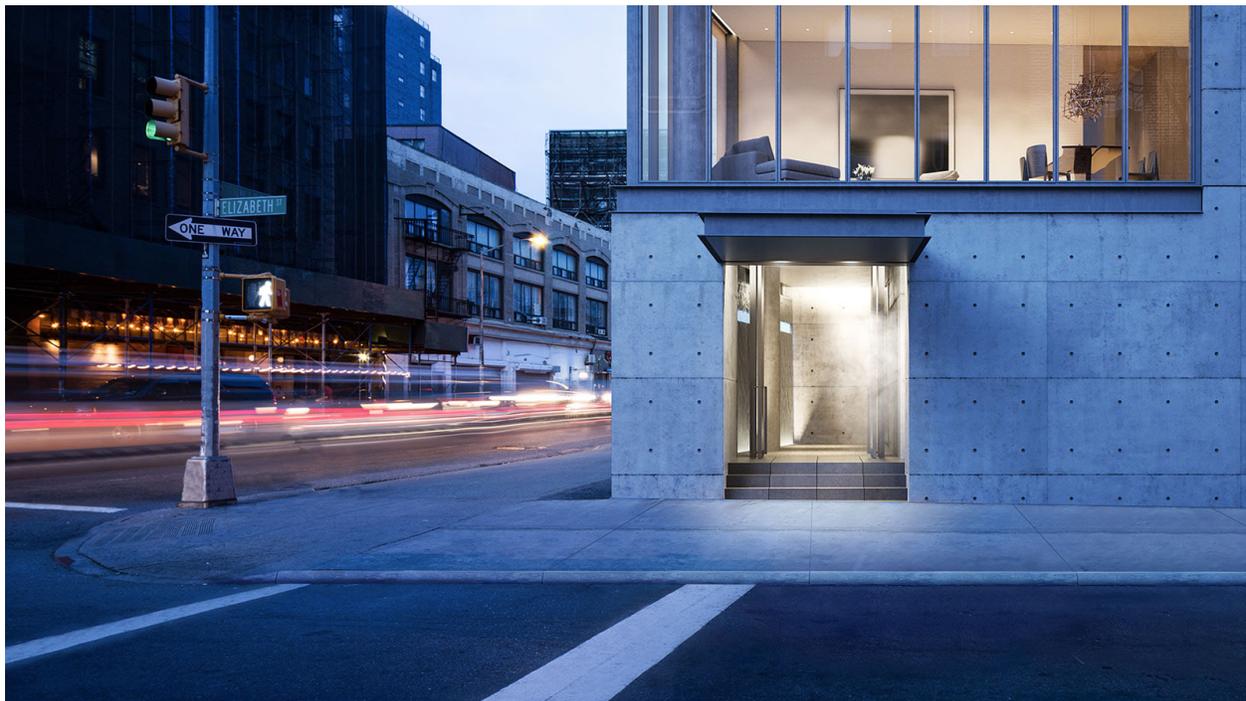


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A building about a beautiful corner in Manhattan

Tadao Ando redefines the condo in apartments conceived almost as vitrines in Nolita

by Edwin Heathcote March 2017



For most of the past century or so, no one really cared who designed Manhattan's apartment blocks. They were generic; what counted was location and size. But the starchitects have arrived in a big way. Now condos are marketed on their designers as well as their design, as creation as much as location. Most recently the High Line, the public park built on an abandoned elevated railway, has proved a kind of magnet for developers vying with each other to commission the starriest names. If this trend has led to a lot of unusual and distinctive shapes as architecture morphs into marketing, 152 Elizabeth looks completely different.

Commissioned by the development firm Sumaida + Khurana, the architecture aficionados, the emerging block in the North of Little Italy area looks like it might become one of the most elegant condo buildings the city has ever seen. Simple, self-effacing and beautifully proportioned, it is the work



of Tadao Ando, the Japanese architect. The one-time boxer who is now revered as a creator of serene museums and impeccable concrete surfaces, has designed an intriguing building that combines his familiar motifs with something of Nolita's particular blend of loft living and industrial construction.

This is a rational building that owes much to the simplicity of Soho's historic iron-framed buildings as well as the slick commercial architecture of 60s Midtown, yet it seems to slot comfortably on to the edge of Little Italy with its textures of fire escapes and cast-iron storefronts. It subtly evokes some of the earliest modernist architecture, the German



factories and industrial structures that employed glass curtain walls to bring light deep into the factory floor. The transparent block is then woven into the solid city block by being anchored in concrete on either side. This is a building about a beautiful corner.

Ando's buildings usually look inward, in the Japanese style, built for modesty and privacy. Here he turns brasher. The apartments are conceived almost as vitrines — these are lifestyles on show and, conversely, the city outside becomes the spectacle to be consumed through floor-to-ceiling glazing.

There is no arrogance here, no attempt to overwhelm or overscale. It is a building in proportion, exquisitely detailed and carefully tailored.

It is notoriously difficult to judge a building from even the best rendering but, whatever the outcome, you have to respect a developer who seems to commission through aesthetic desire rather than merely the desire for margin.

The show apartment for this development will be finished towards the end of March.

Renders: The Boundary and Noë & Associates

