

Redo of Dallas skyscraper includes removing, improving marble exterior



Photos by Ashley Landis/Staff Photographer

Workers removed panels of marble from the former First National Bank tower on Monday. The marble will be restored and then placed back on the building.

# Restoring the stone

By STEVE BROWN

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The top-to-bottom renovation of one of downtown Dallas' largest skyscrapers is taking advantage of the latest building technology.

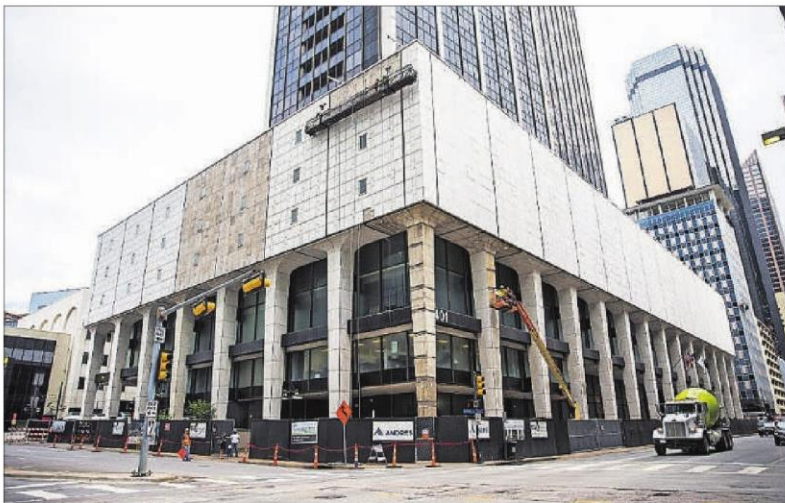
Work crews have begun removing all the white marble from the exterior of the 52-story former First National Bank tower at 1401 Elm St.

Over the next year, the stone on the outside of the 52-year-old landmark will be taken down, shipped out of state and restored with a high-tech manufacturing process.

Each of the inch or more thick marble slabs that cover the 1.5 million-square-foot high-rise will be sliced into two or more identical slabs, glued to a metal honeycomb backing and then replaced on the outside of the building.

"This is our first real historic project — the first time we have reclaimed the stone off a building," said Dan Slain with contractor HyCOMB USA of Florida. "We have projects scattered all over the world.

"We've worked on the biggest shopping mall in Canada," Slain said. "We



Most of the stone panels from the Elm Street tower will be trucked to Florida to a plant near Miami. A few curved panels will be shipped to China for a specialized reconstruction.

are now doing a huge building in New Delhi, India."

Most of the stone panels from the outside of the Elm Street tower will be trucked to Florida to HyCOMB's plant near Miami. A few curved panels will be shipped to China for a specialized reconstruction.

"We take the slab of stone, laminate the honeycomb on two sides of it and run it through a big belt saw," Slain said.

The result is a stone exterior that looks as new as when the skyscraper was constructed in 1965.





Ashley Landis/Staff Photographer

**Dan Slain of contractor HyCOMB USA** says the project will result in a stone exterior that looks as new as when the skyscraper was constructed in 1965.

# Renovation to restore building's marble

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All of the original marble came from the same quarry in Greece where the stone from the Parthenon was quarried, Slain said.

"We've bought some more stone out of that same quarry, in case we need it," he said.

The painstaking removal and restoration of the marble is part of a requirement from the National Park Service because of the building's landmark status.

Once Dallas' tallest skyscraper, the building was

acquired last year by San Francisco-based Drever Capital, which is converting the high-rise into a combination of apartments, hotel rooms, and retail and office space.

"The National Park Service requires us to put the exterior back exactly like it was," said Steve McCoy, president of Drever Construction. "We've had very little break with the stone we've taken off so far."

The architects and contractors for the project — Dallas-based Merriman Anderson/Architects and Andres Construction — have

done multiple downtown Dallas building redevelopments. This is the first time they used HyCOMB USA on a project, said architect Jerry Merriman.

"They are one of the leaders in this technology," Merriman said. "Each of the marble panels is documented and numbered and labored before it is removed."

"I'm not aware of anything of this scale being done before," he said. "It's a plus that it's sustainable architecture — it's salvaging materials."

All the original glass on

the outside of the skyscraper will be cleaned and resealed and left in place.

The \$380 million project is the largest and most expensive such development ever in Dallas.

Renamed The Drever, the building is scheduled to reopen in 2019 with 324 apartments and a 218-room luxury hotel.

"For about a year, the building will have exposed concrete on the outside," Merriman said. "Then it will have new, shiny marble."

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