

995 FIFTH AVENUE

architectural history



It's a fact: Living in a luxury apartment building on Fifth Avenue, across the street from the world-renowned Metropolitan Museum of Art and Central Park, is one of the best places to live not just in New York City, but in the world.

That is the enviable situation of residents of 995 Fifth Avenue, a white-glove co-op on the southeast corner of 81st Street. This 17-story edifice was built in 1926 by developer Morris H. Rothschild on what was primarily an empty site. Initial plans filed with the city stated the building would have 100 units, but Rothschild was able to acquire and demolish a private home on the adjacent lot, permitting him to increase the number of units to 120. It was to be a residential hotel called the Stanhope.

Rothschild commissioned Rosario Candela – an Italian-born architect whose name is now synonymous with elegant, graceful, generous and well-thought out apartment layouts – to design the building. The renowned Robert A.M. Stern, one of the most important architects alive today, sings Candela's praises: "The most amazing part of Candela's buildings are the plans of the apartments, which are very ingenious."

Over the years, quirky incidents at the hotel made news. In 1929, the *York Herald Tribune* reported, a hotel resident had to appear in court on a charge of "failing to muzzle her Pomeranian." In 1933, one of the oldest twins in America at the time – Mrs. Jeanette Lauchheimer – celebrated her 99th birthday in the hotel with 200 guests. After the party, a *New York Times* headline proclaimed that the happy nonagenarian hostess was "Ready to 'Do It All Over Again'."

In 1941, the hotel's then-owner, Jesse Sharp died, and his wife, Mrs. Evelyn Sharp inherited it and took over its management. The *New York Times* said it was believed that she was the only female operator of hotels in the country at that time. She set her

*transcending
the ordinary*

"I've always been fascinated by New York's prewar architecture and love to share their histories with the residents of these special buildings. Hope you enjoy!"

Deanna



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cap on attracting the high-end carriage trade, and in 1954 embarked on a three-year renovation plan that included redecorating all the rooms in red, white and blue. She also added 24-hour-a-day maid service, so that a woman arriving at the hotel could expect help in unpacking, pressing her gowns, or stitching a dropped hem, no matter what the hour.

Two decades later, there was an attempt to convert the hotel to co-ops. In June 1962, studios were offered for sale for \$7,820, one-bedrooms for \$18,020, and two-bedrooms for \$26,000. The conversion never happened and it remained a hotel. One memorable guest was The Beatles' Ringo Starr, who spent a night in the hotel with his wife and two sons in June 1969 after making a transatlantic crossing on the Queen Elizabeth 2.

The Stanhope's sidewalk café was beloved by New Yorkers and visitors alike. In 1979, Woody Allen used it as a location for a scene in his film "Manhattan," his black-and-white cinematic love letter to his favorite city.

In 1986, the Stanhope was identified in the *New York Times* as among the first to break the then-stratospheric "\$200-a-night" barrier. This report drew outraged Letters to the Editor. "We used to come into the city regularly," one letter-writer complained, "but high hotel costs have reduced our stays to day trips."

The Stanhope as we know it today – one of the finest apartment buildings in Manhattan – began in 2005 with its conversion to "a co-op with condo rules," according to the building's owner Extell Development. The firm brought in aristocratic British architect John Simpson to transform the building that we now know simply as 995 Fifth Avenue. Simpson bore impeccable credentials. He was the designer of the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace and the English residence of the late King Hussein and Queen Noor of Jordan.

Collaborating with the New York City architectural firm Cetra/Ruddy, Simpson carved 26 palatial apartments out of the hotel's 185 rooms and suites. Each apartment is either a half-floor or a full floor, with square footage ranging from 4,100 to 84,000 square feet. Every apartment looks over Fifth Avenue.

With luxurious spa, sommelier and concierge services, 995 Fifth provides caters to its residents' every whim. Undoubtedly Mrs. Evelyn Sharp – with her red, white and blue updating of the rooms – would be pleased at the gem her beloved Stanhope has become, better than ever as 995 Fifth Avenue.