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11 09.18.2013

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COURTESY NANCY OWENS STUDIO

NYC LUXURY RESIDENCES EMBRACE
HIGH-END LANDSCAPE DESIGN

APARTMENT & GARDEN

It may be an apartment building, but 101 Bedford Avenue has all the amenities befitting a luxury condo development. The

Williamsburg property offers a party room, wine vault, business center, recording studio, screening room, fitness center, indoor pool, bike storage area, parking garage, and pampering station for your beloved pooch.

There's more. The U-shaped building wraps a 15,000-square-foot courtyard that, once complete, will feature an undulating boardwalk that winds through patches of trees and flowering bushes.

"It was a great opportunity to create a garden experience **continued on page 15**



Starr Whitehouse's courtyard garden for W57



Future Green Studio integrated plantings into two developer buildings.

COURTESY STARR WHITEHOUSE



COURTESY FUTURE GREEN STUDIO

APARTMENT & GARDEN continued

from front page rather than a flat courtyard with planter boxes, which is what a lot of these buildings have," said the landscape architect Nancy Owens. "The developer wanted it to look like no other courtyard."

The property exemplifies a budding trend in New York that gives new meaning to the term urban jungle. Increasingly, developers of both rental and condo buildings are recognizing the value of distinctive landscapes, from lush rooftop terraces to organic gardening beds. While attracting tenants is the main impetus, designers cite additional factors: the LEED rating system; Mayor Bloomberg's initiative to "green" the city; and an overall cultural shift toward integrating nature into our daily lives.

"It's what people want," said Owens, noting that 101 Bedford Avenue marks her first developer project. "I've never sought out this type of work, but I think I will in the future."

Stephen Whitehouse, who has practiced in New York for three decades and co-founded the landscape firm Starr Whitehouse in 2006, says the now-ubiquitous rooftop terrace used to be the exception. Vegetable gardens and outdoor exercise areas were even more unusual. Today, clients feel these types of spaces are essential, "as they contribute to the overall value of a property," he said.

Whitehouse's firm conceived the landscape design for one of Manhattan's most-adventurous residential projects: W57, the

tetrahedral-shaped edifice by Bjarke Ingels Group. Its sloping courtyard is nearly the size of a football field, and once the property opens in 2015, you might actually catch residents playing with their balls in the vast open space, which will include a verdant meadow and grove of birch trees.

"The original idea was that this would be a building built around a central park, where people can sunbathe, barbecue, and play," said Laura Starr, co-founding partner at Starr Whitehouse.

The developer, Durst, is hoping this desirable feature will help compensate for W57's location on the far West Side. "When you're not right in the thick of things," said company spokesman Jordan Barowitz, "you need to have an

amenities package that will entice residents."

Location wasn't a problem for the design and development firm DDG Partners when it set out to design 41 Bond, a boutique condo building in Noho. Still, it wanted to create singular architecture with a profound landscaping component. It turned to Brooklyn-based Future Green Studio to help execute its vision.

The result: an elegant, bluestone-clad building with an array of foliage—ferns, ivy, moss—sprouting from balconies, window boxes, and the parapet. Moreover, the entrance awning is topped with vegetation, as is the roof. "We were looking for any opportunity where we could poetically insert landscape into the space," said David Seiter, Future

Green's founding principal.

The effect was so successful that the two firms teamed up again to envision another landscape-infused condo building on Ninth Avenue. The property, 345 Meatpacking, was recently finished, and its 37 units are already sold.

Architect Peter Guthrie, head of design and construction for DDG, said incorporating greenery into urban dwellings is nothing new. He notes a movement in the 1800s to let ivy grow on West Village buildings, and the potted plants that have long decorated city fire escapes. "What we're doing is making it a little more permanent," he said. "The creation of a natural feeling, that's what we strive for in our architecture."

JENNA M. MCKNIGHT