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Disputed Deposit On Condo Shared

By JOSH BARBANEL

Scarlett Johansson's mother won back part of a disputed deposit she put down on a high-rise Manhattan apartment in a court settlement signed on Wednesday. The case focused on the falling income of Ms. Johansson's mother as the former agent of her famous actress daughter.



Scarlett Johansson

Reuters

The case in Manhattan state Supreme Court also was testing the validity of a standard contract clause allowing a would-be buyer who can't get a mortgage to back out of a purchase agreement.

But after a dispute over claims of confidential details appearing in the media, the parties agreed to each share part of the \$130,000 deposit on a two-bedroom apartment at the 41-story Strand on West 43rd Street.

Exact details weren't disclosed, but lawyers for both sides said their clients were satisfied with the settlement.

Ms. Johansson's mother, Melanie Sloan, backed out of the \$1.395 million purchase in November. She indicated she couldn't obtain a mortgage because of "loss of her largest client" after she signed the purchase contract, according to her court papers.

But the lawyers for the couple selling the apartment said Ms. Johansson, who wasn't a party in the case, had dropped her mother as her agent in October, 2009, and that Ms. Sloan had long known her income would be declining.

Adam Leitman Bailey, an attorney for the sellers, said his clients "are very happy with the amount they were able to keep."

Morrell I. Berkowitz, who represented Ms. Sloan, said the dispute "was amicably settled." "It was a garden variety dispute over the contract deposit," he said.

After the deal with Ms. Sloan fell through, the sellers, Christina Castelli and Grant Moffett, put it back on the market and a week ago it was listed in contract.