



PABLO ENRIQUEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Condos in 'Real New York'

An 82-unit condominium in the East Village where a church complex once stood.

By C. J. HUGHES

In the East Village, it became something of a guessing game: What would happen at Avenue A and East 12th Street, which languished as a dusty lot after the Mary Help of Christians Church complex was razed in 2013?

Now, there's an answer. The blockwide site is giving way to Steiner East Village, a seven-story brick condominium from Steiner NYC with 82 apartments and amenities that are rare in the neighborhood, like an indoor swimming pool and a library with a fireplace.

Douglas C. Steiner, Steiner's chairman, said he searched for seven years for a suitable site in the neighborhood, where big development parcels are rare. Mr. Steiner, who lived in the East Village from 2005 to 2014 before moving to Williamsburg, Brooklyn, refused to give up on an area that he finds "authentic and intriguing and eclectic" and fondly calls the "real New York."

Some residents were critical about the demolition of the complex, which included the 1917 church with its twin copper-topped bell towers, a Catholic school and a rectory.

After Mr. Steiner bought the site in November 2012 for \$41 million, pleading notes were left on the church's steps, urging him not to tear it down. Preservationists tried unsuccessfully to have the church designated a landmark after the Archdiocese of New York closed it in 2007.

"I think there were a few loud voices," Mr. Steiner said, downplaying the opposition.

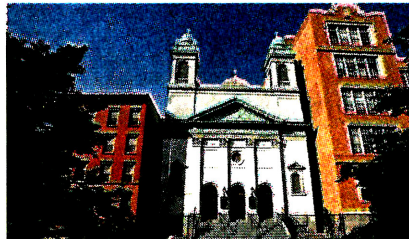
The project has been designed to suit its surroundings. Its facade is lined with bricks to better fit in with nearby apartment buildings that are more than a century old. In addition, windows are in the casement style, with neat grids of panes.

Designed by S9 Architecture, whose credits include designs for Brooklyn office buildings and Staten Island's New York Wheel, a take on a Ferris wheel that is scheduled to open in 2017, the condo offers units ranging from one-bedrooms, with an average of 753 square feet, to four-bedroom penthouses, with an average of 2,870 square feet. Most are two-bedrooms. All feature wine refrigerators, washers and dryers and radiant-heat bathroom floors. The eight penthouses have about 11- to 16-foot ceilings and private outdoor space.

In a neighborhood where condos are scarce and often small, the large L-shaped Steiner East Village takes its building amenities seriously. A 4,000-square-foot landscaped courtyard garden is overlooked by the swimming pool and library, which



RENDERING FROM WILLIAMS NEW YORK



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Douglas C. Steiner, top, is building a condo at Avenue A and East 12th Street, site of the former Mary Help of Christians complex.

will be adorned with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves and a marble fireplace. Residents can also relax on a planted 4,000-square-foot roof deck with views of the Empire State and Chrysler buildings.

The building will have a 10,000-square-foot storefront along Avenue A, where a playground for the church's school used to host a popular flea market.

The project was delayed in part because plans changed. A luxury rental building with 160 units was originally envisioned for the site, but banks were reluctant to back it since it was an untested product for the area, Mr. Steiner said.

Today at the \$206 million development, one-bedrooms start at about \$1.1 million and the priciest penthouse, a four-bedroom with 1,364 square feet of terraces, is \$11.25 million, with overall prices averaging \$2,100 a square foot, according to Mr. Steiner. Douglas Elliman Development Marketing is handling sales, which are set to begin later this month with the opening of a SoHo sales office.

In the East Village, condo pricing can vary. Generally, western locations that are closer to subway lines fetch higher prices, said Ari Harkov, an associate broker with Halstead Property Development Marketing who is active in the neighborhood. At 324 East Fourth Street, which is near Avenue C and far from trains, apartments are selling for about \$1,400 a square foot, he said.

Mr. Harkov noted the more centrally located 100 Avenue A, a new 32-unit condo near East Seventh Street with amenities like a Blink Fitness gym, is redefining the market. In mid-March, prices there averaged \$2,300 a square foot, according to a spokeswoman for 100 Avenue A, which Nest Seekers International is marketing.