

COMMERCIAL OBSERVER

The Plan: There's No Weeping in the Willow at 201 East 23rd Street

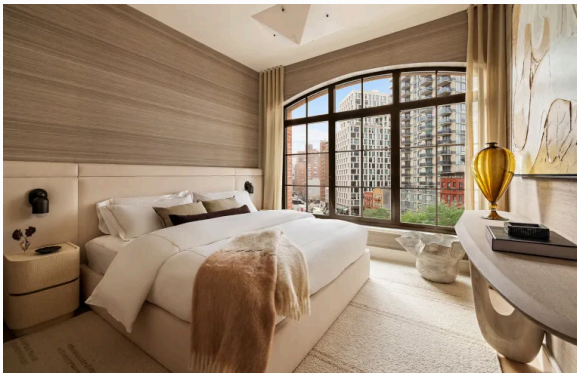
February 25, 2026 by Amanda Schiavo



The exterior of 201 East 23rd St was done by Cookfox Architects.



The units range from one to four bedrooms, with one-bedroom homes starting at \$1.2 Million.



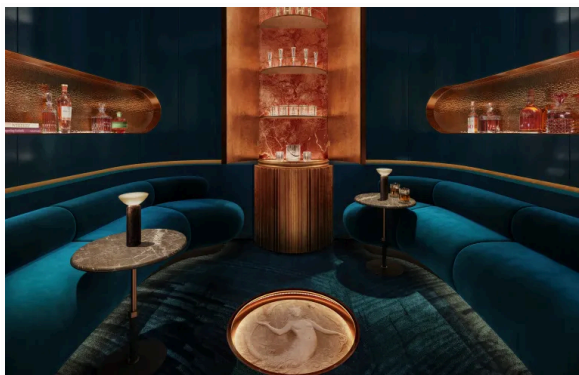
As of publication only two-bedrooms remain available at the building, with pricing starting at \$2.07 Million



As of publication, The Willow was over 65 percent sold and move-ins are expected to begin in the spring



Willow residents will have access to a rooftop dining and lounge space.



The Willow also features a speakeasy-style wet bar called The Mermaid Room.

Anywhere else is hollow for the incoming residents at the Naftali Group's Willow.

The developer's latest ground-up residential project is a 19-story, 69-unit luxury condominium at 201 East 23rd Street in Manhattan's Gramercy Park neighborhood. The building is named the Willow, a nod to the area's history, as in the late 1800s one of the first tree species planted in Gramercy Park was the willow.

"There was this beautiful postcard that was made of a willow tree in Gramercy," said Danielle Naftali, executive vice president of marketing, sales and design at Naftali Group. "I brought that to my branding agency, and I said,

'Guys, I think we should name it the Willow. Let's bring in the history of Gramercy Park.' "

As part of that nod to the area's history, the team behind the Willow also planted a willow tree in the rooftop amenity space, which features dining and lounge areas as well as grilling stations. Other amenities at the Willow include a ground-floor library, a landscaped courtyard garden, a fitness center, a sauna, a movie room, and a music space for listening and playing.

"The amenities were designed by Rockwell, and they're arguably one of the best interior designers in the world who think about spaces from a hospitality perspective," Naftali said. "What we wanted to make sure was through the amenity experience that you really felt this hospitality vibe throughout. It's a place that you want to host your friends, your family, and it's a great escape also from your apartment."

The Willow also features a speakeasy-style wet bar called the Mermaid Room, another nod to the area's past. While constructing the Willow, the developers salvaged a large mermaid medallion from the site and embedded it into the floor of the bar.

"When we bought the site [in 2023], it was a pretty ugly two-story building, but I saw in the facade this mermaid medallion made of stone," Naftali said. "It was just on the facade, and it definitely wasn't there when they originally built the building. They definitely took it from another building, probably from the 1940s or 1950s. Right before we were about to demolish that building, I said to my team, 'We need to keep the mermaid medallion and bring that back into the Willow.' "

The exterior of the building was done by COOKFOX Architects, and designed to harness the charm and boutique feeling of the neighborhood.

“We thought bringing beautiful arches to the facade would really charm up this corner location,” Naftali said. “What CookFox did very well was interpret these arched windows in a new way. From the outside, we made sure, from the windows to the brick and the mullions, that there’s just a lot of charm from the facade side.”

As of publication, the Willow was over 65 percent sold and move-ins are expected to begin in the spring. The units range from one to four bedrooms, with one-bedroom homes starting at \$1.2 million. Only two-bedrooms remain available at the building, with pricing starting at \$2.07 million.

“Part of the creative process for us when developing these projects is to make sure there is a real story behind it,” Naftali said. “This is not something that we try to create overnight.”