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Condos on a West Village Triangle

By Jane Margolies March 11, 2016



Floor-through condos will occupy the second to fifth floors at 175 West 10th Street, with a duplex penthouse on top. Credit Rendering from Paperfarm

The first design for the building was too industrial-looking. The second was too glassy. But the third was just right.

At least that's how the design progressed for the seven-story condominium rising at the intersection of Seventh Avenue South and West 10th Street.

The site for the building, now known as 175 West 10th Street, is a small triangle that was created when Seventh Avenue was extended on a diagonal south from Greenwich Avenue in 1919, slicing through city blocks and leaving irregularly shaped lots on either side. Originally known as 130 Seventh Avenue South, the site is just over 2,900 square feet, with its longest side on the commercial thoroughfare.

Although triangular sites elsewhere in the city have given rise to extraordinary architecture — the Flatiron Building, for instance — the odd lots along Seventh Avenue were for many decades largely ignored by developers, who favored sites with more buildable sizes and conventional configurations. Gas stations and other single-story structures were erected on some of the sites. In 1937, the Texas Company built a one-story building on this lot, and over the years different businesses have occupied it, most recently a restaurant and nightclub named Veranda.

But with even challenging sites attracting developers lately, especially in prime locations, the lot caught the attention of Continental Ventures and Itzhaki Acquisitions (then the Keystone Group), which paid \$6.2 million for it in 2012. The developers hired IBI Group Gruzen Samton to design a building with retail space on the

ground floor and condominium residences above.

Because the site is in the Greenwich Village Historic District, the design required approval by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. But getting the go-ahead was not easy.

When Gruzen Samton's design was presented to the commission, the objections weren't to the idea of razing the 1937 building — its facade had been altered long ago — but to the height and industrial look of the design put forth to take its place.

The developers then asked BKSK Architects to take a crack at it. The firm is known for designing contemporary buildings that fit into the fabric of historic neighborhoods. But BKSK also ran into resistance when it presented to the commission its initial version, which had seven stories and a glassy facade. "They told us to trim the height," said George Schieferdecker, a partner of BKSK, "and go back and think harder about the masonry context of the site."

The architects did just that, knocking off a floor and adding details that "hint at" the historic buildings of the area, Mr. Schieferdecker said. In 2014, the commission signed off on a design for a triangular building with chamfered corners and an entrance on the intersection with West 10th Street. On the facade, horizontal bands of brownstone will stretch under windows. Three-foot-wide brick piers will climb to the roofline, which will be topped with a flat ribbon of gray-colored metal — a modernist riff on the elaborate cast-iron cornices in the area.

Floor-through condominiums of about 2,700 square feet will occupy the second to fifth floors, and a 2,860-square-foot duplex penthouse will have an upper level set back on the roof. Some of the awkward spaces resulting from the building's triangular shape will be absorbed in closets and mechanical spaces.

With the project a go, Greystone joined the development team, purchasing a majority stake. The building topped out in December, and Jeffrey Simpson, the chief executive of Greystone, said he expected it to be ready for occupancy by late fall or early winter.

Today, the site is swarming with construction workers, and a large sign trumpets "Full Floor Residences Starting at \$6.6 M." That starting price is for the second-floor unit, with prices ascending on higher floors to nearly \$10 million for the penthouse, according to Fredrik Eklund and John Gomes, the Douglas Elliman Real Estate agents overseeing marketing and sales. A sales gallery, with a model kitchen and baths, is expected to open this month at 137 Seventh Avenue South.