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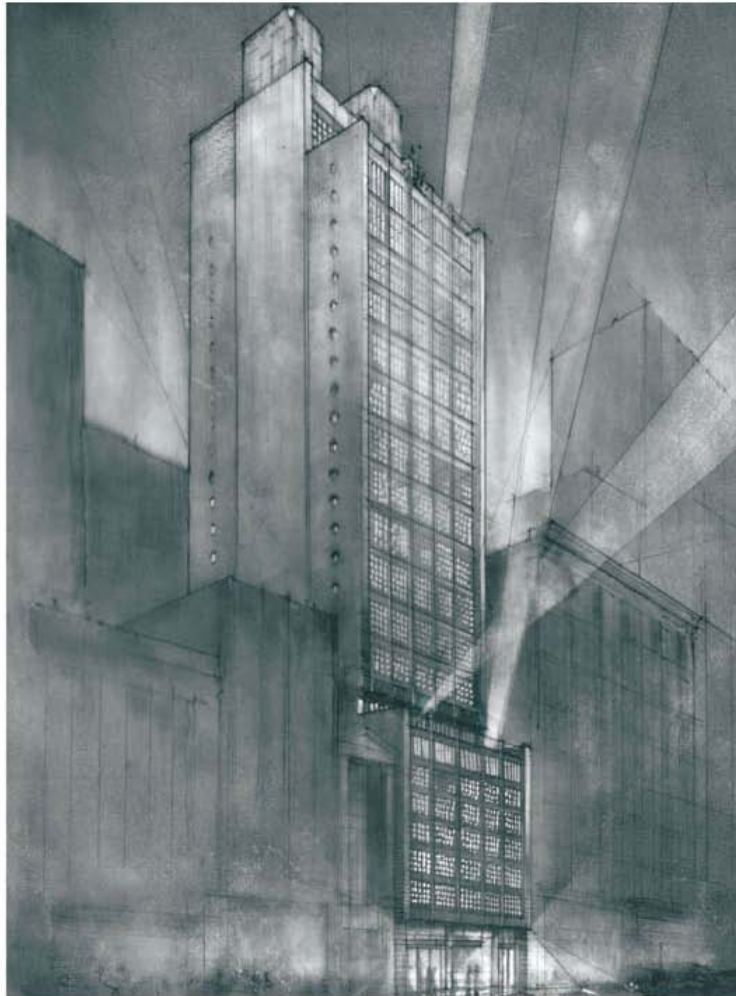
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MINDBOGGLING REVEALS

Roman & Williams Take On Midtown With New 30-Story Hotel

Thursday, September 16, 2010, by Joey



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- NEW ROMAN & WILLIAMS HOTEL**
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Roman & Williams, the upstart interior design firm (the Standard Hotel, the Ace Hotel, Gwyneth Paltrow's place) co-founded by Hollywood set designers Robin Standerfer and Stephen Alesch, has deftly avoided backlash from the preservation crowd. When they designed their first ground-up building, in history-rich Nolita, R&W came up with a building that managed to blend in beautifully with 150-year-old tenements while still looking new and fresh. But 211 Elizabeth was a runt compared to **120 West 57th Street**, the firm's just-announced **30-story hotel** in Midtown, and there will no doubt be some lingering hard feelings over what had to die so that this blockbuster could live.

The former 120 West 57th Street (right) was the longtime home of the **Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services**, which went into contract to sell the building in 2007. Demolition work began on the 12-story building, designed by Harry B. Mulliken and built in 1903 (but later altered), to some moaning and



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groaning, but nothing like what accompanied the razing of the [Drake Hotel](#) a few blocks east. The new hotel on the site, slated to **open in 2013**, will be a 130,000-square-foot building with a lobby restaurant and bar, 250 rooms and 46 suites. And yep, it's right next to the 57th Street entrance of [Le Parker Meridien](#). Careful when popping in for a burger during construction.



The hotel is being developed by [Ark Partners](#), which owns and operates a handful of New York City hotels under its [Willow Hotels](#) subsidiary. The first rendering is still a little bit draped in mystery, but it does remind us of Tribeca's [Artisan Lofts](#) condo conversion, another Roman & Williams design project. The architect-of-record for the hotel will be, brace, **Gene Kaufman** (as in [The Gene Kaufman](#)), but if he [knows what's good for him](#), he won't claim credit for the finished product.

Here's the portion of the press release dealing with the design:

Roman and Williams has designed a building whose disciplined and reductive architecture gives it structure and clarity when viewed from afar and from the street. The façade is defined by two muscular shoulders – made of **iron-spot black brick** – that define, frame and ground the building's front elevation. Glazed black brick and metal windows – muntined to **create the feeling of a beautiful lantern when lit from within** – comprise the bulk of the façade. These windows will relate the new hotel to much of the traditional, iconic architecture in the neighborhood.

Guest room and public area designs will feature rich woods, understated yet grand décor elements, and a nod to Mid-Century-Modern design. The material palette is restrained, earthy and sensual in the common areas of the hotel, and guest rooms have a functionality and airiness of a loft with simple, functional and well-detailed furnishings.

The **bathrooms are inspired by those in classic 1930s New York apartment buildings**, with marble and tile detailing and custom fittings. With floor-to-ceiling windows, outdoor terraces, soaring high ceilings, sweeping views of Central Park from upper floors and a restaurant and bar under the helm of a to-be-announced noteworthy and acclaimed restaurateur, the new hotel will emerge at the forefront of bespoke upscale hotels in Manhattan.

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