October 24, 2013

Three New Standard Features In A Skyscraper

New Yorkers spend more time at work than in their homes or cars. Thus it's only fair that some office features simply come standard. Here are three elements to expect in any new skyscraper.

1) Outdoor terraces



Yesterday at 7 WTC, we snapped Related's Michael Samuelian, Empire State Realty Trust's Tom Durels, and H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture's Hugh Hardy. Michael says every space that has leased in the South Tower at Hudson Yards has an outdoor terrace, and none of the floors left have them. Corporations are creating their own "community space" within their private quarters nowadays, he says. Tom, whose realm includes "the most famous office building in the world," says the advantage or prewar buildings like the Empire State Building are that they have setbacks, which now are becoming outdoor terraces.

2) Observation decks



Michael says every new skyscraper has one of these. Here's the 80-foot-cantilever deck on Hudson Yards' north tower (construction on that building will start in January). It'll be the highest outdoor observation deck in NYC. What else makes this one unique? There's also a Sky Lobby up there with a bar and lounge, so people don't just buy a snow globe and leave but rather stay awhile. He jokes that Related has indeed pro-forma-ed the price of a martini at 1,200 feet.

3) Visible retail



We snapped the trio above, along with World Trade Center Properties prez Janno Lieber (who's speaking at Bisnow's Post Bloomberg event Oct. 30, more at the bottom of this issue), at a Greater New York Construction User Council event. Janno says the new WTC has retail not just underground as before 9/11 but also at ground level. 30% of the Downtown population walks to work, he says, and the massive WTC development will better fit into the neighborhood. The company's historical specialties are residential and retail, hence Hugh's praise of Hudson Yards as a truly mixed-use, ground-up neighborhood. The one thing the WTC lacks that Janno and company would love to have included is a cogen plant, considering Silverstein (and Speyer) were the first to put one in (at 11 W 42nd St). Silverstein just couldn't agree with the Port Authority, he says; there's just too much other stuff going on underground down there.