

L+M and CIM Group Reveal Plans For Massive Project in Two Bridges Area



Expanded retail on Cherry Street is part of the new development plan. Rendering by Handel Architects.

[L+M Development Partners](#) and the [CIM Group](#) are unveiling plans tonight for a new project at 260 South St. that will add more than one-million square feet of residential and commercial space in the Two Bridges neighborhood. The development team outlined the proposal for two towers, the tallest measuring nearly 800 feet, in an interview with **The Lo-Down** earlier this week. They briefed local residents in a neighboring complex, which the developers also own, this evening.

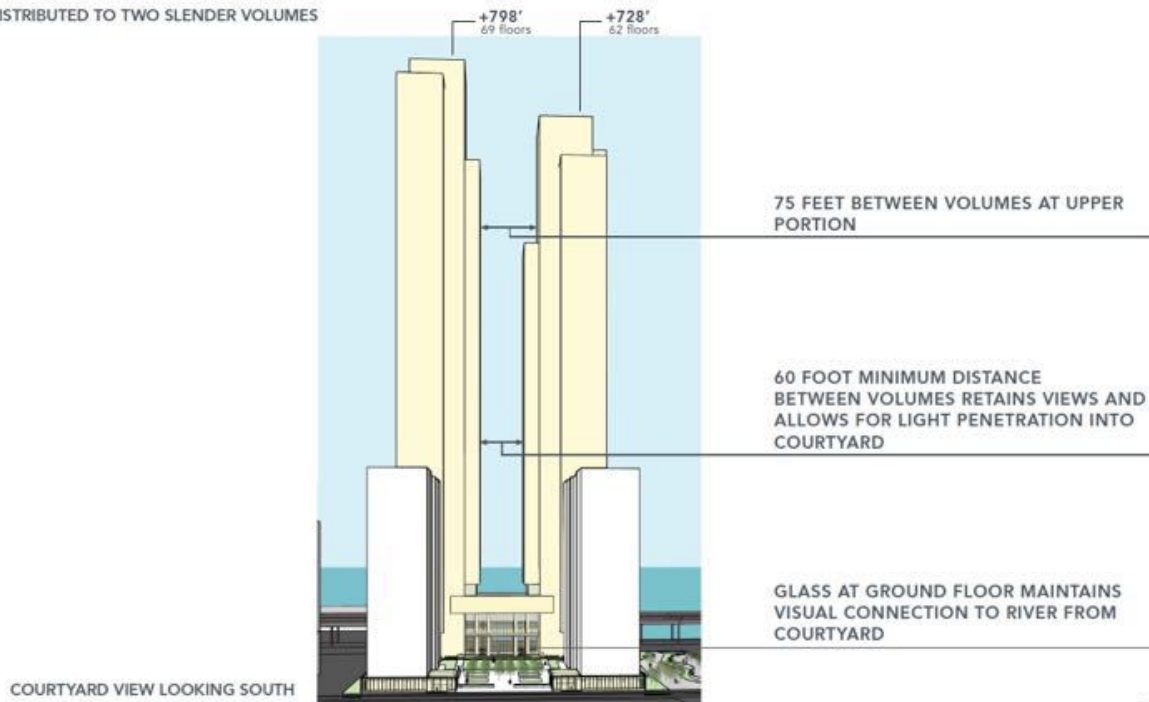
The massive complex is one of four large-scale projects set to transform the Two Bridges community in the next several years. It will include up to 1350 apartments, as many as 338 of the units set aside for low-income and/or middle-income families. Some senior housing is anticipated. The developers also plan new ground floor retail on Cherry Street, new green spaces and upgraded flood protection systems.

L+M and CIM Group partnered in 2013 to [purchase 265-275 Cherry St.](#) (also known as Lands End II), Section 8 rental towers with 490 apartments. The following year, they picked up an adjacent parking lot on South Street, which is where the new towers are going to rise.

In our interview Wednesday morning, David Dishy, L+M partner and president of development and acquisition; Katherine Kelman, L+M associate director; and Alex Kafenbaum, associate with the CIM Group walked us through preliminary details of the ambitious project. In recent years, L+M Development has become a familiar presence on the Lower East Side. It's part of the partnership building the large [Essex Crossing project](#) on Delancey Street and has other developments in-the-works throughout the East Village. CIM Group is a Los Angeles-based firm that has become a major player in New York City during the past few years. Among other projects, it's building condos at [100 Barclay St.](#) and [432 Park Avenue](#).

PROPOSED DESIGN

AREA REDISTRIBUTED TO TWO SLENDER VOLUMES



Massing diagram from community presentation.

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[Handel Architects](#), tasked with designing the new project, is still working on concept drawings for the two skinny towers. In the meantime, the developers are making available sketches depicting the overall size, shape and positioning of the buildings.

As you can see in the illustration posted here, the larger tower will measure 798 feet, or 69 floors. The shorter tower will top out at 728 feet, or 62 stories (the number of floors could change based on conversations with city planning officials). "The overall concept," explained Kelman, "is that it's two slender towers on a shared podium with a single lobby." The towers start out 60-feet apart and there are a series of setbacks as they rise. On the upper floors, the distance between the buildings grows to 75 feet. "They're intentionally differentiated," she said, "to create some visual interest."

The team looked at building a single structure stretching across most of the lot on South Street, but concluded that it would have blocked light and views to the East River, in her words, "diminishing the quality of the entire site." It also would have made the open recreational spaces on the property a lot less appealing. "So, instead we decided on two towers," said Kelman, "with space between them and a lobby with a ground floor that has a lot of transparency (allowing people on Cherry Street to see through to the river)."

The biggest drawback for current residents is a significant one. The new towers will back up to the existing buildings, blocking windows facing the river in about 100 apartments. "But all of those apartments," said Kelman, "also have rooms facing east or west that are the legal light and air and they will continue to be used as they are now." This was, to no one's surprise, a major point of contention at tonight's community meeting (we'll have a recap of the meeting tomorrow).



Preliminary open space design. Rendering by Handel Architects.

The developers are obviously very much aware that people in the Two Bridges neighborhood are, at best, skeptical of new development projects. Noise, buckling sidewalks and other construction problems from Extell's 80-story [One Manhattan Square](#) mega-tower have caused consternation in the local community. Plans announced last spring by [JDS Development for a 77-story residential tower](#) at 247 Cherry St. raised new worries.

This is one of the reasons they're emphasizing new amenities for the residents of Lands End II, the property they've owned for the past three years. As Kelman explained, "We own the Cherry Street buildings, we own the development site. We want both properties to be successful. We are using the new building as an opportunity to make improvements to the Cherry Street properties, as well, and to improve the quality of life on the block for existing residents and new residents."

While there's quite a bit of open space on the property now, it's underutilized and dominated by concrete rather than grass and trees. The landscape architecture firm, [Mathews Nielsen](#), was hired to evaluate all of the recreational areas within a 10 minute walk of the development site. They found a fair number of basketball courts and playgrounds, but not much in the way of community gardens and open spaces for seniors to exercise. Early plans call for new seating areas, landscaping, separate ADA-compliant play areas for toddlers and older kids, spaces for seniors and a lawn for passive and active recreation. There will be two design workshops early next year for residents to help design the new outdoor amenities.

PROPOSED SITE LANDSCAPING AND PROGRAMMING

PROPOSED GROUND COVER
 • 48% GREEN/EARTH
 • 52% ASPHALT/CONCRETE



Drawing by Mathews Nielsen.

In accordance with guidelines instituted after Hurricane Sandy, the new project will be elevated above the 100-year-floodplain. In order to protect the existing Cherry Street buildings, the developers are looking at a network of earthen berms, flood walls and temporary flood protection gates.

Also on Cherry Street, plans call for building out retail spaces almost to the property line. At the moment, the Lands End II complex features only one commercial business, a Stop 1 Deli. After the local Pathmark store closed a few years ago to make way for Extell's luxury tower, the deli became just about the only place in the immediate area to buy food. In the expanded commercial spaces, the developers explained, a small grocery store or a pharmacy (perhaps as large as 4,000 square feet) could be accommodated.

Finally, 103 parking spaces in the current surface lot will be replaced with underground parking and a new community room will be built in a space currently occupied by Two Bridges Neighborhood Council.

As each new development project has been announced, residents in the Two Bridges area have expressed new fears about change in a neighborhood long considered a bastion of stable affordable housing. Thousands of market rate apartments will be created in the next several years. But this development team is underscoring its commitment to affordable housing. In 2013, they agreed to extend the affordable housing contract at Lands End II for 40 years, protecting 490 apartments. In the new project, 25% of the units will be designated as permanently affordable. They'll be evenly distributed throughout the towers. There will be no "poor door."



265-275 Cherry St.

During the next year, there will be an enhanced environmental review in the Two Bridges area to address community concerns about the three large-scale projects on the drawing board. All of the developers, including L+M and CIM Group, have agreed to take part in a series of upcoming community meetings (we'll have more about the upcoming sessions on Monday).

The developers of 260 South St. say they'll meet with local residents on a regular basis to discuss concerns about construction. Dishy said L+M will be using Essex Crossing, where the development team has placed a high priority on community engagement, as a model. In that project, he said, it's been important to the partners to establish good credibility in the neighborhood. "We want to maintain that credibility and continue that reputation for being forthright, transparent and for having good communication with (the neighborhood)," said Dishy.

Kafenbaum agreed that local engagement regarding construction issues will be key. "Recognizing that we own the adjacent buildings," he said, "is a really important thing because we want to be really good landlords and good management companies that recognize the needs of our existing residents." Kafenbaum added, "There have been a lot of construction issues in the (Two Bridges) neighborhood over these current buildings (but in the new project) there is no one who would want to better protect the people in the immediately adjacent buildings than us."

In summing up the project, Dishy acknowledged that the towers are obviously "big buildings," but he argued that there is an upside for the community. "We appreciate what makes the Two Bridges neighborhood special," he said. "It's what got us here in the first place." The proximity to the East River, Lower Manhattan's mixed-income character, the neighborhood's access to public transportation were all

selling points for the development team. Dishy added, "We are trying, as much as possible, to maintain that sense of community, to create a project (that will lead local residents to ultimately say), 'You know, these are big buildings, but they're really nice and it's made life better for folks who live here now,' both (in terms of) open space, access to the water, community space, all of those kinds of things."

After going through an environmental review and undergoing an approval process with the Department of City Planning, the developers hope to begin construction in 2018 and complete the project in 2021.

The developers of 260 South St., as well as JDS Development Group and the Starrett Corp, which is [planning a large project at 271-283 South St.](#), will present their proposals at a public meeting Dec. 15 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at Gouverneur Health, 227 Madison St.

Coming up tomorrow, a report from last night's community meeting, including reaction from residents regarding the new towers in the Two Bridges neighborhood.