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BUILD

A Supertall on Fifth Avenue, Eager to Be a Good Neighbor

The building, to be known as 520 Fifth Avenue, is adorned with setbacks and arches, nods to classic New York City architecture.



At 1,002 feet, 520 Fifth Avenue is the second tallest building on Fifth Avenue after the Empire State Building. Katherine Marks for The New York Times



By **Matt Yan**

Matt Yan climbed a ladder to one of the future penthouses, with a view of the Empire State Building.

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A new mixed-use skyscraper in Midtown, embellished with arches and terraces, is set to pierce through New York City's skyline, adding another supertall to the mix.



The mixed-use building, to be known as 520 Fifth Avenue, will include a members club called Moss, office spaces and residences. Katherine Marks for The New York Times

The new tower, to be known as 520 Fifth Avenue, topped out this week. At 1,002 feet, the building is the second tallest on Fifth Avenue after the Empire State Building. It's also the tallest residential building on Fifth Avenue, and is slated to be completed in 2026, with phased occupancy starting next year.

Rabina, a Manhattan-based developer, collaborated on 520 Fifth Avenue with Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF), an architecture firm with a portfolio of other supertalls, like One Vanderbilt in Midtown and the Lotte World Tower in Seoul. Suffolk handled the construction, while Vicky Charles, a Soho House alum with celebrity-clienteles like George and Amal Clooney, David and Victoria Beckham and Harry Styles, oversaw the interior design.



A rendering of the office spaces. Nearly all of them will have private outdoor space. Binyan Studios

Nestled at the corner of 43rd Street and Fifth Avenue, the slender structure, which sits on a quarter-acre lot, is adorned with arches and setbacks, nods to classic New York City architecture. The arches are made from glazed terra-cotta on the lower floors, before switching to painted aluminum with bronze extrusions on higher floors. The building resonates with nearby buildings like Grand Central Terminal, the Fred F. French building and the Century Association next door, said James von Klemperer, the president and design principal at KPF.



A rendering of the building, which is adorned with arches and setbacks, both nods to classic New York City architecture. Binyan Studios



A rendering of one of the rooms in the amenity suite, which is on the 88th floor. Binyan Studios

The building has office space on the ninth through 34th floors and residences from the 42nd to 80th floors. Two floors above and below the lobby and retail space, there will be a members club called Moss, featuring a dining program in collaboration with the Union Square Hospitality Group, helmed by Danny Meyer, along with other amenities like a spa and athletic club. And on the 88th floor — named because it's 880 feet high — residents will have access to an amenity suite, complete with a solarium, a game room with a vintage billiards table and a private dining room.

“We took the top floor of the building, which is the most valuable residential floor, and turned it into a common amenity,” said Ian Klein, senior vice president and the head of development at Rabina. “Whether you’re buying on the 40th floor or the 70th floor, you can still go up and enjoy that view.”



The building is slated to be complete in 2026. Katherine Marks for The New York Times

Sales for the residences, which are one- to four-bedrooms, were launched earlier this year by Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group and started at \$1.7 million for a one-bedroom. As of last week, 70 percent of units were sold, according to a publicist for the building.

The design of the residences are about “really great quality, like a blank canvas,” said Ms. Charles, the co-founder of Charles and Co. “If you think about furniture like the clothes on the body, you’re creating a healthy body to be dressed.”

The offices, however, are meant to feel like an extension of the home, with private, gender-neutral restrooms, outdoor space on nearly all the floors, separate HVAC systems on each floor and even windows that open — in case you need some fresh Midtown air. When designing the offices, Ms. Charles had to rethink her approach, especially because she started the initial process before the pandemic and the rise of remote work.



An estimated 2,500 construction workers will have worked on the job site by the time the project is complete. Katherine Marks for The New York Times

By the time the project is complete, an estimated 2,500 construction workers will have worked on the job site, said Chris Koehnken, a project executive at Suffolk, with a typical day having 300 to 325 people on site. But now that the building is topped out, which means that the highest concrete floor is finished, the crane can come off and the elevators can start, Mr. Koehnken said.

“It’s also a sign of things to come, like we’re there,” he said. “We’re in a new phase of the project and a lot more activity on site, but we’re that much closer to the end of the tunnel.”



James von Klemperer stands on the outdoor space of a future office floor. Katherine Marks for The New York Times

James von Klemperer, KPF, president and design principal

I think all tall buildings, especially, have a kind of responsibility that goes beyond the program and the site. Because once you emerge into the skyline in a significant way, which this building will, the skyline is almost viewed, I think, by us New Yorkers as public property. If you put up a terrible profile on the skyline, everybody has to look at it from uptown, downtown, Long Island, New Jersey. And it's very subjective, but we feel we should be doing something to grace the skyline, not to give it some defect.



Ian Klein stands outside in the unfinished building, with the Empire State Building behind him. Katherine Marks for The New York Times

Ian Klein, Rabina, senior vice president and head of development

A first-order principle for us was: Don't do a glass and metal curtain wall building, which is what everyone expects you to do in Midtown. I think that was somewhat prompted by the residential because we wanted to give it somewhat of a more comfortable feel. But I think it was also just a reaction against what people identify as a somewhat commodified form of real estate development — to try and do something that felt distinctive and unique and also kind of human.



Vicky Charles stands near one of the building's arched windows. Katherine Marks for The New York Times

Vicky Charles, Charles & Co., interior designer

When things don't feel comfortable, it's a subconscious thing. Sometimes that might just be the lighting is too bright or too harsh or the colors are too cold. You can't really describe why you don't like it, but it just doesn't feel quite right. We just wanted to make sure that same language comes through in all the spaces, that it's softer, it's warmer.



Chris Koehnken stands on the construction bridge on the 75th floor. Katherine Marks for The New York Times

Chris Koehnken, Suffolk, project executive

The nice thing with these projects is you look at them, and I can stand there and identify: 'I remember how that was a challenge or this was a challenge, and what we had to change here; or what this originally was and now how it looks.' Those are the things I get out of when I look at a building. It's a sense of accomplishment that there might have been some issues getting there, but we ultimately solved the riddle.