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C.P.W.

NEWSLETTER

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF 336

In Elizabeth Hawes' fascinating book "New York, New York: How the Apartment House Transformed the Life of the City (1869 - 1930)", the architects Schwartz and Gross, who designed our building, are presented as opening a new era of apartment house design in 1929 and 1930. They designed four buildings on Central Park West that were built in this period: 55, 101, 241 and 336. Hawes notes,

"These buildings. . .were tall, machine inspired Art Deco towers, colored subtly in earth tones and decorated with sunbursts, bold flutes or vertical sprouts. They were romantic technological creations, they framed the most memorable skyline in the city. They had begun, tentatively, with one of the first generations of apartment dwellers, and they had ended, flamboyantly, with urban sophisticates."

Also included among the outstanding buildings which they designed are 1185 Park Avenue and 14 East 75th Street. According to Hawes,

"Their style was sophisticated, and once in a while so well articulated that it caught everyone's attention. The sheer volume of their work. . .made Schwartz and Gross both typical and noteworthy, for their buildings appeared on block after block of the city, and in the end, determined street character more widely than landmarks ever could."

The "AIA Guide to New York City" by Elliot Willensky and Norval White cites 336 as follows:

"This 16-story apartment house is crowned with terracotta reminiscences of Egyptian-styled papyrus stalks (don't confuse this with the 19th century Egyptian Revival style, of which very few examples remain in the city). The tapestry brick enriches the viewer's experience closer to eye level."

An architect's sketch of the building is on a wall in the lobby. The original plans for the apartments in the building, as

created in 1929, are on view in the basement. The original owner of the building was Edgar Levy who wanted the building to reflect the cosmopolitan character of the city. Special concessions were made so that artists and musicians could be included among the residents. Off the rear lobby there were a few rooms available for maids when accommodations were not available in the basic apartment plan. The larger apartments had a buzzer system for summoning household help.

The building was organized as a coop in 1971-1972. In recent years the interior space of some apartments has been rearranged altering the original design. Our Board of Directors must review all alteration plans before any such work is started.

Gracious and comfortable living overlooking Central Park were the prime attributes in 1929 as they continue to be today!

BROWN WATER PROBLEM

Tenants have recently been concerned because water flowing from the hot and cold water faucets has on occasion been discolored. The water tank has been cleaned recently and all of the pipes carrying water have been completely flushed out. The trouble is difficult to trace to a particular cause. However, it would be helpful if tenants would report to Louie when this occurs and let him know which plumbing lines seem to be affected most frequently.

Other buildings in Manhattan on both the East and West sides have noted a similar problem with discolored water. It may be caused by the ancient water mains, some of which are more than 100 years old, which carry water to our buildings. These water mains are slowly being replaced.

If the water is discolored, keep it running for a few minutes, to see whether it clears. Obviously, one should not use the water if the discoloration continues. Report it promptly to Louie in the hope the source of the problem can be traced and corrected.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION

Emergencies rarely occur but it is useful to know what provisions for quick response are available. Louie and Sergio are accessible by phone and beeper most of the time. The elevator men know how to contact them and should be apprised of the situation. A call to Kreisel at 370-9200 is also a method for emergency notification. There is a stand-by superintendent in a Park Avenue building who can step in to deal with a critical situation if Louie and Sergio are unable to respond. Kreisel would take whatever measures are necessary to deal with the situation. One hopes it will not be necessary to explore these options!

DRY FLORAL ARRANGEMENT IN THE LOBBY

The dry arrangement of grasses, seed pods, eucalyptus and other natural beauties is the splendid work of a young man named Robbie. His shop is called Special Cuttings and is located at 422 Amsterdam Avenue (at 80th Street). This arrangement requires no maintenance and should continue to be decorative for at least a year.

STORAGE BIN REMINDER

Tenants are urged to identify their storage bins by using the tags on the storage bin doors. It is possible that bins that are not in use can be made available. Neighbors may benefit and the building will know who belongs to which bin. Until this identification process can be completed the situation is somewhat chaotic.

APARTMENT SALES

If you are interested in selling your apartment or know people who are looking for an apartment, you are invited to let your neighbors know by using our newsletter. Inquiries regarding availability of apartments come to all of us. There is no building source for this information. It might be of value to include this information in the newsletter giving apartment number, size, name and phone, no price.

Please send any news, want ads, notices or suggestions to the Editor, Phyllis Sternau (3E).