

MAY 14-18

MEATPACKING DISTRICT

DESIGN

09



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This Project is seeking
LEED-CS designation

Charles Blachman and Morris Adjmi

The Developer and the Architect

We sat down with Charles Blachman, developer, and Morris Adjmi, architect, to discuss their project at 450 West 14th Street, The High Line Building. We got the conversation started by asking Mr. Blachman for a little history on how he came to develop some of the Meatpacking District's most recognizable buildings, that Soho House, Bumble and bumble, and Theory.



Charles Blachman: I ended up developing properties in the Meatpacking District because I used to visit the neighborhood in the mid-70s, and it was a very different place in those days. In the late 90s I was doing projects in West Chelsea and the West Village, so I would always pass through the neighborhood. I saw some of those same great buildings in a new light and thought, "Why not here?" I met Morris when the corner of 40 Gansevoort came on the market. It wasn't landmarked, but I wanted to be prepared in case it was designated during development. I asked around for recommendations, looking for someone who did landmarked buildings but with a newer, modern edge, and when I met Morris I liked him right away. 450 West 14th is not technically in the landmarked district, but it's important to me to preserve what is historically significant to the neighborhood.

Morris Adjmi: On our projects together in this neighborhood, one of the things Charles and I have tried to retain is the gritty character of the neighborhood. If that goes, a lot of the soul of the Meatpacking District will disappear. For 450 West 14th, we are doing the same thing, we want to make a bold statement while retaining the industrial qualities of the district and the memory of the railroad along the High Line.

CB: We could have re-clad the original structure with a new material, but we thought it was important to keep the feel of what it was – a depot for meatpackers where the train used to pull up and deliver meat – there were coolers and everything in there.

MA: And now I think it's really going to be the epicenter of the Meatpacking District because it's where the District and the High Line intersect, with the main entrance to the park right below the building. It's the only building where the structure of the High Line and the structure of the building are completely intertwined.

CB: There are many special features about the building: the design, the location, the LEED certification.

MA: The building has 360-degree views, and it straddles the High Line, which lets you see the park in a completely different way – looking down from above. The building is special because we were forced to keep the cores on the ends, as opposed to in the center where the High Line intersects the building, so we ended up with wide open floor plates, and you can see all the way through the building. Visibility is amazing, it's going to be really incredible for tenants.

CB: A lot of the tenants who have moved to the neighborhood lately are doing it because they recognize the brand and marketing value of it, and they feel that the neighborhood fits the image of their company and customers. Also the retail traffic should increase substantially when the High Line opens. It's going to be a big opportunity for the retailers because the main entrance to the High Line is right at our building. For office tenants the neighborhood is a great place to work. The building has a lot of open space, terraces, and at the High Line level, there is open space adjacent to the park, which is very unique and contributes to the environmental design of the building.

MA: We are really committed to sustainable design – we are targeting a LEED Gold certification – and we've worked closely with the LEED consultants as well as the mechanical engineers to ensure that the building is very efficient. We utilized the existing building, and set back the new construction from the edge to allow a space on the north and south for lots of green space for our tenants.



A



B



CB: One thing that a lot of people don't realize is that doing construction in high density places like Manhattan is by nature "green." Some inherent qualities that make the project environmentally friendly are the fact that people can access the site by public transportation, we're not cutting down trees, and we are incorporating the existing structure into the project. Not to mention the building's relationship park and the building's operable windows.

MA: Yes, the tenants are really going to enjoy the fact that on a nice day, they can open the windows, because typically new buildings are hermetically



C



D



E

A 450 West 14th Street, 1938

B The building draws upon the industrial aesthetic of the adjacent landmarked Historic Gansevoort District, utilizing brick, steel, metal spandrels and factory windows. The solid existing Art Deco base is juxtaposed with the modern framed glass and steel volume of ten stories that hovers above it. Glass wedge indentations on the North and South faces of its tower corroborate the dynamic and angled intrusion of the High Line below.

C The High Line Building at 450 West 14th Street, built in 1936, has an existing five-story masonry base that was a meat cold storage facility, which serviced the elevated railway that passes through the building. Left derelict for nearly 25 years, the High Line is undergoing a transformation and will open in June for its new life as a 1.5 mile long park that stretches Gansevoort Street up to 30th Street on the West side of Manhattan.

D As one of the primary architectural features along the first phase of the park's development, the building echoes the principles put forth by the High Line design team by utilizing LEED certified "Green Building" technologies and energy-saving materials and methods.

E The railway, now known as the High Line, operated in concert with the building from its construction until it stopped operating and was closed in 1980.

sealed. Since the floor plate isn't that deep, you'll be able to open the windows and get cross breeze – and there is certainly plenty of ventilation there! In terms of the construction, the building is now completely topped off, and we're starting to put windows on in the next month or so, and then you're going to really start seeing the form of the building.

CB: The office space is currently about 20% leased – and the building will officially open in October. It's very exciting that we'll be opening just a few months after the High Line park, and we're looking forward to being a part of that and everything going on in the neighborhood.

Did You Know? LEED

WHAT?

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System – more commonly known as LEED – is a series of standards that was developed to raise the bar for environmentally sustainable construction.

WHO?

In 1998, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) launched LEED. Robert K. Watson, a senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, was the founding chairman of the LEED Steering Committee, and the standards are continually updated in an open, transparent process by a group of thousands of member organizations.

WHERE?

Different versions of the LEED Rating System are available for different project types, including:

- Homes
- Neighborhood Development
- Commercial Interiors
- Core & Shell
- New Construction
- Schools, Healthcare & Retail

WHEN?

LEED is useful in all stages of a building's construction – users could include developers, architects, engineers, landscape architects and facilities managers.

WHY?

LEED was created to define "green building" by developing a common, universal standard. In addition, raising awareness of, promoting, and rewarding "whole building" design processes and environmental leadership in the construction industry has led to healthy "green competition" – which benefits everyone.