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MONEY

Coda for 66th St. B&N

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Barnes & Noble is boxing up its books at Lincoln Center.

The company is shuttering its popular megastore at Broadway and 66th Street because of a looming rent increase.

The location is notable for its cafe, its many celebrity book signings and its music store, popular with Lincoln Center visitors.

"[It's] economically impossible for us to extend the lease" beyond its end in January, spokeswoman Mary Ellen Keating said in a statement.

The company said it will search for a new Upper West Side location but declined to elaborate. It still has a store in the neighborhood at 82nd Street and Broadway.

The world's largest bookseller has been plagued by declining sales and is trying to sell itself as a battle to control the company plays out.

Retail expert Faith Hope Consolo cautioned against seeing the closure as a sign of widespread retail trouble ahead for booksellers.



The Barnes & Noble store draws celebrities such as Henry Winkler, above, for book readings and signings.

"I think that it's a case-by-case basis," Consolo said of major bookstore closures. "The Internet has affected the sales of books, that's true. But I don't think we're going to see a wave of closures. [Barnes & Noble] just decided to pack this store up."

Consolo thinks an apparel or brand-name store will move in. She cited the recent openings of Apple and TJ Maxx stores in the area.

"I think [retail has] just become more about fashion," she said.