

The New York Times

In Yorkville, Building With Families in Mind



Suzanne DeChillo/The New York Times

KID CORNER A number of new condominiums in Yorkville have apartments of two bedrooms or more.

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Published: March 24, 2011

IT seemed fitting for the developers of the Isis, a new high-rise condominium in Yorkville, to invite local first graders to watch the building's construction. The neighborhood on the Upper East Side, once a German enclave of low- and midrise apartments, is becoming more popular with families because of its excellent schools and good real estate values.

In fact Alchemy Properties, the developer of the 32-unit Isis at 303 East 77th Street and Second Avenue designed the tower to have only apartments of two bedrooms or more, which could also be easily combined to make even larger living spaces for families. Isis is within walking distance of Public School 290, where the first graders attend school.

Yorkville, bounded by 72nd Street to the south and 96th Street to the north, and stretching from Third Avenue to the East River, has in recent years been popular among young professionals new to the working world. But an onslaught of development since the mid-2000s has removed some of the housing stock once favored by young, single people and replaced it with larger condominiums typically appealing to families.

As [Kenneth S. Horn](#), the president of Alchemy, put it, “We determined that in this particular area, it would be better to do a bit larger units as opposed to, say, another project we’re doing now on the Far West Side, where we have studios, one-bedrooms and one-bedrooms with dens.”

Isis is almost half sold, he said, “and I don’t think we’ve sold to any single people.” The developers threw a pizza party for their first-grade observers when they topped off the building in mid-2009.

Data provided by Miller Samuel Inc., a [Manhattan](#) real estate appraisal company, shows that 25 apartments of three bedrooms or more were sold in Yorkville in 2009, and 26 last year, compared with fewer than 10 in each of the two previous years. Over that time the number of studio sales shrank steadily, while the number of one-bedroom sales fell in the recession and then rebounded a bit in 2010.

Stuart Moss, a senior vice president and associate broker at the Corcoran Group, said the new developments in Yorkville, which include three on East 85th Street — [the Lucida](#), at No. 151; [the Brompton](#), at No. 205; and [the Georgica](#), at No. 305 — “have taken over a lot of those smaller, less-expensive former-tenement-type places that might have appealed to younger professionals.”

Some developers have found themselves combining apartments to create larger spaces, including those of the Brompton and the Lucida. Others including Alchemy have started out with mostly larger apartments. (In Alchemy’s case, the developer also included a popular line of two-bedroom apartments with a smaller kitchen-dining area and a “den” that could be used as a children’s playroom, among other things.)

The developers of [the Azure](#), at 333 East 91st Street and First Avenue, [the Mattone Group](#) and [the DeMatteis Organizations](#), began with 110 apartments of two

bedrooms or larger (and only 18 studios or one-bedrooms), and have continually found themselves combining apartments for buyers.

“We structured our building to allow for a combination of two two-bedroom apartments into a 3,000-square-foot four-bedroom,” said Douglas MacLaury, the senior vice president for development at the Mattone Group, “and that’s been one of our more successful products.” The building, which has a children’s playroom and a game room for teens, is about a third sold, he said.

Prices for new condominiums are \$1,400 to \$1,600 a square foot, Mr. Moss said, adding that an older co-op apartment might go for \$800 to \$900 a square foot. Combined apartments are becoming more common in the area’s co-ops, he said. Rena Goldstein, an associate broker with Halstead Properties who lives in Yorkville with her husband and 21-year-old son, agreed. She combined two units to create her three-bedroom apartment at 200 East 78th Street and Third Avenue

“Large apartments — larger than two bedrooms — are not that common in the older buildings,” Ms. Goldstein said. “So you’ll see in my building, for instance, there are a lot of combinations where people have put apartments together.”

Yorkville’s appeal to families is enhanced by its excellent public schools, as well as its many preschools. The Upper East Side, of which Yorkville is a part, also has some of the best private schools in the world, Mr. Moss said.

The neighborhood has two attractive parks — [Carl Schurz Park](#), the site of Gracie Mansion, and the smaller [John Jay Park](#) — plus [Asphalt Green](#), a nonprofit community recreation center on 5.5 acres with an Olympic-size pool, a fitness center and sports offerings.

Besides a variety of children’s activity centers, like Kidville on East 84th Street and the Art Farm in the City on East 91st, Yorkville has a number of stores like Gymboree and Planet Kids, which sell the necessities of childhood. Many restaurants are themed for children, and those that aren’t typically welcome them.

“There are a lot of kid-friendly cafes, where you don’t have to apologize for having a screaming kid,” said Jenny Rozenblat, who rents a 900-square-foot one-bedroom on 81st Street and First Avenue for \$2,100 a month with her husband and 9-month-old

daughter, Nadia.

As her daughter grows, Ms. Rozenblat said, she and her husband will probably find a new apartment — but only a few blocks west, within Yorkville, to get Nadia into the highly rated Public School 6, on 81st between Madison and Park. “It feels like it’s an understanding community here,” she said.