

Third Avenue's Retail Revival in Full Bloom

Upscale stores filling into area where Bloomberg Tower nearly finished; lots of turnover

ADELLE WALDMAN

Bloomberg is creating a buzz where Midtown meets the Upper East Side, but excitement among retailers around Bloomingdale's has nothing to do with mayoral decisions from City Hall.

As the Bloomberg tower goes up between Lexington and Third Avenue at 58th St., on the former site of Alexander's department store, commercial real estate brokers aren't sure if Midtown is moving east or the Upper East Side is moving south.

But it's clear that something is happening to retail space on Third Avenue in the 50s and 60s. Rents are going up in Bloomingdale's country, and upscale stores are coming in as the tower that will house Mayor Michael Bloomberg's eponymous business information company nears completion.

The building, set to open later this year, will have 700,000 square

feet of office, retail and residential space, 40,000 square feet of which are already leased by Swedish clothing chain H&M. Big boxes are also arriving nearby, with Home Depot leasing 80,000 square feet on the corner of 59th St. and Third.

The furniture store Select Comfort has leased 2,400 square feet of space at 61st St. and Third Avenue, and a slew of smaller retailers, including the accessory store Alexia Crawford and body care products merchant Bare Escentuals, are moving in nearby.

"There has been a lot of turnover, and the area has changed a lot," says Garrick-Aug Worldwide vice chairman Faith Hope Consolo, who leased both the Alexia Crawford and Bare Escentuals spaces.

Broker Kim Mogull represented 1030 Third Avenue in the Select Comfort deal, with broker Bill Crisp representing the furni-

ture store.

Consolo says the neighborhood has transformed as old leases expired and spaces went vacant. "The stores used to be more homogenous, more like a mall, without any distinct character," she says.

More upscale retailers are moving in, and Consolo says it's no surprise.

"You had a neighborhood that had very strong fundamentals, waiting for new retailers to come in," she says.

But new stores are also bringing higher retail rents, climbing from about \$150 a square foot a year ago to \$200 or more a square foot today, according to brokers.

The area's in-between status is a big reason for the rise of retail, brokers say. It's desirable because of seven-day-a-week foot traffic coming from the Upper East Side, new residential developments in the area and Midtown office workers.

"It's Midtown, and yet it's the



bottom of the Upper East Side," says Scott Edlitz, managing director of Robert K. Futterman & Associates.

"You've got office workers heading to the subway stop on 59th St., plus shoppers from all over converging to shop at Bloomingdale's."

The recent flurry of activity is also being spurred by the new availability of larger spaces, says

Beth Greenwald, a broker with Newmark New Spectrum Retail. Until recently, Greenwald says the area did not have the large spaces that high-end retailers covet. But many new residential projects have involved knocking down smaller buildings, and putting up new condos with ample retail opportunities on the ground floor.

"It was never a bad situation, but it's getting better," Greenwald says.

For example, the Bloomberg tower project involved knocking down a square block as well as a few smaller buildings.

The infectious excitement generated by the nearly completed Bloomberg tower has also inspired landlords to look for a better class of tenants as leases expire, says Edlitz.

"There's an expectation of better quality retailers, more like on Lexington and Madison Avenues," he says. "Lexington has always been great, and now it's spreading to Third."

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Multitasking can seem like ADD



Am I a supreme multitasker or do I have ADD?

LOIS WEISS

If you can't sit still, love talking on the phone, meeting new people, networking, and juggling 20 tasks at once, you might have attention deficit disorder, also known as ADD. Believe it or not, real estate can be a great career for you.

Of course, having a straight or queer eye for architecture, fashion, spatial relationships and synergies helps.

It also helps to know math - but that's what calculators and assistants were made for.

People affected by ADD recognize the flexibility of working on real estate deals, financings, construction projects and leases, which makes for a more enjoyable career than sitting at a desk all day.

There are times you have to do that, too, though.

But if you can't sit still for long - get up and take your mobile phone and sit in the park. Bring your WiFi-enabled laptop, a BlackBerry or what have you. Keep on working your leads, and making decisions - even if you have to sit through a luncheon or keynote meeting speaker.

Television superstar and real estate billionaire Donald J. Trump says no one ever told him he had ADD - but admits he probably has it. "I can understand that [a lot of people in real estate have it]. I probably do, but I didn't know it," he says.

One prominent leasing broker says he figured out he must have ADD when his son was diagnosed with the disorder by a doctor. "When I was a child, they

labeled it different things," he recalls. "Clearly I had to work harder at school and was never an A student. It was hard to sit still and focus on doing my work."

To overcome those potential handicaps, he became a people person.

"I've had compassion and understanding and been listening and solving problems since I was 10 years old. Now I solve clients' problems," he says.

Those with ADD have difficulty focusing on one thing at a time, but once the condition is understood, it becomes an advantage, since most sufferers multitask very well.

"I turn the impulsivity into drive and energy to tasks that I can accomplish for my clients," explains the broker.

Since he also lacks the confidence he believes would automatically come along with an MBA from Harvard, a credential some of his competitors can claim, he says he strives to do his due diligence and be complete in his presentations.

"Not having the academic suc
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