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Staging a Construction Site with Luxury Furniture

By STEFANOS CHEN



An under-construction townhouse in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn that was staged with luxury furniture. Credit Evan Joseph

How do you sell a \$7 million townhouse that's still under construction? Find a sofa that complements concrete.

At least that was the solution adopted by the Fortis Property Group, the developer of six new townhouses in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn that were first listed in April. Fortis filled one of the unfinished concrete shells with luxury furniture a few weeks ago and threw a party.



A staged bedroom inside the concrete shell of a townhouse on Amity Street. Credit Evan Joseph

The event halted construction in one of the townhouses to allow Interior Marketing Group, a luxury staging company, to furnish several floors and an outdoor space with cream-toned furniture and leather-and-steel coffee tables. The effect was eye-catching, if a bit jarring.

About 100 brokers and prospective buyers donned hard hats and toured the styled construction site on Amity Street, said Jonathan Landau, chief executive of Fortis Property Group.

Filling the unfinished space with furniture was a first for his firm, but a way to show potential buyers what the space could be. After all, he said, “people didn’t buy Teslas before the first ones were delivered.”



A rendering of what the finished living room will look like. Credit Williams NY

“These spaces are more unique,” he added, noting that their size and layout are unusual for the market. Unlike two larger and wider, five-story townhouses in the development that have already sold, these are 65-feet deep, but only 16 feet wide – narrower than most townhouses in the area, which range from about 18- to 30-foot wide. Prices range from about \$6 million to \$7 million.

To maximize the space, Mr. Landau said the six townhouses have ceilings up to 20 feet high and ample glass to fill their centers with light. A standard configuration includes 3,700 square feet with four bedrooms, four baths, two powder rooms and an elevator. Each house will also have basement access to parking and the option to use amenities at a neighboring condo building.

No contracts have been signed since the party, Mr. Landau said. “These are not impulse purchases,” he said. The attached townhouses, part of a seven-building development called River Park, formerly part of the [Long Island College Hospital](#) site, won’t be completed until the second quarter of 2018, he said.



A rendering of the townhouses in the River Park development. Credit Williams NY

“There were a bunch of wide eyes,” said Paul Johansen, an associate broker with CORE, who is not involved in the project, but attended the party. He said this level of marketing might be typical in Manhattan, but not Brooklyn.

At more than \$1,600 a square foot, he said the townhouses are pricey for the neighborhood, where \$1,200 to \$1,500 a foot is more typical. He said the clients he brought to the party, a couple from Manhattan, weren’t interested.

But the price shouldn't be an obstacle, Mr. Landau said, noting that nine out of 17 condo units have already sold in an adjacent Fortis condo, with sales in the \$3 million to \$8 million range. Douglas Elliman [has the listings](#).

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