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A wall in distance is a point.

A wall in plan is a line.

A wall in elevation is a plane.

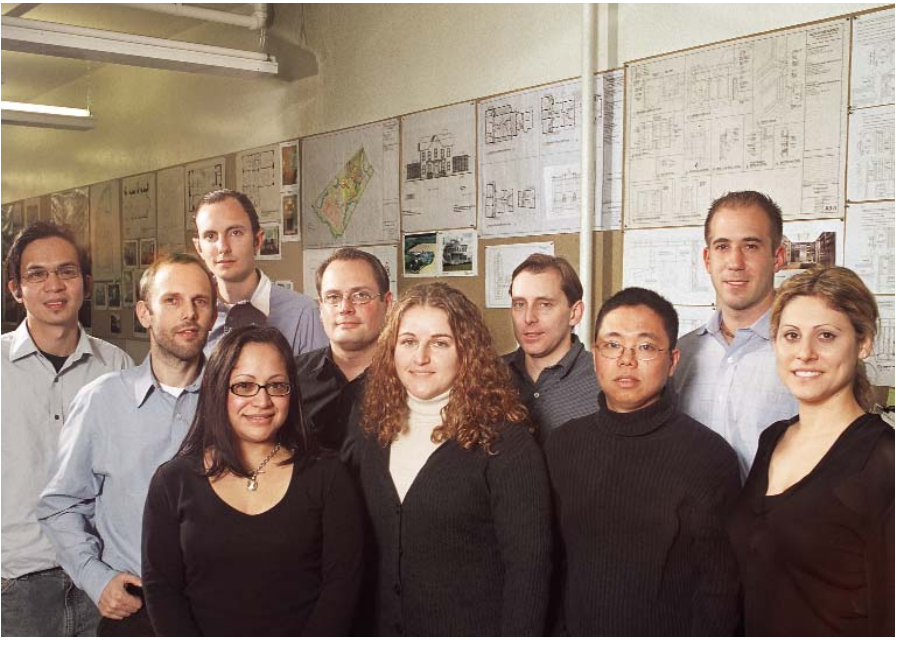
Geometry and architecture interelate. The elements of geometry transformed to three dimensions are the elements of architecture.

Walls protect, support, divide, display, exhibit and inform.

The Berlin Wall divides, the Wall of China protects, the Wall of Tolerance commemorates, the Ellis Island Wall of Immigrants memorializes. Each wall serves a purpose.

The 85 foot wall in our office displays projects and is the visual backdrop to the office. It represents our working philosophy to examine and critique as a team and is a tool to enhance our objectivity. We "walk the wall" with staff and clients.

This issue launches our new publication entitled "The Wall." It will be published quarterly beginning January 2004. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform and educate our readers on design, architecture, urban design and real estate issues.



The staff (photo at left) provides our clients with the highest level of service and design. A multidisciplinary approach to problem solving mirrors the cultural diversity of our office. We are a like minded group of young architects who are optimistic about the future of the profession and enthusiastic about architectural practice in New York City and the tri-state region.

HOW TO STRETCH A BUILDING

STEVEN KRATCHMAN, AIA

TO STRETCH AN EXISTING BUILDING requires creativity on the part of the architect, property manager, and board of directors to meet current market requirements and the demands made by customers. Maximizing the value of every square inch of an existing property and adapting to changes in family size and differing lifestyles are trends that are on the rise to keep and attract tenants/shareholders. To effectively compete for residents it is desirable for buildings to feature landscaped courtyards, roof terraces, fitness centers, party rooms, and storage facilities. On a regular basis families are staying put and combining apartments in lieu of moving out. In order to accommodate these trends, even in "pre-zoning", over-built properties, existing provisions in the building code can be utilized.

STRETCH OPPORTUNITY NO. 1: THE "ONE PERCENT RULE"

The "one percent rule" used to be "as of right." It permitted the building department commissioner to increase the floor area of a building one percent of the total beyond what is allowed by zoning. Today this rule is discretionary. The commissioner evaluates each application case by case. Considerations include the date of the original building, the proposed area increase, the proposed use, and consistency with acknowledged socio-economic trends. An established trend is the need to enlarge resident manager's apartments to provide for a family. A typical application consists of a letter to the commissioner stating the facts and the request supported by drawings, signed and sealed by a registered architect or engineer. The commissioner can issue a "letter of no objection" and grant the request on behalf of the landlord, board, or tenant. The "one percent rule" can be used in combination with the opportunities described below.

STRETCH OPPORTUNITY NO. 2: PROVIDE ACCESS TO UNACCESSIBLE AREAS

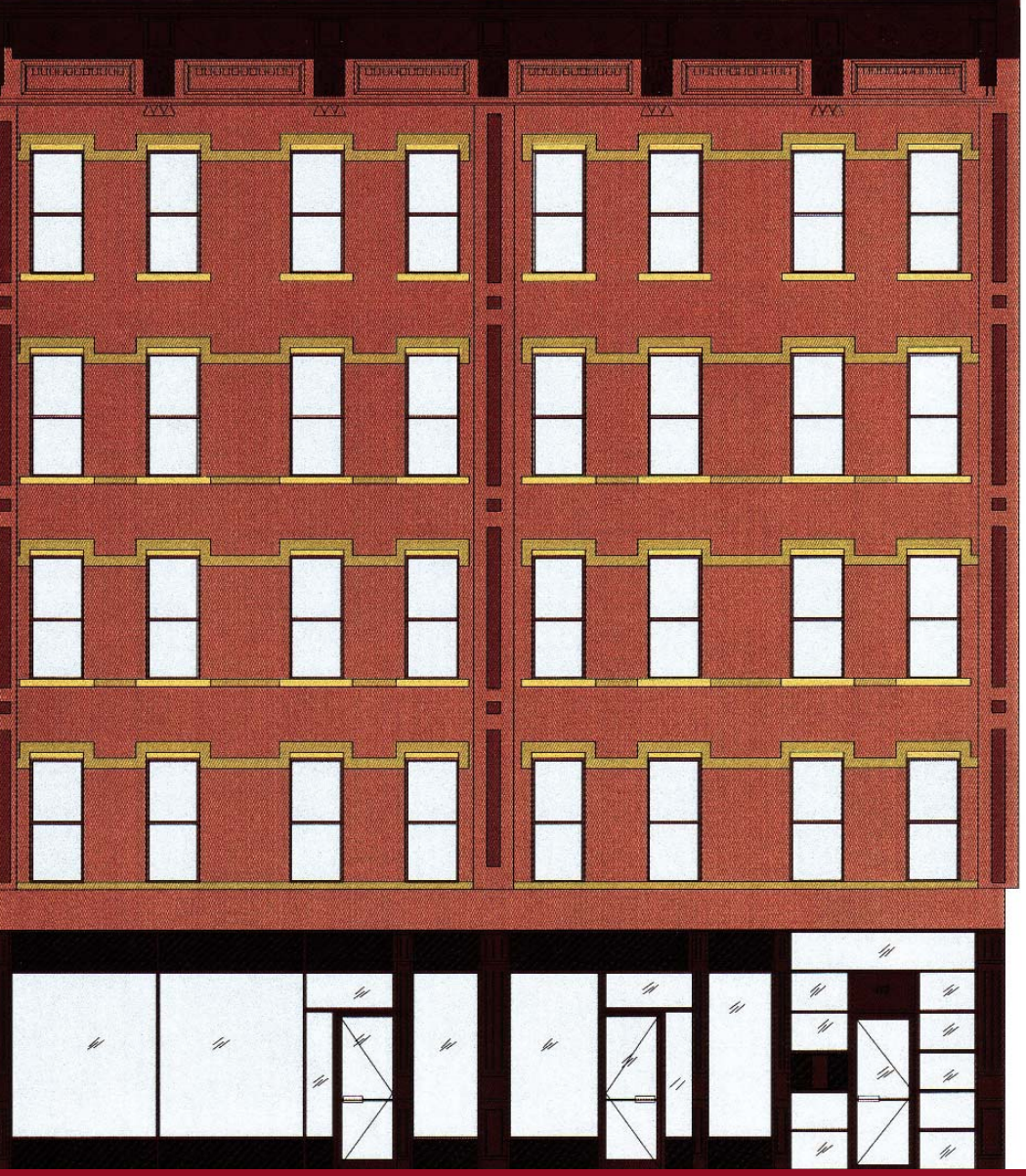
Multi-family residential buildings, unlike their commercial counterparts, frequently have under-used roofs, maid's rooms, subcellars, bulkheads and tank rooms. Rooftops can be converted to common terraces. The structural roof loading capacity must be verified, as the code requirements for roofs are less than"promenades," the name the code assigns to rooftop occupancies. The certificate of occupancy may also need amending to allow for rooftop use. Raising or lowering the elevator in an elevator building one stop may sound complicated and expensive. However, when combined with a planned capital expenditure of elevator mechanical upgrades, along with the benefit to the residents of accessing a rooftop previously inaccessible, the project may seem less formidable. Handicap access to all building floor levels is increasingly important, whether or not it is required by code. With creativity and careful planning a building may be able to re-use an existing space in the lower level of a tank room (the water tank is required to be raised twelve feet above the roof level).

Former maid's rooms often are under-used and they can be converted to amenities such as storage, fitness centers, or party rooms. The code does not require natural light and air to these types of ancillary occupancies. Design professionals should be consulted in these projects regarding permitting and life safety.

STRETCH OPPORTUNITY NO. 3: FLOOR AREA CREDITS FOR MECHANICAL USES

A basic provision in the building code and zoning regulations states that mechanical floor area is not counted towards building floor area. It can be successfully argued and demonstrated by supporting data, calculations and drawings before a commissioner that successive, incremental air conditioning modifications have used up floor area. Floor mounted units, duct penetrations and related equipment, when added together, on commercial and residential floors can be significant. Sometimes 250 square feet can make a difference and enable a resident manager's apartment to be expanded.

Real estate professionals know that buildings are originally built for a certain type of user. Over time the user tends to change. It is important to know that owners have options to adapt to these changes. Learning to stretch an existing building provides flexibility, continued use, and greater value.



172 East 106th Street, NYC

The existing multifamily residential properties consist of two adjacent five-storey brick walk-ups with a commerical base built in the 1880's.

The two properties were merged allowing a series of architectural changes that otherwise would not have been permitted. Ground floor commercial space was significantly increased by removing a redundant stair from grade to second level. A crossover floor was created on the second level to connect one building to the other. Twenty two (22) new class "A" apartments were created within the original envelope where there were only sixteen (16).

An additional apartment was located in the cellar for use by the building superintendent. The building code does not allow residential uses in a cellar. This is the only exception as designated by building commissioner's directive.

Forty percent (40%) of the floor joists were replaced. New electrical, heating and plumbing services were provided. The building is fully occupied and includes a local florist and a Cuban restaurant.

PROJECT DATA

CLIENT **E 106th Street Partnership**

PROJECT SF **18,000**

CONTRACTOR **Matrix Construction**

PROJECT COST **2.0 million**

480 Park Avenue, NYC

The 1920's era luxury apartment building constructed prior to current zoning regulations is over-built according to today's standards.

The following two separate projects stretched this existing building to increase the property's value and accommodate changes in family size and different lifestyles:

1) A rooftop garden and terrace were created by *stretching* the elevator one stop higher as part of a larger elevator machine room upgrade. The new elevator bulkhead was designed to fit the space in an existing room under the raised water tank.

2)The resident manager's apartment was expanded to two bedrooms by joining the existing unit to a former under-used maid's room located directly below.

PROJECT DATA

CLIENT **480 Park Avenue Associates**

PROJECT SF **5,000 (combined)**

CONTRACTOR **480 Park Avenue Associates**

PROJECT COST **750,000 (combined)**

413 West 13th Street, NYC

This project was at the vanguard of the Meat Packing District's conversion from predominantly industrial/manufacturing uses to commercial, retail and gallery.

Six stories were added to an existing three-storey warehouse structure at the 13th Street side. Two new elevators and two new fire stairs were inserted. Existing columns were reinforced down to the footings. Foundation was expanded to accommodate the load generated by the six new stories.

New floors are 14 feet high and are outfitted with oversized windows to take advantage of the Hudson River and City views. The building is fully occupied and includes two art galleries and a training facility for Bumble & Bumble, an Estee Lauder company. The project was built as designed and as-of-right with no special approvals.

PROJECT DATA

CLIENT **SUB 412 Associates, LLC**

PROJECT SF **60,000**

CONTRACTOR **SUB 412 Associates, LLC**

PROJECT COST **15 million**

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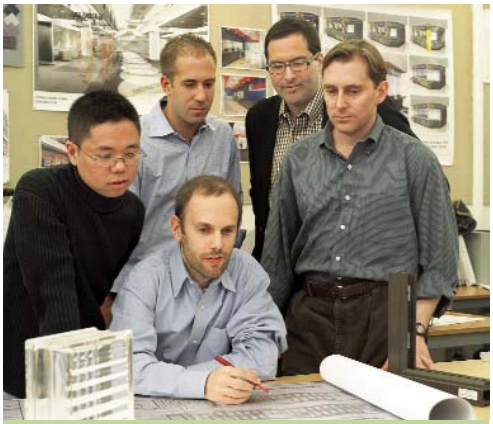

STAFF AT WORK

STEVEN KRATCHMAN ARCHITECT, P.C., IS A FULL SERVICE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN FIRM WHICH PLACES SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON SERVING REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS, PROPERTY AND RESIDENTIAL MANAGERS IN BOTH COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL SECTORS.

WE SPECIALIZE IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF PROJECT TYPES

building architect services
real estate development projects
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single and multifamily residential
retail, restaurant, and showroom
professional and commercial offices
historic preservation and landmarks
waterfront developments
roll-out projects
interior design

OUR AVAILABLE SERVICES ARE

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project management
construction supervision
expediting

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