

**Mercer 40 Residences**, an \$80 million luxury condominium in the artistic Soho Historic District in Lower Manhattan, offers modern glamour and amenities while blending in with the neighborhood's mercantile context.

"[During construction] it was one of the most expensive, high-end condominiums in New York City," says Bill Frederick, executive vice president of construction manager Pavarini McGovern of New York. "It was very unique and gathered a lot of attention."

Pavarini McGovern broke ground on the 156,000-sq-ft project in January 2005 for EMJ Development, First Parking, Goldman Sachs/Whitehall, and Hines, all of New York. The company wrapped up

construction in November 2007.

Architectures Jean Nouvel of Paris, France, designed the glass-clad structure, with SLCE Architects of New York serving as production architect. While strikingly modern in appearance, the building is rooted in historic detail. Research indicated three buildings sat on the block in the early and mid-19th Century.

In keeping with that fact, Mercer 40

gives the appearance of multiple buildings. Red glass graces the corners on one side of the structure and dark blue the other. Two-thirds down the Grand Street façade, a setback creates the illusion of separate buildings. In addition, the 13-story tower rises above a portion of the structure giving the appearance of yet another building.

Despite its contemporary look, the

### Key Players

**Owner:** EMJ Development, First Parking, Goldman Sachs/Whitehall, Hines, all of New York

**Construction Manager:** Pavarini McGovern, New York

**Design Architect:** Architectures Jean Nouvel, Paris, France

**Production Architect:** SLCE Architects, New York

**Interior Designer:** Roman and Williams Bldg. & Interiors, New York

**Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Engineer:** Cosentini Associates

**Structural Engineer/Exterior Wall Consultant:** Gilsanz Murray Steficek, New York

**Excavation/Foundation Sheet piling and Dewatering:** Laquila Construction, Brooklyn, N.Y.

**Superstructure Concrete:** DiFama Structures, Brooklyn, N.Y.

**Curtain Wall:** Enclos Corp., Brookfield, Conn.



project received unanimous approval by the city Landmarks Preservation Commission. Mercer 40 replaced a parking lot.

"The building is in the rhythm of the other buildings, in the same scale," Nouvel said in its application. "It integrates into the architecture of the old neighborhood."

Frederick describes the foundation work as fairly difficult, requiring dewatering. The project includes two underground levels, a parking garage and support space with a spa. The team placed sheeting and shoring along three sides of the building and erected a concrete sheer wall at the north end, alongside an existing building.

The concrete-frame building includes a sixth-floor setback with a garden area, bathhouse and 50-ft lap pool, wood-paneled gymnasium and a lounge on the

amenities deck. In addition, several units have private pools.

The lobby features a three-dimensional mural imported from France and attached to the back of glass panels. It gives the feeling of standing in a forest, Frederick says. Mirrored wall light boxes house theater-style lighting, and a mirrored glass panel wall runs the length of the lobby.

The exterior boasts a unique curtain wall system, created by Enclos Corp. of Brookfield, Conn.

"Many of the units have a wall in the curtain wall system that slides open, allowing air into the living room area of the apartment," says Frederick. The system required special gasketing to keep water infiltration out, he adds.

The largest opening window is 11 ft high by 20 ft long. The windows operate at the touch of a button. All windows in-

clude recessed shades to provide uniformity from the street and blackout shades in the bedrooms. Each assembly unit weighs 1,100 lbs.

Most of the residences feature a sliding wall bookcase, which can close to create a private bedroom or study. The aluminum-framed wood panels attach at the top to a track and are hung from a steel frame with a guide track installed flush with the wood flooring. Installation required tolerances of less than .5 in. to ensure proper functioning. Floor-to-ceiling heights are 14 ft.

"This was a home run," said one judge. "By far the best residential project in New York."