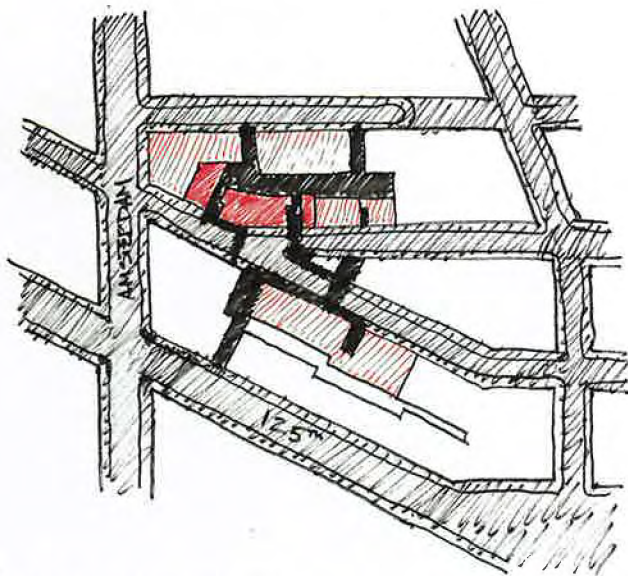


# “THE MALT HOUSE” MIXED-USE COMPLEX

# REPURPOSING VINTAGE HARLEM BREWERIES

NEW YORK CITY,  
USA



Study sketch retracing historic  
through-block connections  
in West Harlem

Thomas Gluck

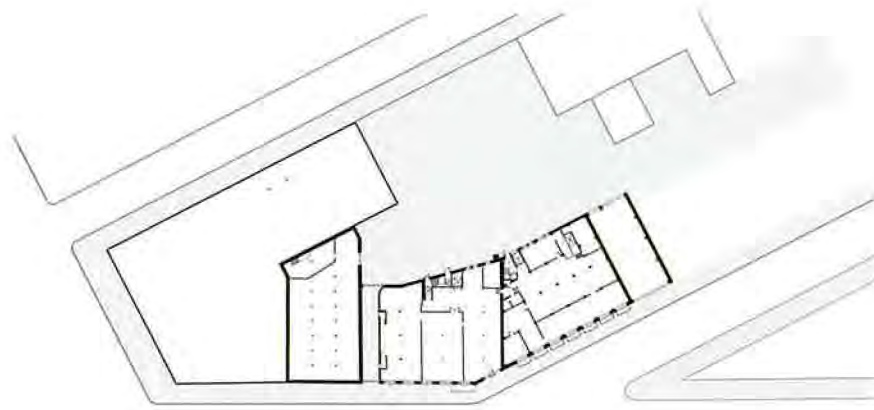


**GLUCK+**

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Original first-level floor plan – Not-to-scale

Peter Gluck founded the prolific design-build firm that bears his name, and his son Thomas is one of the five principals. Other top New York architects have gravitated to lower Manhattan; Gluck+ is based in West Harlem, a historic district to the north that is now a vibrant, multi-ethnic community. Industry was formerly concentrated in a neighborhood called Manhattanville, extending to the Hudson River, but most of its structures have been repurposed.

Over the past decade, the studio has worked with a local development company on the transformation of a cluster of four abandoned brewery buildings adjoining their office. The three-five story brick warehouses, built separately in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and covering most of a city block, have no great architectural distinction but are a vital part of the urban fabric. They reinforce the sense of place and remind us of the days when much of Manhattan was a working-class city of European immigrants fresh off the boat – a past that has been largely erased in the lower half of the island, where luxury apartments, office towers and tourist attractions have replaced docks, tenements and sweatshops.

Beer was the lubricant that sustained the workers, and German immigrants seized the chance to demonstrate their skills. In 1917, the president of Bernheimer & Schwartz Pilsner Brewing company, proudly declared: “At the dawn of a new century, our high ceilings and large expanses of airy light will make the production of our golden nectar the envy of industry everywhere”. His timing was unfortunate: that was the year that war blighted the reputation of Germany in the U.S. and Congress passed the act that led to Prohibition, banning the sale in the U.S. from 1920 to 1933. Bootleggers replaced legitimate businesses and public consumption actually increased.

Gluck and his studio have enhanced those expanses of airy light and exploited the high ceilings to create The Malt House, a complex of offices, an art gallery and ground-floor retail. A steel structure was inserted to reinforce the brick structure, and to support a three-level glazed infill that fills a gap in the street façade, and a five-story addition set back on the roof. Outwardly, the complex has become a harmonious patchwork of colors and materials, the sleek curtain wall complementing the punched-out windows and weathered masonry of the warehouses. It preserves the modest scale

of the neighborhood and provides a welcome amenity in Terrain Work’s pocket parks to either side of the street that allow pedestrians to walk two blocks south to the main artery of 125<sup>th</sup> Street. And, though the pandemic has delayed leasing, the complex should be a valuable addition to a burgeoning science corridor flanked by two subway lines, a few blocks from the Manhattanville campuses of Columbia University and City College of New York.

As Thomas Gluck explains, “our strategy was to leave raw spaces as they were and make surgical interventions on the office floors”. Cast-iron columns and staircases ascend from the basement level in a soaring space that evokes Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s *Carceri* and may be leased by a restaurant. Another lofty volume was divided into three stacked galleries with a new freight elevator linking them to a loading dock. Gavin Brown, a well-respected art dealer, was an early arrival, leased the space for a couple of years but was unable to survive the loss of business during the pandemic.

“Surgical interventions” understates the complexity of the changes the architects had to make. Thomas credits Silman structural engineers for their expertise, especially in the challenging task of assisting temporarily propping up the structure while the old cast-iron columns’ granite footings were replaced. Many buildings on the island rest on bedrock, but Manhattanville occupies a river valley with soil 30-m deep. The perimeter foundation wall was extended and helical piles 13-m deep were drilled to support a new reinforced concrete mat slab. A vapor barrier was installed below it and around the footings. Steel braced frames were tied into the slab to give lateral stability to the existing buildings and support the steel structure of the rooftop addition. And new service cores were cut into the old fabric to bring in services and systems upgrades for what is now a unified sequence of offices on the upper floors. The complex has been doubled in size to a total of around 17,070 sq. m and it offers a menu of options to a single tenant or a multiplicity of small users.

As adaptive re-use becomes ever more popular for its historic, environmental and cost benefits, Gluck+ are taking a lead and are currently working with an uptown charter school to insert a 400-seat concert hall into a former garage and add new stories.

The complex has become a harmonious patchwork of colors and materials, the sleek curtain wall complementing the punched-out windows and weathered masonry of the warehouses.



Site plan of Manhattanville  
Factory District – Not-to-scale

- A- Malt House
- B- Mink Building
- C- Sweets Building
- D- Taystee Building



First level plan – Scale 1:600



Third level plan – Scale 1:600

- 1- Entrance
- 2- Lobby
- 3- Retail
- 4- Gallery
- 5- Offices



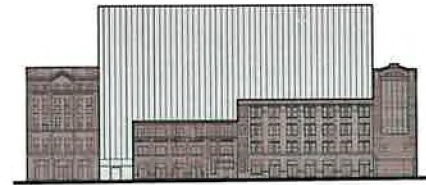
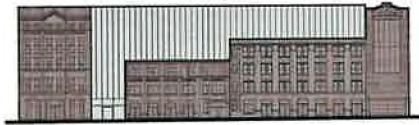
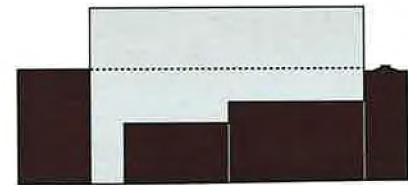
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Study diagrams of volume extension and relative elevations

- Existing volume
- Proposed extensions



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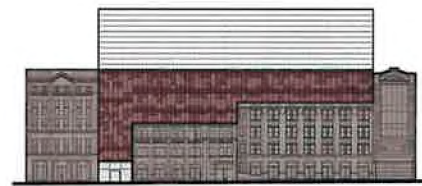
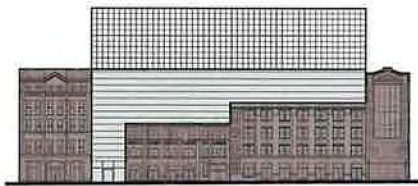




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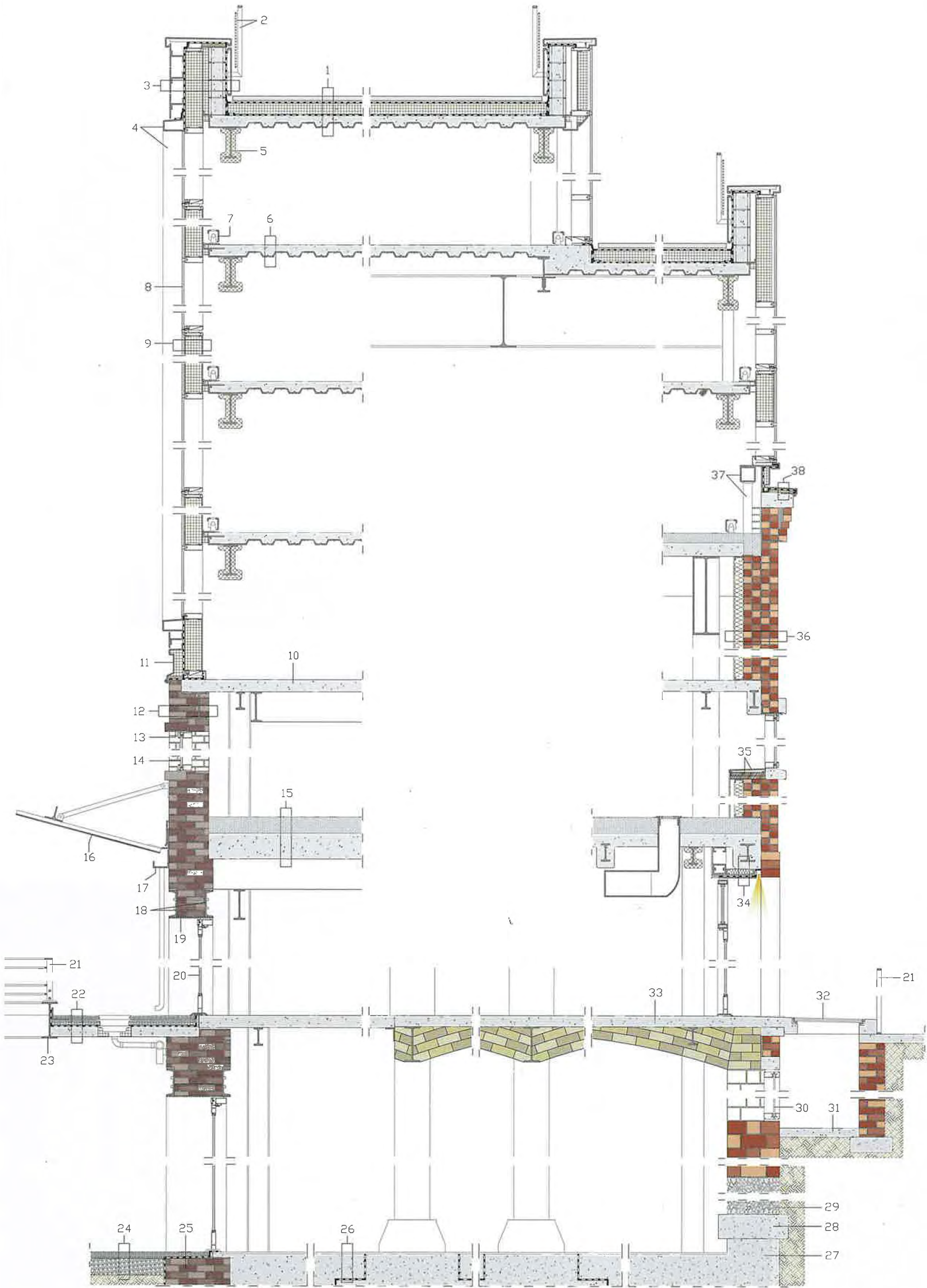


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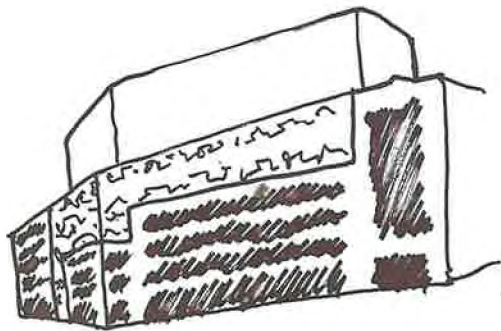
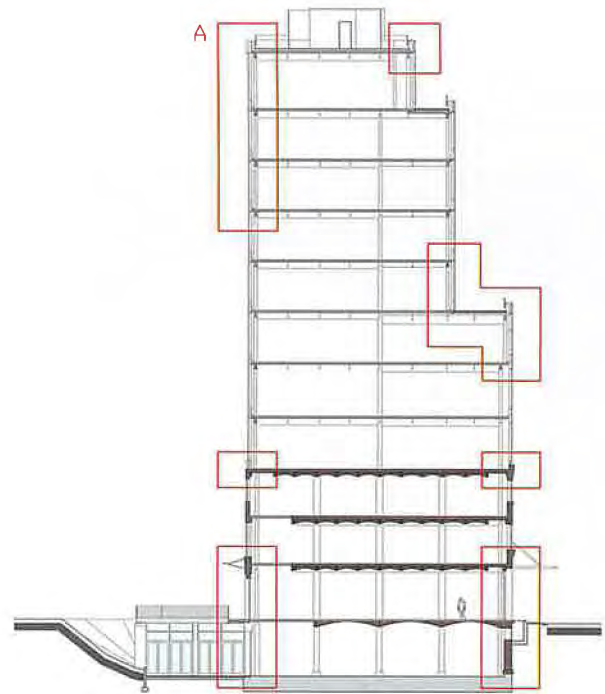
**Detail A: Construction system**  
**Vertical section – Scale 1:50**

- 1- Walk-on roof with 2" (50 mm) concrete pavers, waterproofing membrane, 6" (150 mm) rigid insulation, waterproofing membrane, 5 1/2" (140 mm) composite slab of concrete fill over corrugated decking
- 2- Balustrade comprising steel profiles and mesh
- 3- Façade comprising concrete panels, metal Z-profiles, waterproofing membrane, steel panel, 7 7/8" (200 mm) mineral wool insulation layer, steel panel, insulation layer, 7 7/8" (200 mm) CMU parapet, waterproofing membrane, metal flashing
- 4- Aluminum profile frame
- 5- 13 3/4 x 4 7/8" (350x125 mm) steel I-beam with flame-retardant treatment
- 6- 5 1/2" (140 mm) composite slab of concrete fill over corrugated sheeting
- 7- Hydronic radiator
- 8- Glazed curtain wall with 1/4 - 1/2 - 1/4" (6/13/6 mm) aluminum glazing units
- 9- Aluminum shadow box 1/4 - 1/2 - 1/4" (6/13/6 mm) glazing unit, steel panel, 7 7/8" (200 mm) mineral wool insulation layer, steel panel
- 10- 5 1/2" (140 mm) slab with reinforced concrete topping
- 11- Metal panel with insulation
- 12- Existing wall with 16" (400 mm) bricks and steel I-beam
- 13- Steel L-profile supporting façade
- 14- Aluminum window with 5/16 - 1/2 - 1/4" (8/12/6 mm) glazing unit
- 15- Floor with concrete topping slab, 11 3/4" (300 mm) reinforced concrete slab
- 16- Canopy comprising corrugated sheet metal on metal profile supports
- 17- Metal rainwater gutter
- 18- Coupled steel C-profile lintel
- 19- Steel plate closure
- 20- Aluminum door with 1/4 - 1/2 - 1/4" (6/13/6 mm) glazing unit
- 21- Flat steel bar balustrade
- 22- Crushed limestone paving, filter fabric, drainage panel, waterproofing membrane, 4 1/2" (115 mm) reinforced concrete slab
- 23- 16 1/2 x 7 1/8" (420x180 mm) steel I-beam
- 24- Crushed limestone paving, gravel layer, subgrade
- 25- Existing brick foundation
- 26- Reinforced concrete flooring, waterproofing membrane, reinforced concrete foundation slab
- 27- New reinforced concrete foundation
- 28- New reinforced concrete underpinning
- 29- Existing cobblestone foundation wall
- 30- Fixed aluminum window with 5/8" (15 mm) glass
- 31- 4" (100 mm) reinforced concrete slab
- 32- Skylight with triple non-slip glass
- 33- Existing floor comprising reinforced concrete slab on existing brick vault
- 34- Sheet metal finish, waterproofing membrane, fiber-reinforced plasterboard, metal C-profile framing with insulation, steel I-beam and reinforced concrete
- 35- Sheet metal sill over wood blocking
- 36- Façade comprising existing 3/4" (400 mm) brick, metal C-profile framing with 4" (100 mm) insulation, plasterboard
- 37- Steel box profile framing
- 38- Sheet aluminum cladding, waterproofing membrane, fireproof panel, reinforced concrete beam



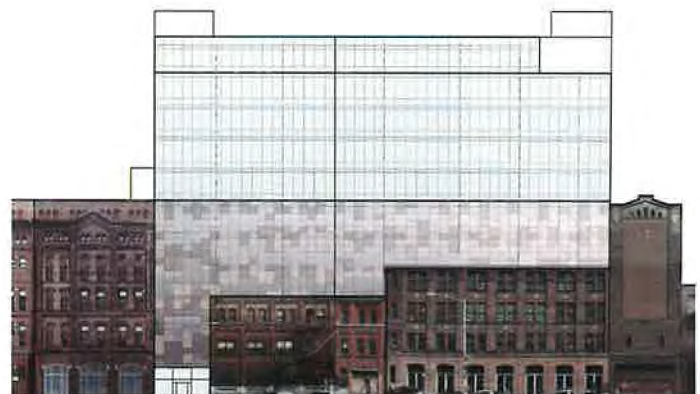
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XX section  
 Scale 1:600



Study sketch of façade  
 on 126<sup>th</sup> Street

Elevation on 126<sup>th</sup> Street  
 before and after







## CREDITS

**Location:** New York City, USA – **Development and Construction:** The Janus Property Company  
**Gross Floor Area:** 17,066 m<sup>2</sup> – **Architect:** GLUCK+

### Consultants

**Structural:** Silman – **MEP:** Jack Green Associates – **Code:** M Hashas – **Geotechnics:** Soil Mechanics  
**Landscape:** Terrain Work – **Shoring:** BlueSky Design – **Façade:** Forst Consulting – **Lighting:** Lux  
Populi – **Elevators:** SKA, Iros Elevator – **Specifications:** Construction Specifications

**Portrait image:** Theo Morrison

**All images** courtesy of GLUCK+

