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Glass and Steel to Invade Cast-Iron SoHo

By RONDA KAYSEN

SoHo, the downtown neighborhood known for its cast-iron lofts and 19th-century tenements, is about to get something with an uptown flavor: a glassy high-rise.

Sales are expected to begin this month for [One Vandam](#), a 14-story condominium that will rise on the Avenue of the Americas near Vandam Street and open in early 2015. The building's modern aesthetic will be a stark departure from the historic sensibility of the neighborhood, to the dismay of some residents and historic preservationists who fear it might dilute SoHo's rich character. The slim edifice may tower above its neighbors, but developers hope the novel height will entice buyers with promises of unobstructed skyline views.

"Who wouldn't want to wake up and make breakfast in this kitchen to this view?" asked Nicholas Silvers, a founding partner of [Tavros Capital Partners](#), standing in front of a wall-size photo of the skyline in a model kitchen at the sales office. Tavros is developing the 25-unit property with the Quinlan Development Group.

Because the building has no tall neighbors, the design provides natural light in nearly all rooms, including bathrooms and kitchens. From the seventh floor up, all units will have skyline views. In a nod to SoHo's industrial motif, most kitchens will have floor-to-ceiling pocket doors made of glass and steel.

Studio DB designed the interiors, employing materials from local designers like the Hudson Company, which made the quarter-sawn white oak flooring. Mathews Nielsen, a landscape architecture firm, designed a 6,400-square-foot second-floor common terrace, which wraps around a lounge and gym. Prices start at \$1.54 million, for a 737-square-foot one-bedroom. The smallest of three penthouses, a four-bedroom duplex with three terraces, is listed at \$15 million.

While the building has piqued the interest of luxury buyers, it has unnerved SoHo preservationists who perceive it as a looming eyesore that may cast shadows on the neighborhood, including nearby Vesuvio Playground. With an uneven facade made of glass, steel and a pale limestone called Alabama stone, the building is likely to stand out.

"It's about as out of place for this neighborhood as you could imagine," said Andrew Berman, the executive director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. "They're taking a page from the Trump SoHo book rather than the lovely brick-and-mortar, 19th-century landscape that's around."

The 46-story Trump SoHo at Spring and Varick Streets does dwarf its neighbors, but One Vandam is a fraction of the height. It is also narrower, sitting between a five-story apartment building and God's Love We Deliver, a nonprofit organization that is expanding to five stories. Nevertheless, One Vandam is unabashedly different from the industrial style of SoHo lofts.

"The kind of people who look for SoHo and want the real loft experience, that's not the kind of people who are buying these kinds of places," said Siim Hanja, a broker for Brown Harris Stevens who specializes in the SoHo market. "These are the new, slick, second or third homes for guys in financial services who don't have two seconds to rub together and just want a ready-made place."

Prices for a two-bedroom start at \$3.275 million, for a 1,557-square-foot unit. Three-bedrooms range in size from 2,026 to 2,432 square feet, with prices starting at \$5.25 million. All of the four-bedrooms have 2,261 square feet, with prices starting at \$6.25 million. The price has not yet been listed for the top penthouse, a 5,270-square-foot triplex that has nearly 2,000 square feet of outdoor space, an outdoor spa, three fireplaces and a private elevator.

Preservationists see One Vandam as emblematic of a shift toward high-rise development in the area west of SoHo and south of Greenwich Village, which is not protected by a historic designation. West Broadway marks the western boundary of the SoHo Cast Iron Historic District. The building will also be larger than current zoning rules permit, because its developers bought 19,000 square feet of additional development rights from God's Love We Deliver, which allowed them to build a wider structure. Despite the size, the developers point to taller buildings along the western side of Sixth Avenue as evidence that One Vandam will complement the area, not crowd it.

"The city is about tall buildings," said George Schieferdecker, a founding partner of BKSK Architects, which designed One Vandam. "This building strives to be a contemporary expression that has its roots in a lot of thought about traditional buildings."