

Power Lunch

Kelly Kennedy Mack, president of Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group, joins internationally renowned architect Richard Meier at his West Side offices for a fascinating discussion on inspiration, innovation and the future

KELLY KENNEDY MACK: Corcoran Sunshine has had the pleasure of working with you on many different residential buildings over the years—173/176 Perry, 165 Charles Street and the newest addition to the collection, Richard Meier On Prospect Park. Where do you find your inspiration when approaching a new residential building?

RICHARD MEIER: There are two things. It is important to me as an architect to consider the relationship between a new building and the existing context that is around it, and to enliven its surrounding community by virtue of its presence.

Having worked on the West side for 25 years, I'm constantly enamored with the quality of light here. There's no place in New York City where you have the ability to see the sunset the way you do from the West side. When we created 173/176 Perry, none of the residential buildings had really taken advantage of the incredible light, so I did. In addition, the buildings created something of a "gateway" for the West Village. It's a place of arrival on the West Side, where people jog and stroll with baby carriages. I have so many people say to me "I run up and down the West Side Highway, and these buildings are my milestone." That sense of place is ultimately very inspiring.

KKM: Community is clearly an important factor in both your residential and public work. How do you bring that sense of community to your multi-unit residential developments?

RM: Community spaces within a building are extremely important. Today, people expect amenities within the building, not just a nice yard. At Charles Street, there's a swimming pool, a gym and a small screening room. At Prospect Park, we have a fantastic roof terrace that tenants will use, and a 30,000-foot fitness club, which even includes a basketball court. Residents have a lot of spaces to lounge and socialize in. I think it's important to make these spaces available to everyone, not just one resident who happens to own a floor, such as the penthouse.

KKM: The real estate landscape has changed dramatically in Manhattan, as well as Brooklyn, since your first ground-up residential building was completed in 2002. New development has energized virtually every neighborhood in New York. It is such an exciting time to be a part of it.

RM: It's great. I love New York. It's constantly changing, and I like



Kelly Kennedy Mack, president of Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group, with Richard Meier, principal of Richard Meier & Partners

all the changes. That's the nature of New York. A long time ago, I shared a studio on the Lower East Side, and I knew that area. If you go to the Lower East Side today, it's unbelievable how it's totally transformed. I just read about a new development on 124th Street. That's what makes New York exciting.

JOSH LEHRER

KKM: Also, the type of architecture that is being developed is more diverse than ever.

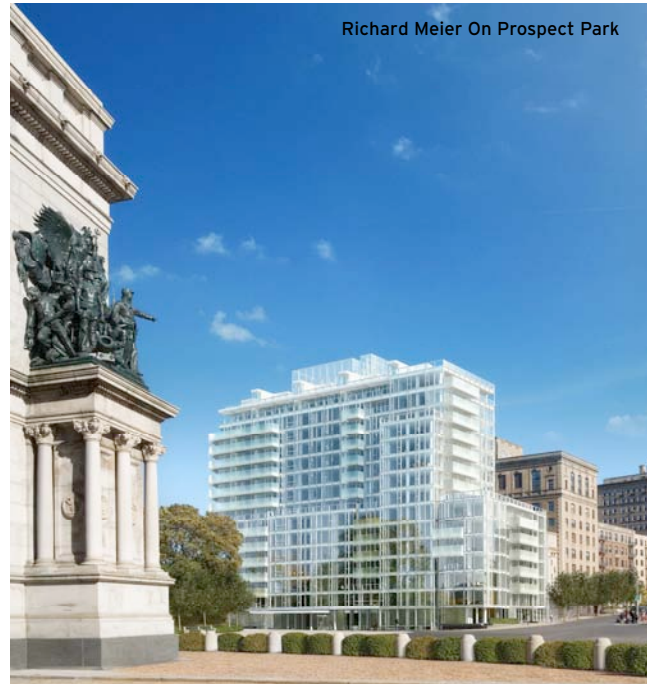
RM: There's a greater awareness about architecture than there ever has been.

KKM: Why do you think that is?

RM: There are a huge number of shelter magazines. People love looking at other people's homes. It's voyeurism born from curiosity. That is much more prevalent in residential architecture than in commercial architecture.

KKM: Architects are becoming pop culture personalities now. Having won the Pritzker early in your career, you have always been widely recognized. What advice would you give to architecture's emerging talents?

RM: You have to be involved in the urban situation and building in the city. Doing a small, one-off house may make your reputation, but that's not what's important.



Richard Meier On Prospect Park

“The biggest change in technology has been in energy conservation. People think that glass buildings are inefficient in that sense, but it's just the opposite. Conservation issues are very much a part of the design process.” —Richard Meier

KKM: Was there something about the site of On Prospect Park (in Brooklyn) that made it particularly suited for a Richard Meier design?

RM: Absolutely. Unlike most sites in Brooklyn, it's open to the park, as well as the museum, and the library across the street. It is a very central location, but also very accessible. The site has morning and afternoon light that makes it totally unique—it would be different even down the street.

KKM: Is there a recent technological innovation that has changed how you design a building?

RM: The biggest change in technology has been in energy conservation and how we achieve that. People think that glass buildings are inefficient in that sense, but it's just the opposite. They have innate efficiencies. Conservation issues are very much a part of our design process, and we are very sensitive to them. Going forward, we plan to hold almost every project that we're working on to L.E.E.D. certification standards. If you have environmental concerns in mind, you can create a sustainable design.

KKM: You are involved with many different types of projects

being built all over the world—both public and private, large and small. Do you tend to gravitate towards one more than another?

RM: No. I keep saying we're not going to do anymore private houses, but somehow we are. We're doing 6 houses in China, 21 houses in Bodrum, off the coast of Southern Turkey, a small house in Palm Beach and a few other small houses in the Dominican Republic. There is no way that I could say I won't be doing a certain kind of project because I will end up doing it, and I won't make sense.

KKM: Is there one particular project that you are most proud of?

RM: It's hard to pick just one thing. The Getty Center is going to be there for a long, long time, and anyone who goes there just enjoys the experience. It was 12 years of my life well spent. The museums I have done are so important to the communities in which they reside. It's hard to say just one thing. ♦

On Prospect Park is Richard Meier's first residential development in Brooklyn. For more information on the property, please visit www.OnProspectPark.com