



## POST FOCUS ON COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

# Developers look at Elaine's



**BETWEEN THE BRICKS**  
**LOIS WEISS**

**E**LAINES is turning into a development site, according to **Neal Sroka** of Prudential Douglas Elliman, who is marketing the restaurant along with the two occupied walk-ups above it for \$9.5 million.

"The people putting in offers now are all developers, who see the potential of the site that has air rights and could include the corner building," said Sroka. "It's [now] all about the real estate."

As Post colleague **Steve Cuzzo** revealed last week, CB Richard Ellis honcho **Steve Siegel** had been negotiating for just the restaurant space and put in an offer to the owner to turn

Elaine's into a Knickerbocker Bar and Grill outpost through his exclusive broker, **Kim Mogull**, CEO of Mogull Realty.

But that deal is no longer on the table.

"Elaine made Elaine's — in spite of the location at Second Avenue and 88th Street," said Mogull.

For just a restaurant deal, she noted, the current numbers make no sense.

"The Knickerbocker steakhouse brings its own following and has a thriving brand — and also has one of the best T-bone steaks in Manhattan," Mogull added.

That's why Mogull is still scouring for appropriate locations for a Knickerbocker.

"We have an offer in on a far more suitable site on the Upper East Side, far away from the ongoing upheaval and pestilence caused by the Second Avenue subway construction that will unfortunately continue well into the future," she said.

"We will also be looking along the Upper West Side over the summer." Stay tuned.

A 16-story residential rental at 135 William St. on the corner of Fulton, owned by Metro Loft Management, is on the market and could sell for as much as \$30 million.

"It could be a beautiful condo conversion," said **Jon Epstein** of Grubb & Ellis, who is the exclusive broker for the 60,000-square-foot property, along with colleagues **Charles Kingsley** and **Neil Hellman**.

Currently, there are 30 "very large" loft apartments that measure either 1,471 square feet or 1,676 square feet apiece and rent at market rents — mostly to families with small children. A small, 800-square-foot retail space is vacant, and there is a new entrance to the Fulton Street transit hub at the base.

"This is a prominent cor-

ner property with great light and air," said Kingsley.

Skip a few neighborhoods north and the currently vacant loft building at 396 Broadway in the historic TriBeCa East area is finally getting a life.

Four years ago, the **Cherit** family branch headed by Abe and sons Isaac and Eli, vacated the building in preparation for a sale that died.

After "many iterations," the Cherit's have now decided to turn it into a luxury rental with 52 residential units, according to their architect, **Gene Kaufman**.

"There are great spaces, with high ceilings and a high proportion of windows," Kaufman said. The building backs onto Walker Alley, and there are also side lot windows.

**Andrew Heiberger's** Town will market the units, which will be ready in fall 2012 and range from studios to penthouses. The building will have a doorman as well as a valet and, of course, lobby fridges for food deliveries.

"This will be a great building and it has a lot of upside for the very vibrant neighborhood," Kaufman added.

Kaufman just acquired Gwathmey Siegel, where he is now a principal in the new

the newly redeveloped 450 W. 14th St. at the High Line in the Meatpacking District actually has a retail tenant in hand.

The documents suggest that Urban Outfitters will be taking retail space in the cellar and first floor as well as office space on the fifth floor above the High Line. Online brochures show 4,308 feet in the cellar, 7,636 on the ground and 12,500 square feet on the fifth floor.

This would be one of the first mass-market national retailers to rent in the otherwise luxury corridor.

The building's retail broker, **Kelly Gedinsky** of Winick Realty, would not discuss the tenant and insisted there is no signed agreement. The building's office brokers, Newmark Knight Frank, referred me to the money man at Winthrop Realty Trust, who did not return a call prior to deadline.

**Stephen Plourde** and **Keith Fencil** of the McDevitt Co. represent Urban Outfitters. Neither returned phone calls, nor did a spokeswoman for the retailer.

"There is a whole new vi-

Knight Frank, whose teams have been working on several restaurant deals.

"Owners have gotten reasonable, but the good properties are still leasing at good numbers," he said. "If it is priced right and has the bones of a former restaurant, people are slopping them up."

His deals include a new Crumbs that is coming to 1,250 square feet at 2476 Broadway. The space includes a cellar, and the deal was completed at close to the asking rent of \$200 a square foot.

**Mark Frankel** and **Ben Birnbaum** of Newmark repped the tenant; **Davie Berke** and **Paul Berkman** of NKF repped the owners.

Yelp.com has signed a five-year lease in the Flatiron District for 9,505 square feet at 100-104 Fifth Ave. The asking rent was \$55 a foot.

**Paul Milunec** and **Scott Gamber** of CB Richard Ellis represented the tenant. **Grant Greenspan** represented the owners at the Kaufman Organization in-house. This deal comes only a few months after

