The New York Times

THE HIGH END

From Slacks to Square Footage

A 42-story tower rises on the site of the flagship Syms discount clothing store in Lower Manhattan.

A rendering of the completed tower. Binyan Studios

By Jane Margolies

May 11, 2019

Perhaps you remember the late Sy Syms, founder of his namesake discount clothing chain, intoning "An educated consumer is our best customer" in commercials. Maybe you even shopped at a Syms before the company declared bankruptcy in 2011 and shuttered its stores.

But now, two years after the squat Syms flagship on Trinity Place in Lower Manhattan was demolished, a 42-story tower is rising in its place. The clothing company has reinvented itself as a real estate concern named Trinity Place Holdings, and 77 Greenwich, consisting of a 90-unit condominium atop a new public elementary school, is its first foray in construction. The sales office opens this month.

Mr. Syms himself cobbled together the site — which includes the footprint of the old store as well as the Robert and Anne Dickey House, an 1810 landmark rowhouse that sits next to it — as well as enough air rights from neighboring buildings for the new tower to reach 500 feet.

Trinity Place Holdings, for its part, brought together a team of local architects: FXCollaborative, whose Statue of Liberty Museum opens this month, designed the building; Deborah Berke Partners took charge of the residential interiors; and Future Green Studio will landscape outdoor spaces.

The building has yet to top out, but its two-part form already reflects the main uses to be contained within. The eight-story cast-stone base will house the school, which will also spread into the Dickey House, whose interior is now gutted. That Federal-style building has Flemish bond brickwork and a rare bowed facade and was originally built as a mansion for a merchant's family. The School Construction Authority will turn the shell of the building into a school fronting on Trinity Place.

If the lower portion of the building feels solidly rooted in the neighborhood's masonry architecture and history, the slender faceted-glass tower shooting up from the ninth floor aspires to be a part of the sky.

Rendering of a living room on a high floor in 77 Greenwich that takes in views of the Hudson River, the Battery and beyond. Binyan Studios

The entrance to the residential portion of the building will be on Greenwich Street, opposite the unlovely Battery Parking Garage. The lobby, with ribbed oak walls and ceiling, has been designed to whisk residents from street noise to "serenity," said Ms. Berke, the eponymous founder of her firm and dean of the Yale School of Architecture.

Upstairs in the apartments, which range from one- to four-bedroom units, with two- and three-bedrooms predominating, things open up dramatically. Many new residential buildings on Manhattan's west side afford views of the Hudson River, as this one does. But it's rare to be able to also look south, to the Battery and, beyond it, the bay.

Dan Kaplan, senior partner at FXCollaborative, ensured that every apartment would glimpse that view with angled glass on the southern and western facades of the building. The interior finishes, which include pale-colored marble and oak and sycamore millwork, are intended to enhance the feeling of light and air. All apartments will have powder rooms.

Building-wide amenities include a dog run on the 9th floor with a view of Trinity Church, and a large lounge, children's playroom and gym on the top floors of the building, along with a 3,600-square-foot landscaped roof.

Of course, the school is the amenity that may be of greatest interest to families in the building, not to mention the neighborhood, which is increasingly residential. It is expected to open in 2022 and offer 450 seats from pre-K through fifth grade.

Rendering of a lounge on one of the top floors of the building, where there will also be a children's playroom and a gym. Binyan Studios

Matthew Messinger, chief executive of Trinity Place, expects the residential portion of the building to be completed next year. Apartment prices start at $1.7 million, which gives renewed meaning to this stretch of Greenwich Street, which was once known as Millionaire's Row.

Mr. Messinger, who like the rest of Trinity's current leadership, has expertise in the real estate, not clothing, industry, said there are no members of the Syms family left at the company. But Trinity holds the intellectual property assets of the Syms business, including the rights to Filene's Basement, a chain that Syms acquired in 2009. Although the Filene's stores, too, closed after the parent company folded, Trinity has recently revived the business as an online entity.

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/11/realestate/from-slacks-to-square-footage.html