

Under Construction



WHO'S WHO FOR 5 COLUMBUS CIRCLE

LANDLORD: 1790 BROADWAY ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECT: LB ARCHITECTS
ENGINEERS: TAS ENGINEERING
BROKER: JLL

COMING FULL CIRCLE: In a more than \$10 million renovation plan, the owner of 5 Columbus Circle plans to remove the aluminum of the lower floors and put cast stone to match the building's original Vermont marble facade (left). Also it has upgraded elevators (top middle) and plans to replace double-hung windows (right). And some columns through out the building have been stripped (bottom middle).

By Liam La Guerre

While the trend around the city has been to modernize older office buildings, like replacing stone facades with glass sheets, the owner of 5 Columbus Circle is doing the opposite.

Some decades ago the base of the 21-story, 239,000-square-foot building (with an address of 1790 Broadway) was covered with aluminum. So as part of a more than \$10 million renovation plan, landlord 1790 Broadway Associates (comprising a group of investors) is planning to remove the aluminum and replace it with cast stone that would resemble the Vermont marble facade of the upper portion of the building so there will be more continuity between the bottom

and top of the tower.

"There's a lot of effort in the city to create brand spanking new things, but this building is going to go back to what it looked like in its glory days," Claire Milonas, the co-president of 1790 Broadway LLC, the managing entity for the landlord, told *Commercial Observer* during a recent tour of the construction project. "It was a beautiful design. And it's going to reclaim its position as a historic building of New York City."

The building was built in 1911 as the headquarters for the United States Rubber Company—a tire manufacturer—at a time when that section of Midtown was called "Automobile Row" due to a proliferation of car dealerships in the area.

The city's Landmarks Preservation

Commission designated the structure a landmark in December 2000 (the landlord has approvals for the facade work from LPC). Designed by architects John Mervin Carrère and Thomas Hastings, the well-known pair behind the New York Public Library's main branch on Fifth Avenue, 5 Columbus Circle features a marble lobby and a bullnose Flatiron Building-like design at the corner of West 58th Street and Broadway. It has fireplaces on the four upper floors.

Retail chain Nordstrom will open an 8,000-square-foot retail space on the base floors of 1790 Broadway as part of its larger Columbus Circle campus.

While the exterior will go back in time, the landlord has upgraded the elevator mechanicals (of which there are six

passenger and two freight) and plans to replace the classic double-hung window frames with new ones. The renovation project also includes new building systems, boilers and cooling towers and the revitalization of a courtyard. And the landlord stripped some columns to reveal the steel beams. The project is expected to be completed next year.

"Our building is a fabulous commercial space for tenants who want a little bit of the old, a little bit of the Downtown feeling, the open floor plates as well as on higher-up floors, with sweeping views of [Central Park]," said Milonas, who shares the co-president title with her sister Sofia. "Our upgrades to the building, allow for state-of-the-art facilities."