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Landmark View Is Disappearing

Q & A

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Q. *My wife and I signed a two-year lease in a condo building in Brooklyn with a great view of a New York landmark. We were wary of some empty lots between the building and the landmark, but were told it would be years before anything started. One week after we moved in, work started on a building that we soon discovered would block our entire building's view of the landmark. That view was used in marketing the apartment and to charge its hefty rent. Though the new building won't be finished for another couple of years, I'm curious to know how that changes our negotiations with the owner of the unit once our two-year lease is up. What happens to the price when those views disappear?*

A. **Dov Treiman**, a Manhattan real estate lawyer, says landlords are never held responsible for the loss of views in apartments they rent. "Since the writer apparently lives in an unregulated apartment, the parties are perfectly free to negotiate new terms — including a new rent — when the current lease expires. The diminished view is a bargaining chip for the writer, but it does not provide the writer with any kind of legal right."