Normative urban instruments – such as setbacks, heights, etc. – define the maximum volume to be built on urban plots so as to ensure common good. With the chance of selling air rights, however, the incentive to trade the idle shares of a building’s volume becomes a way of subverting the law without affecting public space. This example shows how the combination of regulatory instruments and the compromise between private parties can completely define the form of a building.
Located in the Gramercy Park neighborhood of Manhattan, 160 East 22nd Street is a 21-story, 84-unit condominium apartment building. In addition to luxury residences, the structure includes ground floor retail space.

The design is based on a modern interpretation of the elegant and timeless classic pre-war apartment buildings in the neighborhood. The limestone-clad building’s massing is sculpted to incorporate a 24’ (7.3 m) cantilever, and punctuated with alternating deep set fenestration pattern. The building’s cantilever was conceived to successfully integrate additional development rights purchased by the property, while the required setbacks were incorporated into the composition, allowing the top-level apartment units to enjoy access to terraces.
**LEGEND / LEYENDA**

1. Vestíbulo residencias
   Residential lobby
2. Bodega
   Package room
3. Corredor de servicio
   Service corridor
4. Cabina de correos
   Mail booth
5. Almacén
   Storage
6. Local comercial
   Commercial
7. Corredor
   Corridor
8. Estar-comedor
   Living room and dining room
9. Dormitorio principal
   Main Bedroom
10. Dormitorio
    Bedroom
11. Caldera
    Boiler
Planta 15º y 20º piso
15th and 20th floor plan
E./S. 1: 250

Planta 16º a 19º piso
16th to 19th floor plan
E./S. 1: 250

LEYENDA / LEGEND
1. Vestíbulo residencias
   Residential lobby
2. Bodega
   Package room
3. Corredor de servicio
   Service corridor
4. Cabina de correos
   Mail booth
5. Almacén / Storage
6. Local comercial
   Commercial
7. Corredor / Corridor
8. Estar-comedor / Living room and dinning room
9. Dormitorio principal
   Main Bedroom
10. Dormitorio / Bedroom
11. Caldera / Boiler
Elevación oriente / East elevation
E. / S. 1:500

Elevación poniente / West elevation
E. / S. 1:500

Elevación sur / South elevation
E. / S. 1:500

Elevación norte / North elevation
E. / S. 1:500

Edificio adyacente
Adjoining building

Edificio adyacente
Adjoining building
As with the exterior design, the interior is comprised of classical proportions and contemporary character. A well-balanced variation of noble materials and details throughout the building creates a sleek style with a touch of luxury vintage, all executed by local craftsmen. Millwork details in the lobby and apartment units accentuate a sophisticated traditional touch, while the muted natural elements and white spaces stage the perfect backdrop for the owners’ eclectic styles.

Overall, 160 East 22nd Street’s design aims to blend classic contemporary lines with historic contextual influences, resolving complex vernacular New York City regulations, while meeting the fine aesthetic and pragmatic needs of its end users. ARQ
**160 East 22nd Street**

Arquitecto / Architect: S9 Architecture  
Ubicación / Location: 160 East 22nd Street, New York  
Cliente / Client: Toll Brothers City Living  
Materiales / Materials: Ladrillo monolítico portante / Monolithic load-bearing brick

Terminaciones / Finishings: Losas de hormigón visto, pisos de hormigón llaneado, carpinterías de aluminio anodizado negro / Exposed concrete slabs and floors, black anodized aluminum windows  
Superficie construida / Built surface: 10,776 m²  
Año de proyecto / Project year: 2011  
Año de construcción / Construction year: 2014

S9 Architecture is a New York based team of 70 designers whose works are concerned not so much in building Manhattan’s skyline as addressing the impacts of new spatial needs from a pedestrian point of view; they include residential, mixed and adaptive reuse projects. Among them are 205 Water Street in Brooklyn (2012) and Ponce City Market in Atlanta (2015), together with The New York Wheel, Empire Stores and 606 Broadway, currently under construction in New York City.
In the early 2000s a building in the Meatpacking district, the Porter House, took advantage of New York City’s buildings regulations to expand and overhang over and existing historic building. The cantilever operation was argued as material efficiency but also as a historic preservation strategy; it would cancel the possibility of building over the historic structure. That building was not only a smart joint venture between architecture and real estate, but one intervention that helped cast the transformation of NYC’s luxury residential market.

Modern, elegant, timeless, classic, luxury, vintage, local, sophisticated, traditional, noble, contemporary, sleek, historic and contextual, are all words used to describe the new residential – not housing – building in the 160 East 22nd Street of Manhattan. The building, learning and expanding on SHoP’s Meatpacking District building, took advantage of air-rights acquisition regulations to build more surface, more apartment units, and multiply the land’s footprint. The fifteen stories cantilever is not a heroic architectural achievement like that of early modernists, it’s not meant to be one; it is architecture been the product of spatial regulations in favor of square footage, not architectural innovation.

The building’s deep enclosure creates a stark homogenization of its exterior surface, a characteristic first developed in New York City’s corporate and financial skyscrapers, now expanded to every building type. The upside, it allows to have windows all around bringing more light to each unit. Unfortunately, the floor plan – a site for architectural achievement – loses its clarity subjected to an intricate core resulting from the agglomeration of spaces around it.

The building will, nevertheless, fulfill the end users’ desires, written, rendered and packaged in the building’s media as seen in Street Easy (the first result in a web search), and formalized in a broken address with 82 units in 21 stories. Its daily life will indeed be contextual, but contextual to New York City’s historic development of housing as a luxury and not as a right.