

HOME FRONT

Developers making eco-friendly a habit

Lower Manhattan leads in high-end green towers, partly because of mandates

BY MARGARET JAWORSKI

FROM BASEMENT TO roof garden and countertops to closets, just about everything in Lisa Sharkey and Paul Gleicher's newly renovated Upper West Side brownstone is green.

Not the color green—though their living room sofa is sage—but the concept green, as in eco-friendly. In the Sharkey-Gleicher home, natural-clay plaster and fume-free paint covers the walls. The countertops and bathroom tiles are made of recycled glass and concrete. The house has mold-inhibiting insulation, a high-efficiency gas boiler, a triple-filtration water system, and a system that cleans the air and doubles as a vacuum.

Mr. Gleicher, an architect and the founder of Gleicher Design Group, says he plans to apply the wealth of experience he garnered during the 18-month renovation of his own home when he launches the subsidiary Gleicher Green Group.

"Before designing for others, I wanted to go through the process myself," he says. "So I became my

All Natural	
Green buildings in Manhattan.	
RENTALS	
THE SOLAIRE	20 River Terrace
TRIBECA GREEN	325 North End Ave.
THE VERDESIAN	211 North End Ave.
THE HELENA	601 W. 57th St.
THE EPIC	125 W. 31st St.
THE MOSAIC¹	10th Avenue and 51st Street
CONDOS	
1400 ON 5TH	
MILLENNIUM TOWERS²	Little West Street and First Place
1 RIVER TERRACE²	
IN DEVELOPMENT	
70 LITTLE WEST STREET	
RIVERHOUSE,	
1 ROCKEFELLER PARK	
<small>¹Completion in 2007. ²Occupancy in 2008.</small>	

own green-construction guinea pig."

From single-family brownstones to high-rises, New York's green scene is inching toward red hot.

Since 2003, six eco-smart apartment buildings have gone up in Manhattan; several more are under construction or being planned.

Tax credits, building incentives and lower utility costs help make the steeper up-front costs of building green—estimated at 3% to 15% more than traditional construction—more palatable.

On top of that, the eco-friendly mantle adds a marketing advantage at a time when consumers are increasingly concerned about energy costs, the environment and global warming.

"This is much more than a trend," says developer Bruce Becker, president of Becker + Becker Associates. "The industry is beginning to understand the tremendous economic, social and ecological benefits of building green."

Going fast

SEVERAL SOUGHT-AFTER investors scooped eight years ago when Mr. Becker first pitched his plan to build a green high-rise on the site of a former sanitarium on Roosevelt Island.

"They're sorry now," Mr. Becker says.

Finished this spring, Mr. Becker's Roosevelt Island baby, The Octagon, has reached 95% occupancy six months ahead of schedule.

Randy Cato moved into a studio unit there a few months ago. Though Mr. Cato wasn't necessari-



THE OCTAGON, on Roosevelt Island, filled up ahead of schedule.

green roof and the subsidized fitness center—and his minuscule electric bill.

"This summer, we averaged \$67 a month," Mr. Vesco says. "And that's while running the air conditioner 24/7."

Hooked

OTHER COMPLETED eco-friendly projects downtown include Tribeca Green, a 234-unit rental property, and The Verdesian, a 26-story building on the northern tip of Battery Park.

Further uptown, on West 57th Street

and 11th Avenue, is The Helena. The 37-story, 597-unit building, which was erected by notable green developer The Durst Organization, is fully occupied. Another half dozen such towers are under construction throughout the city.

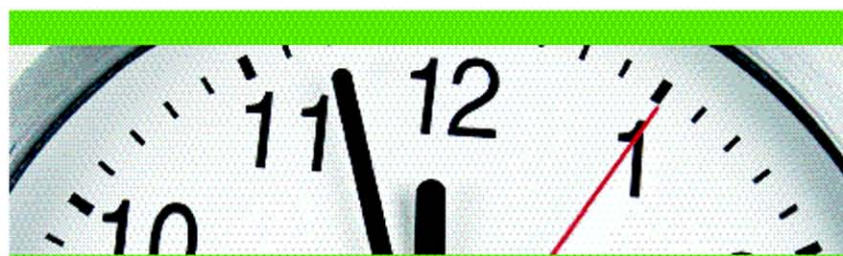
The concentration of green buildings in lower Manhattan does not necessarily reflect developers' environmental instincts. In 2000, the Battery Park City Authority instituted mandatory green guidelines for new residential buildings.

Even so, some developers bitten by the eco-bug are hooked.

"I will only do green projects," says Mr. Becker, who has proposed a mixed-use building in Connecticut.

And he's not just talking the talk: Last year, he traded in his BMW for the car of the moment, yep, a Prius.

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