

NEW YORK OBSERVER

May 18, 2012

<http://observer.com/2012/05/18/billionaires-act-fast-turns-out-one57-is-50-percent-sold-out/>

Billionaires, Act Fast! Turns Out One57 Is 50 Percent Sold Out

By Matt Chaban



Are these \$90 million views? (Extell)

If only Gary “The Best” Barnett were editing *The Times*, the Gray Lady wouldn’t have buried the lede.

“I think the story got a little carried away,” Mr. Barnett told *The Observer* by phone this afternoon. He was referring to a report in today’s *Times* that Extell, Mr. Barnett’s development company, had sold the penthouse at his 1,005-foot One57 luxury tower for somewhere in the neighborhood of \$90 million to \$100 million.

We asked how—and why—the sale had been kept under wraps for a few of months now, even as the price was raised from \$98 million to \$115 million in the face of the sale of Sandy Weill’s \$88 million spread at 15 Central Park West. “We wanted to tie the two together,” he said, “the penthouse announcement and the fact that we’re 50 percent sold. We thought 50 percent would be the big news, but shows what we know.”

As though he doesn’t know exactly what he is doing.

Still, Mr. Barnett has a point: *The Times* totally ignored the 50-percent-sold news, not mentioning it once. While *The Observer* finds those “Development X is Y percent sold—yippee!” announcements to be incredibly annoying and boring, we have to admit, this is kind of remarkable news, as well, especially when you put it in context.

“We’re basically at a billion dollars worth of sales, which is good for six months, I think it’s a record,” Mr. Barnett said of the still far-from-finished project, which has only been on the market for six months. If he can continue to put up the same sales numbers, Extell would be on track to match, or maybe even best the current best-selling building, that godhead across the park and recently usurped record holder, 15 CPW, where [the Zeckendorf’s brought in \\$2 billion in sales](#).

Mr. Barnett’s numbers may be even more impressive, considering One57 has 135 units, compared to 202 at 15 CPW. (Obviously, the construction costs and price per square foot would determine the real winner, but we’re journalists, not astrophysicists, so let’s stick to shorthand for now.)

One thing about all the gaga reports over the sale stood out, though. *The Post* reported that [some buyers were unhappy with the quality of One57](#) and had walked away from some possible purchases:

Also, some potential buyers have walked away from deals at One57 citing, “design flaws,” real estate sources said.

Among the complaints so far are that its builders went against the advice of its architect and neglected to provide enough elevators—particularly problematic for people buying on high floors, who would have to wait a long time for their rides up or down.

Mr. Barnett called those claims ludicrous. “We’ve got got three elevator banks, that’s about one per 35,” he said. “Normally, it’s one per 90. If anything, the building is super-elevated.”

He thought that the comment might be a dig from *Post* reporter Jennifer Gould Keill, angry about getting scooped on possibly the story of the year. “She was calling and calling and cursing, trying to get this story, and I think this was just her way of getting back at us.” Ms. Gould Keill could not immediately be reached for comment.

Flaws or not, Mr. Barnett said he sees continued interest in the project, which has not even topped out yet. “Sales have been very good,” he said, “and now, I think they’re only going to get better.”