

**BIG DEAL**

## Inside the Box

By WILLIAM NEUMAN

**L**OUISE SUNSHINE, the real estate marketing powerhouse who handles sales for many of the city's new luxury condominiums, has entered a new dimension.

Square feet, that archaic measure of living space, is passe. Ms. Sunshine has begun to measure her best properties by the cubic foot.

The cubic revelation came to Ms. Sunshine earlier this month, after she began marketing a new condominium conversion under way in the former Helmsley Windsor Hotel at 58th Street and the Avenue of the Americas, which has a unique penthouse apartment designed by the architect Charles Gwathmey, with 25-foot ceilings. The mundane fact of the apartment's 3,414-square-foot floor plan did nothing to convey all that headroom. But 62,500 cubic feet — now that's living space.

The penthouse — Ms. Sunshine prefers to call it a rooftop home — has been repriced accordingly. Originally listed at \$9 mil-

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Sunshine Group

**UP ON THE ROOF**

A rendering of the penthouse apartments at Windsor Park by Gwathmey Siegel.



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lion, it is now listed at \$16.25 million, or a mere \$260 a cubic foot.

"When you say something has  $x$  amount of cubic feet, it automatically implies it has a great deal of volume, and it implies the wall space necessary to hang your great contemporary art and it also implies views and views and views," said Ms. Sunshine, chairwoman of the Sunshine Group.

The doyenne of the latest best thing in real estate, Ms. Sunshine is so taken with the idea that she plans to apply it to the other developments she is working on, like the new Richard Meier building under construction at 165 Charles Street, in the West Village, where the 4,365-square-foot penthouse is priced at \$20 million. That computes to \$4,581 a square foot. Ms. Sunshine, however, now prefers to think of the Charles Street penthouse as a 60,000-cubic-foot rooftop home priced at just \$333 a cubic foot.

All of which is separate from the singularity of Mr. Gwathmey's penthouse. While Mr. Gwathmey's modernist homes normally sit on landscaped plots in suburbs or by the beach in the Hamptons or Malibu, Calif., this one will look down on Midtown from the top of a 15-story building put up in 1926 by the architect Rosario Candela.

Plans are to split the two-story addition into upper and lower penthouse units, each with four bedrooms, five-and-a-half bathrooms and two fireplaces. The top unit has the 25-foot vaulted ceilings.

The lower unit, which has a large L-shaped terrace with a view of Central Park, has 12-foot ceilings in the living room, dining room and bedrooms, and seven-and-a-half- and nine-foot ceilings in the kitchen and bathrooms. It is priced at \$13 million. Ms. Sunshine was not immediately able to provide a cubic footage for the unit, which is listed at 3,917 square feet in the offering plan.

Mr. Gwathmey, whose firm is known as Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects, said designing the penthouses was "like building one of our houses on a roof." And while the units are made to function separately, in his architect's heart he harbors a quiet hope that they might find a buyer interested in joining them into a unified creation.

"If somebody wished, they could, of course, buy both floors, make an 8,000-square-foot house," Mr. Gwathmey said. "It'd be pretty amazing, to have a duplex and have the whole roof, have no one living over you and the sense of no one under you, and have that kind of architectural enrichment and unique space at the top of the building."

Mr. Gwathmey has also designed the other 101 apartments in the building, which is being called Windsor Park by Gwathmey Siegel. They include seven duplex units with double-height ceilings (think extra cubic footage) and floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the corner of 58th Street and Avenue of the Americas. The duplexes cost from \$3.3 million to \$3.6 million.

The condos went on sale the day before Thanksgiving. Ms. Sunshine said that contracts had been drawn up for 42 of them and that about half of those had been signed. Ms. Sunshine works for the developers Yitzchak Tessler and Meyer Chetrit, who bought the building from Leona

Helmley in November 2003, for \$57 million. According to Mr. Tessler, who plans to move into one of the duplexes, they have budgeted \$40 million for the building's conversion to condominiums.

One of the design challenges presented by the project was that, while the building is only a block from Central Park, its views are partly obstructed by taller buildings to the north, including the Trump Parc, at 40 stories, directly across 58th Street, and the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 35 stories, at the southeast corner of Avenue of the Americas and Central Park South. Views of the park are limited to the corridor along the Avenue of the Americas, and the architect's response was to emphasize those sightlines by giving the high-ceiling upper penthouse an outsized window in the northeast corner.

The view and its limitations, however, are also a challenge to the building's marketing campaign. Ms. Sunshine has been a pioneer in the use of computer-generated simulations that show not-yet-completed apartments in exquisite detail, fully imagined with furnished rooms and art on the walls. And simulated apartments come with simulated views.

The promotional material for the Windsor Park includes a lifelike image of the upper penthouse's living room, with an expansive view of Central Park and the Upper East Side through its oversized window. A corner of the Ritz-Carlton is tucked unobtrusively out a side window, as it might appear if the penthouse had been moved a block north, to Central Park South. But a trip to the building's roof, where workers are preparing the steel underpinnings for the Gwathmey penthouses, revealed a more limited perspective: a modest wedge of park, with the Ritz-

Carlton prominent in the foreground.

But for New Yorkers familiar with the Midtown skyline, the faux view in the computer images is disconcerting for another reason: the angles seem all wrong, prominent buildings seem out of place. A possible answer to that riddle can be found by visiting the Web sites of the Sunshine Group — [sunshinegroup.com](http://sunshinegroup.com) — and of another development she helped promote, the Time Warner Center — [onecentralpark.com](http://onecentralpark.com). Those Web sites use a strikingly similar swath of parkside skyline to suggest the views from the much taller Time Warner Center at Columbus Circle.

Ms. Sunshine said that she was not aware of any discrepancy, but that interested buyers can judge for themselves. "Let them go up and see the view," she said.

Mr. Tessler insisted the views in the computer image are accurate. "It's just a rendering," he said. "It's not a real shot." He added: "Nobody tried to deceive anybody."

Mr. Gwathmey said his firm provided floor plans and other materials to a graphics consultant who worked with Ms. Sunshine to produce the image. "I think the renderist took a liberty on the diagonal," he said about the way the Ritz-Carlton appears to shrink out of the picture.

In the end, the expanded internal horizon of the penthouse, made manifest in cubic feet, may be all that is needed. Ms. Sunshine plays a central role in shaping the developments she markets, and her genius has always been for seeing things, not so much as they are, but as they will be. Ms. Sunshine said the Gwath-

mey penthouses are the start of a new trend. "I believe on the top of every great roof," she said, "now there's going to be a great home."

## Even the Developer Wants In at Time Warner

Stephen M. Ross, the chairman and chief executive of the Related Companies and one of the developers of the Time Warner Center, plans to live in the top floor penthouse in the complex's south building, according to two executives involved in the development.

"My understanding is it is his plan to buy it," said Bruce L. Warwick, president of Columbus Center L.L.C., the company that developed the property for Related and its partner, Apollo Real Estate Advisors.

Mr. Warwick declined to give details of Mr. Ross's purchase, but he confirmed that the developer would be paying the \$30 million price listed for the 8,274-square-foot penthouse in the condominium's offering plan.

Mr. Warwick said that Mr. Ross is not expected to close on his apartment until late next year, when the interior work will be completed.

The Time Warner Center was named best new building of the year at a ceremony held Wednesday by the Municipal Art Society, which gave the development a 2004 Masterworks Award. At the ceremony, Lee Neibart, a senior partner at Apollo, the co-developer, said Mr. Ross would be moving into the building. Contacted through a spokesman, Mr. Ross declined to comment.