the corporation said in the environmental statement that it had been "advised that such testing was not sufficient to determine whether any of such contaminants were present at levels that would render them hazardous."

Steps to isolate contaminants would include the use of air pumps to create negative air pressure within the enclosed areas; installing barriers at windows, doors, elevator shafts and stairways; and cleaning surfaces with high-efficiency particulate air-filter vacuums.

Taking down a 40-story building is unusual but not unique, said Ron Klemencic, chairman of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat. Several of that size have been razed in Hong Kong in recent years, he said, and replaced with larger towers.

Perhaps the most monumental demolition in New York was that of Pennsylvania Station in the early 60's, but the pinnacle was reached in 1968 at the Singer Building, which was the world's tallest 60 years earlier. It was replaced by 1 Liberty Plaza, where the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation now has its office.

Because it was dismantled, the Singer Building did not so much disappear as simply pass from the scene. And that may not be a bad precedent. "The sense of this departure is that of a steamship s slipping away down the river," Fredric M. Bell, executive direc the New York chapter of the A can Institute of Architects. "S thing eroding rather than bei stantaneously removed is prc what's needed."

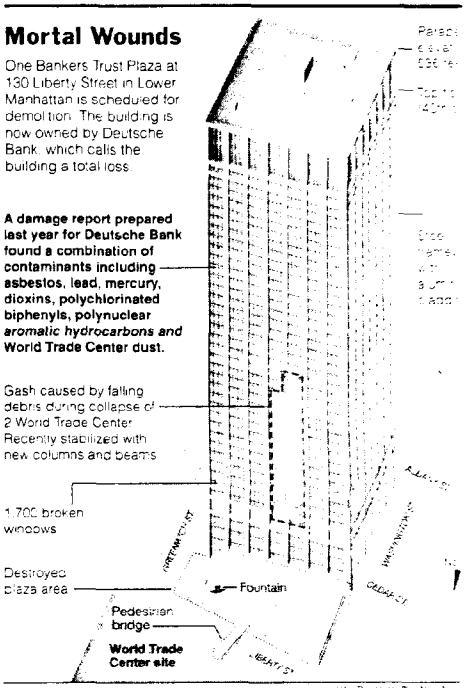


The Singer Building, at one time the world's tallest, was dismantled in 1968. It did not so much disappear as simply pass from the scene.

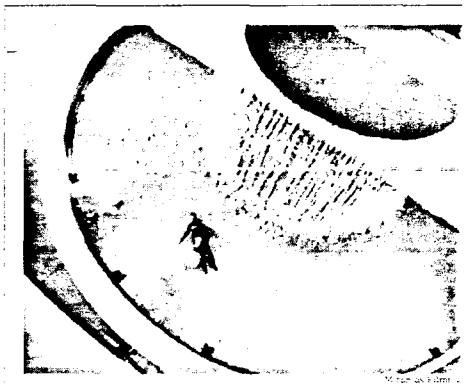
Mortal Wounds

One Bankers Trust Plaza at 130 Liberty Street in Lower Manhattan is scheduled for demolition. The building is now owned by Deutsche Bank, which calls the building a total loss.

A damage report prepared last year for Deutsche Bank found a combination of contaminants including asbestos, lead, mercury, dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls, polynuclear *aromatic hydrocarbons* and World Trade Center dust.



John Pasquin/The New York



The fountain at 130 Liberty Street was used in the 2000 mov "Hamlet," which starred Ethan Hawke and Julia Stiles.

Font That Wept for Ophelia, Lost in the Tears of Sept. 11

"It's an odd question: where would Ophelia drown in New York City?"

Andrew Fierberg, a producer of "Hamlet," which starred Ethan Hawke and was set in modern Manhattan, recalled a location search six years ago that took his film crew to 130 Liberty Street. There, tucked under an elevated plaza but open to the sky, was a semicircular basin fed by a saucerlike fountain that almost seemed to weep.

"It was one of those magical pools of light," Mr. Fierberg said. Cruelly stark, ever changing under shadows cast through the broad aperture, it seemed to be the poignantly perfect setting for a troubled Ophelia, played by Julia Stiles, to meet her doom.

The crew also hoped to film t climactic scenes in the Wor Trade Center. Negotiations we well along with the Port Author of New York and New Jersey, M Fierberg said, but the cost of re ing the space and paving for ext hights turned out to be too much

The pool and the rest of the p za were destroyed Sept. 11, 20 Today, Deutsche Bank is co memorating the pool with a fou tain at the east end of Wall Stree

But Mr. Fierberg cannot forg the original. "It wasn't on the l of sights to see in New York but was awfully beautiful," he sa "Often, even people who kn New York will say, 'Where did s drown?' And I say, 'Well — doesn't exist anymore.'"

DAVID W. DUNLA

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