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A Classical Comeback: New developments abundant in prewar architectural details

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To look at the newest buildings rising in the Manhattan skyline, one would think New York City will be overrun with characterless glass towers that rise at the expense of beloved local architecture. However, that would be an incorrect assumption.

At the same time supertalls were on the rise, a new class of construction has begun to incorporate traditional design elements to great success. CityRealty data shows that [220 Central Park South](#) and [15 Central Park West](#), both Robert A.M. Stern buildings with limestone facades and handsome design, have dominated the most expensive apartment sales of the past decade. Penthouses at The Benson, a prewar-inspired condominium on Madison Avenue, have held the [top contract](#) over the past two weeks, and a sales launch at [150 East 78th Street](#), another classically-inspired Stern design, is anticipated for next year.

Additionally, the apartments within also harken back to historic architectural details. One cannot help appreciating [classic layouts](#) with clearly defined rooms amidst the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown to contain it, and features like high ceilings, expansive proportions, and oversized windows are much admired at any time. These traditional details combine with contemporary finishes, appliances, and infrastructure to create highly coveted homes.

The Benson, Carnegie Hill

Design by Peter Pennoyer Architects

19 stories | 15 units



Rendering of The Benson via Hayes Davidson

The Benson is the first new condominium to take shape on the Upper East Side's Madison Avenue in over 20 years, and its design and limestone facade were inspired by the prewar cooperatives surrounding it. All units feature oversized windows, soaring ceilings, custom crown moldings, fireplaces with custom mantles, custom kitchens by Christopher Peacock, and master suites that occupy their own wing. The building will offer 24-hour doorman and concierge service as well as a state-of-the-art fitness center; half basketball court; spa with sauna and steam room; library with adjoining garden; art studio; pet spa with washing station; private cinema room; and landscaped roof lounge with fire pit and Central Park views.