

lower floors is also confirmed by the early television news coverage of WTC 7, which indicated light-colored smoke rising from the lower floors of WTC 7.

Video footage indicated that the majority of the smoke appeared to be coming from the south side of the building at that time as opposed to the other sides of the building. This is corroborated by Figure 5-17, a photograph taken at 3:36 p.m. that shows the south face of WTC 7 covered with a thick cloud of smoke, and only small amounts of smoke emanating from the 27th and 28th floors of the west face of WTC 7.

News coverage after 1:30 p.m. showed light-colored smoke flowing out of openings on the upper floors of the south side of the building. Another photograph (Figure 5-18) of the skyline at 3:25 p.m., taken from the southwest, shows a large volume of dark smoke coming from all but the lowest levels of WTC 7, where white smoke is emanating. The mode of fire and smoke spread was unclear; however, it may have been propagated through interior shafts, between floors along the south façade that may have been damaged, or other internal openings, as well as the floor slab/exterior façade connections.

It appeared that water on site was limited due to a 20-inch broken water main in Vesey Street. Although WTC 7 was sprinklered, it did not appear that there would have been a sufficient quantity of water to control the growth and spread of the fires on multiple floors. In addition, the firefighters made the decision fairly early on not to attempt to fight the fires, due in part to the damage to WTC 7 from the collapsing towers. Hence, the fire progressed throughout the day fairly unimpeded by automatic or manual suppression activities.

A review of photos and videos indicates that there were limited fires on the north, east, and west faces of the building. One eyewitness who saw the building from a 30th floor apartment approximately 4 blocks



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*Figure 5-18 WTC 7, with a large volume of dark smoke rising from it, just visible behind WFC 1 (left). A much smaller volume of white smoke is seen rising from the base of WTC 7. Note that the lower, lighter-colored smoke (to right) is thought to be from the two collapsed towers*