

## Griffin Court Condo Helps Drive Transformation of Hell's Kitchen

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New York—Hell's Kitchen, less frequently referred to as Clinton, is fast moving up the list of Manhattan's most coveted neighborhoods, and projects like the recently completed Griffin Court Condominium are playing a big part in the process. Developed by Alchemy Properties Inc. and designed by FXFOWLE Architects, the luxury residential building is the face of the Hell's Kitchen of tomorrow.

Alchemy put the final touches on Griffin Court, which consists of 95 upscale residences in two eight-story towers, in January. FXFOWLE, which has designed two other projects in Hell's Kitchen, including Alchemy's Hudson Hill Condominium, knew exactly which direction to take for Griffin Court. The property is hard to miss. First off, there's the two-story, 8,700-square-foot courtyard, visible to all but open only to building residents. "It's one of the really, really unique features of Griffin Court," an FXFOWLE Senior Project Designer of Griffin Court tells *MHN*. "It's a landscaped courtyard, which you really don't see a lot in Manhattan. It's on two different levels with a seating area and a grass playing area for children. It's something that wows people."

And then there's the mural. "Hell's Kitchen fosters a creative energy, and I think we definitely contributed to that trend when we commissioned the mural," Alchemy's Jill Preschel tells *MHN*. Two bare exterior walls were transformed into canvases with 83-foot murals, hand-painted by the winner of a worldwide competition among emerging artists. "The area has a great, warm, welcoming vibe to it, and the murals are one way we participate in that. There are a lot of galleries and restaurants, so it fits into the artistic nature of the neighborhood."

Griffin Court can be seen from three streets—53rd St., 54th St. and 10th Avenue—and FXFOWLE took the opportunity to capitalize on those three different exposures. "There's a diversity of architecture in Hell's Kitchen," the project designer says. "So the building has the same design language but it's executed differently. The different designs on each side enhance the neighborhood and give identity to the building."

While each one of Griffin Court's facades pays homage to the individual building styles on the three facing streets, there is common element among each of the property's visages—brick. It is another characteristic that makes the condominium stand out among the rest. “Many developers have favored glass over the last 10 years,” he notes. “Brick has a ‘poor man’s’ connotation to it, but it can be inviting and warm. We established that you can do very successful, high-end brick buildings that will attract people.”

And attract people, it does. Approximately 20 percent of Griffin Court's units have been sold, and activity is on the rise. “We were seeing people visit three or four times before making an offer, but now we are seeing the lead time shorten,” Preschel says. “Now, people visit one or two times and then make an offer. We’re seeing this at all our properties. It’s indicative of the market. People are more confident.” Also, at Griffin Court in particular, she adds, “We’ve gone effective, so that’s part of it, too.”

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