

Rising East 79th St. Buildings Pay Homage to Pre-War Architecture

By [Amy Zimmer](#) | October 12, 2012 9:51am



MANHATTAN — Amid the grand pre-War buildings on the Upper East Side, two ultra-high-end residential towers, rising within a block of each other on East 79th Street, are making their mark not by adding sleek glassy silhouettes to the streetscape but by giving nods to the old.

[At 200 E. 79th St.](#), near Third Avenue, the 19-story building with 39 residences will evoke the area's pre-war aesthetic with its Indiana Limestone, granite and textured stone facade complimented by bronze-toned windows and articulated lintels, the designers explained.

"We as architects believe that the building should respect its context," explained Nancy Ruddy, principal of the Manhattan-based award-winning architecture and interior design firm, [CetraRuddy](#), she runs with her husband, John Cetra.

"The Upper East Side has all these really gracious pre-war buildings; there's a fabric of masonry and stone," she said. "We didn't want to replicate that era, but we studied what was lovely about pre-war details and interpreted into a modern vernacular."

Sales kicked off this week for Skyline Developers' 200 E. 79th St., with 1,920-square-foot three-bedroom homes ranging from just under \$3 million to 5,100-square-foot five-bedroom penthouses costing more than \$14 million.

Nearly an avenue away at 135 E. 79th St., [the condo replacing the Hunter School of Social Work](#) is using the now-rare art of pre-war craftsmanship of hand-laid brick for its limestone and brick exterior with cast-iron design elements. Its 30 sprawling two- to five-bedroom apartments will each take up a half floor in the 19-story building, according to the project's representatives.

Both buildings will have modern amenities and services, building reps said.

When families are expected to move into 200 E. 79th St. by the summer of 2013, they will be greeted by a lobby that embraces old world elegance: Sapele wood paneled walls accented by bronze frosted mirrors and a "gracefully patterned" light marble floor.

All the apartments have foyers, most have eat-in-kitchens or nooks, plentiful storage, separation of activities with family rooms, for instance, and laundry rooms, much like their pre-war forebears, Ruddy pointed out. There are elegantly proportioned base moldings; custom paneled, solid wood doors; bathroom vanities that look like dressing tables with nickel articulation; and panel oak floors inspired by a grand old Newport mansion Ruddy once visited, she said.

“It definitely feels like a cousin of pre-war. It was interesting to interpret pre-war and what’s gracious,” Ruddy said. “From a planning standpoint we really took what everyone loves about a pre-war building but adapted it for a modern building.”

Unlike glass towers, this building will provide residents with “more walls to put furniture up against,” she said, adding, “The Upper East Side is very dense. It’s not as if you’re looking out at a landscape... it gives you a little bit of privacy.”

But like many modern buildings, 200 E. 79th St. will have souped-up amenities, including a fitness center and gym with a basketball hoop, ping pong, ballet barre and yoga. Its residents’ lounge will overlook a landscaped terrace with private seating areas, a dining table and a landscaped pergola.

The Brodsky Organization hasn’t yet released too many details about the building its developing at [135 E. 79th St.](#), with interiors designed by Bill Sofield —who designs for Tom Ford, Bottega Veneta, Ralph Lauren and Harry Winston, among other luxury brands. But it is expected to reach a new level of luxury combining old touches, like private elevator landings, with modern understandings of room dimensions, according to reps.

Sales are expected to open this winter, with homes starting at roughly \$7 million.