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By **Steve Cuozzo**

New life's in sight for 9 W. 54th St., a pair of landmarked 19th-century red-brick townhouses that architects McKim, Mead and White designed to look like a single residence.



A deal to lease 9-11 W. 54th St. to an art gallery fell through amid COVID worries, but owner Skyline Development says it has offers from other prospective tenants.

The owner, Orin Wilf's Skyline Developers, hopes to land a single tenant for the entire vacant five-story, 25,000-square-foot property.

The 1896-vintage structures were built as a mansion for James Janius Goodwin, a business partner of J.P. Morgan.

They've also been home over the last century to a MoMA photography center, Rhodes Preparatory School for boys and US Trust Company bank. Wilf's firm bought it for \$75 million from J.D. Carlisle Development in 2019.

Wilf said London contemporary art gallery White Cube had all but signed a lease in 2020 "when the pandemic hit and they decided to slow things down."

Now, he said, "We're seeing a broad range of tenant types interested in making it their home." They include financial firms, embassies and art galleries. Newmark's William Cohen and Jeffrey Roseman are sifting offers.

The atmospheric interior boasts vestiges of Gilded Age New York and early twentieth-century banking. But Skyline will work with a tenant to tailor the space to current-day needs.

Skyline's offices happen to be in the adjacent 13-15 W. 54th townhouses, which were once owned by the Rockefeller family. They're also home to celebrated Italian restaurant Il Gattopardo — where, Wilf said, the new next-door tenant "will always have a private table" thanks to his friendship with Gattopardo managing partner Gianfranco Sorrentino.

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