

Architectural stunner helps reinvent the West Side

By Jason Sheftell
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The Dillon, a new condominium that had its groundbreaking in 2008, has some stunning architectural moments. Taking up almost half of the north side of 53rd St. on a downhill slope between Ninth and 10th Aves., it makes an emphatic best-on-block statement in a neighborhood that's in the process of reinventing itself with better architecture and residential services.

Just north of Hell's Kitchen and west of midtown, the Dillon is two blocks from the West Side Highway and Intrepid and five blocks from the Time Warner Center and the entrance to Central Park. According to one of the building's developers, Mario Procida, that's only the half of it.

"The location works because this is a true residential neighborhood just minutes from the craziness of midtown," says Procida, who developed the building with Louis V. Greco Jr. "It's like this buffer so if you work in midtown and walk to work you can decompress. There's a school across the street, and you can just hop on the West Side Highway to get out of town. I think the scale of the building, though, is what makes it special. It's not that tall, and it appeals to all kinds of buyers."



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A trained architect, Procida knows how to build. He paid his dues building affordable housing before teaming with Greco to develop high-end high-design structures like **the Be@ brand** and the **Richard Meier building On Prospect Park**. The Dillon, sleek and smart with 54 different layouts for 83 total units, might be their best yet.

Nine townhouses occupy the eastern edge of the building. Each has street entrances and comes with a parking spot at its basement door, allowing owners privacy while living in what feels like a real home. A wall of glass at the back of each townhouse provides a “whoa” as you enter through the front door.

Designed by New York-based architects Smith-Miller+Hawkinson, the building shows clean lines and sharp angles, echoing slanted windows that add drama to the curtain wall facade and once mundane streetscape. The series of forms work with, not against, each other.

“There was nothing easy about constructing this building,” says Procida, who oversees the construction. “The size of the windows became an issue as we wanted them big and that complicated the facade. They open up several different ways to provide various flows of air. We used film on the lower portion of them that you can see in and out of from only certain angles.”

From the outside of the building, that makes people inside appear ghostly, like moving images on a blurry piece of art. Even the doorknobs have unique hardware. Glass bulkheads leading to the private roof space of each penthouse are like having your own private sculpture.



Sales, handled by Corcoran Sunshine, have been brisk of late. Procida reports the building over 50% sold with three penthouses and one townhouse in contract. Prices for the penthouses start at \$2.735 million, with townhouses listed starting at \$3.165 million. Spacious one-bedrooms in the back of the building sold first, going for around \$725,000. Today, one-bedrooms start at \$845,000 with studios costing \$655,000.

“Finishing any building in this climate is an accomplishment,” says Procida. “We put pride into everything we build and we want it to look good. We think it’s a gem.”

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