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## Real Estate

LIVING IN/Lincoln Square

### An Arts Incubator, Retuned for Extra Livability

By JOHN FREEMAN GILL

**J**OE COFFEY, a Lincoln Square resident for most of the past 21 years, needs no reminding that the lower portion of his neighborhood was not always as stable as it is today. While a college student in the 1980s, Mr. Coffey worked in Columbus Circle as a construction laborer inside the Gulf and Western office building, which was famous for swaying in high winds.

The unwelcoming atmosphere of the circle was aggravated by two other buildings, the dilapidated New York Coliseum exposition center and the "lollipop" building at 2 Columbus Circle, both of which were routinely fringed with homeless people and debris.

"Columbus Circle was terrible and run-down, the Coliseum was an eyesore, the whole area was a mess," said Mr. Coffey, who co-owns an industrial design company.

Undeterred, he moved in 1991 into a rental nearby on West 60th Street, and a few years later the Gulf and Western building was reinforced with concrete and transformed into the sleek and brassy Trump International Hotel and Tower. "From then to now," Mr. Coffey said, "culminating with the renovation of Lincoln Center, the neighborhood has undergone a complete transformation into a great place for families to live and a great place to go out."

Like many who have fallen for Lincoln Square, which extends from Central Park to the Hudson River and from West 59th Street to West 72nd, Mr. Coffey has discovered that it's a hard neighborhood to leave. Initially drawn by its central location and laid-back atmosphere, he has since hoppedscotched among four apartments in the area, landing last year with his wife and daughter in a four-bedroom prewar co-op on West 67th. Although he declined to say how much he paid, comparable apartments sell for around \$6.5 million.

"The neighborhood's gotten more comfortable every year," Mr. Coffey said, emphasizing that he did not simply mean that it had become more upscale. "Upscale can be unpleasant, but it's a very pleasant place to spend your non-working hours."

Today's Columbus Circle — dominated by the gleaming towers of the Time Warner Center, with its tony shops and restaurants — functions as a gateway to the Upper West Side. Byzantine traffic patterns have been replaced by an efficient urban carousel of vehicles whirling around a fountain-ringed central island. At the southern edge, the "lollipop" building was reclad in glazed terra-cotta tiles after a fierce preservation battle; it reopened in 2008 as the Museum of Arts and Design.

At the heart of Lincoln Square's rejuvenation is the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, which has been renovated in recent years to integrate its 16-acre campus more naturally with the neighborhood. On 65th Street and Broadway, a public seating area has been added outdoors while the once blocky, monolithic corner of Alice Tully Hall has been streamlined and opened up with glass walls that diminish the distinction between outside and inside.

West of Broadway, 65th Street has been transformed into a lively cultural boulevard. Juilliard performers lounge near their school's entrance, while across the street, students from the LaGuardia Arts high school chatter outside the Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center. Inside, moviegoers dine on octopus and prosecco at Indie, an informal restaurant with undulating wood walls.

"The beautification of Lincoln Center



PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUNUKI/THE NEW YORK TIMES

**GEOMETRY** Extending from Central Park to the Hudson River, Lincoln Square is bookended by high-rises of radically different kinds. At its heart is the renovated Lincoln Center complex, which includes the remodeled plaza and reflecting pool on the south side of 65th Street.



has been paramount in interesting people in investing in the neighborhood, moving here or opening up businesses," said Lawrence Schier, a senior vice president of the Corcoran Group who lives nearby. "There's an energy about the area, and all kinds of people are moving in, whether international people or people relocating within New York."

#### What You'll Find

The neighborhood is bookended on east and west by high-rises of radically different kinds. Central Park West is lined with prewar co-ops like the Arts-and-Crafts-style Harperly Hall and the Art Deco-style Century, a rare prewar condominium. The graciously monumental 15 Central Park West condo, a pair of limestone towers designed by Robert A. M. Stern and completed in 2008, pulls off the trick of appearing simultaneously new and as if it had always been there. Replacing the down-at-heel Mayflower Hotel and a long-vacant lot on Broadway and 61st, the complex lends an unassuming gravitas to a once desolate stretch of Broadway.

On the western frontier, a neighborhood-within-a-neighborhood has risen on the site of the old Penn Central rail yards. Since 1996, 11 residential towers have been built on or near Riverside Boulevard overlooking the Hudson between 62nd and 72nd. Four were completed by the Extell Development Company in the last four years, and ground is expected to be broken within the year for a 12th high-rise, a condo on 62nd, said Donna Gargano, a senior vice president for development of Extell.

The developer has also received city approval for five more towers between 59th and 61st Streets, to include 2,500 condo and rental units; a public school; a hotel; retail shops; and a cinema. Ms. Gargano said that construction of a 43-story tower on 61st and West End Avenue, to contain the school and a mix of market-rate and income-restricted rentals, was expected to start within a year. How much of the rest of the complex Extell will develop is unclear. "We're looking into the possibility of equity infusion, joint ventures and all possible financing opportunities," including the sale of some parcels, Ms. Gargano said.

The towers of Riverside Boulevard have a crisp repetitiveness that suggests boxes of freshly starched shirts. But many value their tranquility.

Liang Wang, principal oboist of the New York Philharmonic, paid \$2.1 million last winter for a two-bedroom with three exposures in the Aldyn, a new condo with a 40,000-square-foot gym and recreational area. He describes the serenity afforded by his 23rd-floor aerie and its blue river views as even more important than the shortness of the walk to his job at Lincoln Center.

"What mood you're in obviously has an effect on your music," Mr. Wang said, "and being here is very soothing. I just make my reeds here and look out at the city with the Empire State Building, and it feels very open and private."

When heading to Fairway on 74th Street for groceries, Mr. Wang maintains his peace of mind by going through the new Riverside Park South. Eleven of the park's eventual 21 acres have been completed by developers and turned over to the city, according to Ms. Gargano. Work on another 4.6 acres is

expected to be done by early 2015.

Although 71 percent of Lincoln Square residents are white, the neighborhood is far from homogeneous. According to 2010 census data for an area comprising Lincoln Square plus one block to the south, 12 percent of the 52,349 residents were Asian, 9 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent black. The proportion of Asians leapt to 12 from 8 percent between 2000 and 2010, with an even greater share, 14 percent, west of West End.

"For a lot of foreigners this is very appealing," said Mr. Wang, a Chinese native who has two cousins living in the same building, "because you don't have to do anything to the apartment. If you get off the plane and want to buy an apartment, you say, 'Take me to near Lincoln Center or Midtown,' and they take you to one of these apartments, and if you have the money, it's perfect."

#### What You'll Pay

A penthouse in 15 Central Park West recently sold for \$88 million, the most ever paid for an apartment in New York. Over all, in the last 12 months, Lincoln Square condos sold for a median of \$1.55 million, up from \$1.34 million the year before, Corcoran data showed. Condos took an average of 242 days to sell, 19 more than the year before.

The median for a three-bedroom co-op over the last year was \$885 a square foot, said Cathy Taub, an executive vice president of Stribling & Associates. Town houses sold for a median of \$7.95 million, she added. Streeteasy.com recently had 418 residential sale listings.

Among new luxury rentals is Aire, on 67th and Amsterdam; two-bedrooms run \$6,400 to \$8,000 a month.

#### On the Market



**100 RIVERSIDE BOULEVARD, #27BC**  
A four-bedroom three-and-a-half-bath unit in the Avery, a condo with parking, listed at \$3.95 million. (212) 875-2969



**25 CENTRAL PARK WEST, #6X**  
A one-bedroom one-bath condo in the Century, an Art Deco prewar building, listed at \$1.2 million. (212) 588-5635



**180 WEST END AVENUE, #21L**  
A two-bedroom two-bath corner co-op with a terrace, listed at \$1.095 million. (212) 246-9500

#### What to Do

Top chefs have fed an area renaissance. Across from Lincoln Center, Daniel Boulud has Bar Boulud and Epicerie Boulud, with Boulud Sud around the corner on 64th. Jean-Georges Vongerichten has Jean Georges and Nougatine on Central Park West. Thomas Keller's Per Se is in the Time Warner Center.

#### The Schools

Public School 199 on West 70th serves kindergarten through fifth grade and earned an A on its most recent city progress report. No. 191 on West 61st covers prekindergarten through eighth grade and scored a C.

High schools include the Beacon School on 61st, where SAT averages in 2011 were 562 in reading, 554 in math and 567 in writing, versus 436, 460 and 431 citywide.

The private Professional Children's School on West 60th serves students in Grades 6 through 12 who are pursuing careers in the performing or visual arts or competitive sports.

#### The Commute

Columbus Circle is served by the A, B, C, D and 1 subways. The 1, 2, 3, B and C stop at 72nd Street. The 1 (and, at night, the 2) serves Lincoln Center.

#### The History

In 1906, the Shubert Organization opened a theater called the Lincoln Square on the site of Juilliard.