



## The Real Deal

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### *Saving the clock tower*



The iconic building will soon be shroud-free.

On Independence Day 2007, Brooklyn will likely be able to celebrate the liberation of one of its crown jewels. The clock tower of the borough's tallest building, the Williamsburgh Savings Bank tower, will be freed of the netting and scaffolding that has enshrouded it since August of last year. The building's owners, who are converting the Fort Greene landmark into condos, say they hope renovation work on the 512-foot, four-faced clock will be completed by summer.

"We're aiming to have the renovations done by the Fourth of July," said Andrew MacArthur, a principal at the Dermot Company, a co-developer of the building at One Hanson Place. MacArthur said renovations to the clock, which was the largest in the world between 1929 and 1962, were part of the \$8 million facelift the developers are giving the tower's façade.

The tower's new penthouse units will be on the floors directly below the clock, said the Corcoran Group's Adam Pacelli, sales director for the condominium. Occupancy at the converted property will begin in the fall, where sales of the 189 condos have been going well, he said.

"We expect to have the building more than 90 percent sold by the fall," said Pacelli, "but the penthouses, which are going for between \$4.5 and \$8.5 million, may take a little longer to sell."

The pricey penthouses will sit beneath a clock that has dominated Brooklyn's skyline since 1929. Structural work is also being done to the clock's mechanical systems, said MacArthur. In the past, the clock's four faces have occasionally been out of sync with one another, telling different times.

"Hopefully now they'll stay synced up," said MacArthur.

The Williamsburgh Savings Bank tower--popularly referred to as "The Wille"--has been called the "most phallic" building in the world, and it has been memorialized by scores of writers.

As Jonathan Lethem recently wrote, "By sight of this lone 34-story tower, visible for miles, a Brooklynite arriving home from the airport measures the infinitesimal rate of his cab's progress home along the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway."

The tower's pull is both grand and pedestrian, according to Sunny Staller, a graduate student who has lived near the building for the past four years.

"It's such a Brooklyn icon, and I'm glad it's being unveiled again soon," said Staller. "I also miss being able to check the time." *By Gabby Warshewer*