

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

The Dillon: Smith-Miller + Hawkinson

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As neighborhoods go, New York City's Midtown West (aka Clinton or Hell's Kitchen) is a microcosm of the city itself. Roughly carved between 34th and 59th Streets, from 8th Avenue to the Hudson River, it retains the grittiness of its immigrant roots with tenement buildings, warehouses, shops, restaurants, hospitals, and schools. It is also a stone's throw from the urban core of Manhattan — Broadway, Fifth Avenue, Times Square, Lincoln Center, Central Park, and the Midtown business district — making it ripe for gentrification, a process that has been evolving for about 20 years.



Most of the area's residential developments are configured for professional couples or single occupants, and include high-rise apartment towers that skirt the height-restricted blocks central to the community. But the Dillon, a recently opened seven-story condominium on West 53rd Street, is sized for families, too, referencing the historic urban fabric and scale of the location. Its protracted and folded south-facing curtain wall and diverse floor plans speak to new generations.



This in fill project, designed by Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects for the SDS Procida Development Group, features a 176,000-square-foot concrete structure on a sloping, 300-foot-long, L-shaped site.



Referring to such urban works as Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse, design principal Henry Smith-Miller worked closely with project architect Christian Uhl and executive architect Richard DeMarco of Montroy Andersen DeMarco to devise a livable, high-density scheme. What they came up with is an innovative 83-unit hybrid project comprising 52 unique layouts.

Nine triplex townhouses line the street on the building's east end, each having a dedicated entrance, backyard, and basement with adjacent parking space. Directly above, 22 duplexes — some with private roof rights — are organized along skip-stop corridors on the fourth and seventh floors to maximize the spatial potential of the volume. At the building's deeper west end, 52 studios and one- and two-bedroom apartments top the condo's common areas, an entrance to underground parking, and a loftlike, 6,000-square-foot commercial unit that fronts West 54th Street.



"It's packed with salable square feet," notes Smith-Miller. Indeed, all of the units are daylight-filled and have wood floors, spacious closets, and terrific kitchens and baths. Clearly, the architects have created equally pleasing residences that consider the needs of real New Yorkers. Since it opened in September, says developer Mario Procida, the Dillon is nearly 50 percent sold.

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