

The New York Times  
**The City**

September 10, 2006

**DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN**

# A Flatiron On Flatbush

Slashing diagonally across Manhattan's street grid, Broadway is responsible for memorable irregularities like Times Square, Union Square and of course the Flatiron Building, one of the city's best-known and most-photographed structures.

In Brooklyn, Flatbush Avenue follows a similar wayward course, though the lower-slung buildings on the irregular lots that line the street are more likely to be gas stations, garages and warehouses than works of architectural distinction. But now, in a borough where comparisons with Manhattan remain a fact of life, some optimists are saying that a building planned for a triangular lot near the Manhattan Bridge could be a flatiron building of Brooklyn's own.

The project's architect, Ismael Leyva, does not shy away from the comparisons.

"To me, when I saw this site being triangular-shaped, the first thing that came to my mind was that this is going to be similar to the Flatiron Building," he said on Thursday, adding that his team had rounded off the front of the planned building in an homage to the famous skyscraper.

Construction of Brooklyn's flatiron building, a project of the developer Isaac Hager, is scheduled to begin in a few weeks and to be completed in the summer of 2008.

The differences between the buildings are considerable. The 22-story Flatiron Building, at 23rd Street, Broadway and Fifth Avenue, has a limestone and terra-cotta facade, while the new building, a 21-story structure at 85 Flatbush Avenue Extension, on Tillary Street, will be glass. Moreover, the Flatiron Building is commercial, while the new building will hold luxury

condominiums. (Mount Hope Court, a 10-story 1914 structure on the Grand Concourse that is known as the Bronx's Flatiron Building, is also home to apartments.)

Most significant, the Flatiron Building of 1902 is a revered architectural icon, while the Brooklyn building, even optimistically speaking, has an uphill climb to reach such status.

Still, the comparisons have come, beginning with those in *The Brooklyn Papers*, a weekly, which described the structure as looking "like the lovechild of the Flatiron Building and a spaceship."

Mr. Leyva said he was gratified that people saw similarities between the buildings but demurred. "Most of the shape is dictated by the site and the zoning requirements," he said of his project.

One way in which the two buildings really could be similar has to do with their role as a catalyst to development. The Flatiron Building helped open a heady era of construction, and in Downtown Brooklyn, Mr. Leyva's project is one of several buildings to emerge from zoning changes made in recent years.

A few other tall buildings are planned for the immediate neighborhood. Two of them, on Gold Street, are from Mr. Leyva's designs, and a third, at Flatbush and

Myrtle Avenues, will sit on a similar triangular lot that could spawn another high-rise wedge.

In the opinion of Simon Bankoff, executive director of the Historic Districts Council, an advocacy group, the planned building at 85 Flatbush Extension appears to be out of context with what is in the area now. But he added, tongue only partly in cheek, "Maybe it's in context with the new Brooklyn."

JAKE MOONEY



A rendering of a structure that one newspaper called "the lovechild of the Flatiron Building and a spaceship."

## POSTINGS

### Luxury Condos on the Rise in Forest Hills

One block from the fashionable shops of Austin Street in Forest Hills - where side walk cafes will sprout their umbrellas when spring returns - a 21-story Art Deco-style condominium building is starting to rise on a former parking lot across from the venerable Midway Theater.

The Windsor, at 108-24 71st Street, is the latest project of the Cord Meyer Development Company, which first began building homes in then-rural Forest Hills nearly a century ago. A lot has changed since then.

Condominiums in the six-story prewar and postwar buildings that line most blocks in the neighborhood - outside of the Tudor mansions of Forest Hills Gardens - sell these days for about \$ 275,000 for a one-bedroom and \$350,000 for a two-bedroom, according to Barbara Frechter, president of Glenjay Realty, a local brokerage firm. At the Pinnacle, A luxury condominium building on Queens Boulevard that rose to 27 stories in the late 80’s, a one-bedroom sold last week for \$418,000.

At the Windsor, even though only a few floors have been built so far, 52 of the eventual 95 apartments have al-



#### NEW CONDOS ON THE BLOCK

A rendering of the Windsor. Sales have been brisk so far.

ready been sold, said Jacqueline Urgo, executive vice president of the marketing Directors, which is handling the sales, with one-bedrooms starting at \$510,000, two-bedrooms at \$675,000 and high-floor three-bedrooms at \$1.025 million.

“They’re very good price for Forest Hills,” Ms. Urgo said, “outer-borough luxury prices.” Compared with Manhattan prices, which “would be \$1,000 per square foot plus,” she said, “We’re achieving \$650 per square foot.”

The architect on the project is Ismael Leyva, president of Ismael Leyva Architects P.C. “It’s an Art Deco exterior with a combination of beige brick and bronze-tinted glass,” Mr. Leyva said, “with floor-to-ceiling windows at the corners to bring in light” - and on the upper floors of the south and west façades to offer views of the treetops of Forest Hills Gardens or the Manhattan skyline.

Apartment in the doorman building will have mahogany strip floors, nine-foot ceilings and kitchens with stainless steel appliances, beech-colored cabinets and green granite countertops. There will be a fitness center in the building, a lounge and on-site parking for an extra charge. Occupancy is expected to start next September.

Further information can be obtained at the building’s sales office at 108-40 Queens Boulevard; at its site on the internet, [thewindsoratforesthills.com](http://thewindsoratforesthills.com) or by telephone at (718)263-1800

DENNIS HEVESI

At First Avenue and 89th Street

## A 31-Story Rental Building

Post Toscana, a new L-shaped 31-story rental building at 389 East 89th Street, is to be like two buildings in one — offering lofts on four floors of its substantial base and studios to three bedrooms in its sleek tower above — when it is completed at the northwest corner of First Avenue by summer 2003.

"We designed the five-story base to match the height of the six-story building next door," said Ismael Leyva, the architect, whose firm designed the 199-unit building and is the architect of the interior residential portion of the AOL Time Warner Center being built at Columbus Circle.

"After the base, the building sets back 10 feet on the avenue and 15 feet on 89th Street," Mr. Leyva added. "From there it's straight up for the tower."

The project has a budget of \$97 million, according to Veronica Hackett, a principal of the Clarett Group, the developer in a joint venture with Post Properties based in Atlanta. (Their other joint venture — Post Luminaria, along First Avenue at 23rd Street — is to be completed by summer).

Formerly on the site was a one-story C-Town supermarket, which is to reopen as a more upscale store under a different name in 7,200 square feet on the ground floor.

The building's lower girth, which fills a 100-by-100-foot footprint, will hold 33 lofts, ranging 528 to 1,265 square feet, with 10½-foot-high ceilings and a few steps leading up to a sleeping alcove. "Rather than make apartments long and dark, we added extra height," Mr. Leyva said. "It's open space with a bilevel arrangement."

A second-floor fitness area and a multipurpose room are to open into a 40-by-30-foot yard featuring benches and plantings. There will also be a 5,000-square-foot landscaped roof deck.

The facade is to feature concrete panels with imitation limestone, described by the architect as "aesthetically convincing, weather-resistant and affordable." Floor-to-ceiling bronze-tinted glass energy-efficient windows are to define the building's corners, and high-tech, sleek anodized aluminum cornices are to crown its roof and setback.

Inside the lobby, stainless steel is to top four columns; an inlaid marble medallion is to be set on the floor; and back-lit half-moon onyx panels are to be on facing walls.

All apartments are to have washers and dryers, individual climate controls and high-speed telecommunication and cable connections. There will also be a 24-hour doorman.

Rents are not yet set, but the 537-square-foot studios are expected to begin at \$2,000 a month. The one-bedroom apartments, about 45 percent of the building, are to rent for \$2,600 to \$3,500 for 628 to 824 square feet; two-bedrooms, \$3,800 to \$4,500, 1,000 to 1,100 square feet; junior fours (one large bedroom and one small), \$3,800 to \$4,200, 845 square feet; and three-bedrooms, about \$6,000, 1,300 square feet. There are no estimates for rents in the lofts or the two penthouses with fireplaces and 1,200-square-foot terraces.

ROSALIE R. RADOMSKY



# The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES METRO FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2008

## Residential Real Estate

### A Tower With Housing And a Publishing House

By RACHELLE GARBARINE

Reflecting the strong demand in Manhattan both for luxury housing and for new office space, the tower taking shape on the west side of Broadway from 53th to 56th Street will contain the new headquarters for Random House on its lower floors and be topped by 111 luxury condominium apartments.

Upon completion, which is expected in the summer of 2002, the building will be 630 feet high, about the same height as the 56-story office tower nearby at 8 West 57th Street. The new building's 28-story commercial component will house 650,000 square feet of offices for the publishing company, a division of Bertelsmann A.G., the German media giant. Bertelsmann will own that part of the tower, which will be called the Random House Building and have its entrance on Broadway.

The 25-story residential component, to be known as the Park Imperial, will have its entrance at 300 West 56th Street. Its one- to three-bedroom apartments, including five penthouses, will range from 811 to 2,975 square feet. All the units will have 10-foot-high ceilings and, since they start at 300 feet above street level, clear views of the Manhattan skyline, the Hudson River at Central Park.

The building is being marketed as a 70-story tower — with the first residential floor labeled the 49th — based on the developer's calculation of the number of floors it would have if it were entirely residential. The Related Companies, which is developing the \$425 million project, is not the first to take such an approach: Trump World Tower, near the United Nations, is billed as a 99-story building, although it has 72 floors.

At the Park Imperial, "the views became the keystone for our plans for the building," said David J. Wine, vice chairman of Related. Though the company is best known for rental housing, it chose to build condominiums on the West 56th Street site "because we knew people would be willing to pay a lot more money to own an apartment with those views than to rent one," Mr. Wine said.



A project in Midtown combines offices for Random House with luxury condominium apartments.

Prices for the units are expected to be \$575,000 to \$4 million, or an average of \$927 a square foot, said Louise Sunshine, president of the Sunshine Group, the project's sales agent.

According to preliminary figures for the second quarter from the Real Estate Board of New York, the median price for condominiums in the Midtown West neighborhood was \$575 a square foot, up from \$302 for the same period in 1999. At the high end, Ms. Sunshine said, prices go as high as \$3,000 a square foot at the Trump International Hotel and Tower at 1 Central Park West.

The monthly common charges, including real estate taxes, at the Park Imperial are expected to be \$723 to \$2,726. The Park Imperial is eligible to receive a 10-year tax abatement from the city; without it, the charges would be \$1,200 to \$3,100 a month.

Related cannot sell the units until its offering plan is accepted for filing by the state attorney general's office; acceptance is expected by the end of this month. But since the Sunshine Group started marketing the units in August, 71 letters of intent have been received to buy specific apartments, Ms. Sunshine said.

Related assembled the Park Imperial site from 1967 through 1999, buying air rights from owners of adjacent structures at the same time. That allowed the company to increase the height of the building by 10 residential stories. The building is being constructed "as of right," meaning that no special permits or approvals were needed.

While Related decided early on to construct condominiums on the building's higher floors, Mr. Wine said, "the strength of New York's economy gave us many options for the lower portion," including hotel rooms, rental apartments or offices.

Ultimately, "the prestige and financial strength of Random House persuaded us that office use was the best way to go," Mr. Wine said. He added that the mix of uses was ideal for the neighborhood, given the emergence of Broadway in the 40's and 50's as an entertainment, media and corporate corridor.

Because of the Park Imperial's location, Ms. Sunshine said, the apartments have drawn interest from the buyers for whom it was intended: empty-nesters and professional singles and couples. She said there was also strong interest from foreign buyers.

The developers say that in addition to its views, the Park Imperial's contemporary style will help distinguish it from the crop of condominiums, many designed to resemble prewar buildings, being built for prosperous buyers. The building's facade, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, will be clad in a reflective glass curtain wall. It will have a rectangular base and will be topped by a setback residential tower with a saw-toothed silhouette.

Because of the eight-cornered shape of the tower, the layouts of the apartments, designed by Ismael Leyva, a Manhattan architect, will lend themselves to distinctive layouts. Along with high ceilings, all the units will have galleries and central foyers and must will have at least two corner glass walls.

Related has also hired the interior designer Adam O. Tihany, whose work includes Le Cirque 2000, to design the building's lobby, which will feature curved wood walls, a frosted bronze mirror and a terrazzo floor with onyx inlays. Mr. Tihany is also designing the Imperial Club, a business, entertainment and fitness center for residents. Other planned amenities include valet service and garage parking for 100 cars.