

# 40 BOND STREET

## Diamonds Are Forever



Facing page: © courtesy Circursa; this page: © Handel Architects

**Facing** The bell-shaped glass mullions make a subtle reference to the neighborhood's cast iron facades.  
**Above** Frits in the glass conceal the underlying carrier frame.



**New York is awash in luxury housing** developments, so it takes a lot to stand out from the crowd. The architects, engineers, and fabricators behind 40 Bond Street, an ultra high-end condominium by developer Ian Schrager, took this to heart in creating a facade system for their building that is unlike any other in Manhattan or, for that matter, the world. Cast aluminum gates, stainless steel plates, curved bottle-green glass, and blackened copper come together to create a rich architectural experience that is so iconic, yet so responsive to its context that it is high tribute to both the designers and those who helped transform their design into reality.

Located in the historic NoHo (short for North of Houston Street) neighborhood 40 Bond draws on its surroundings without trying to mimic them. The design architects, Swiss firm Herzog & de Meuron, collaborated with New York-based Handel Architects as the architects of record to develop the project. Herzog & de Meuron are best known for their minimal modern compositions, but here they indulged in a highly ornamental design that takes its cues from the neighborhood's richly detailed cast-iron buildings. These precedents, darkened with age and shadow, as well as the vestiges of industrial grit, inform the new building's design, which succeeds in reinterpreting these elements in complex and contemporary ways. But don't think columns and pediments—40 Bond's street elevation looks more like a massive,

shining vitrine than a classical temple.

The architects divided the 40,000-square-foot, 27-unit building into two distinct parts: Duplex units modeled on townhouses occupy the first two floors, and more typical condo units fill out the eight upper floors, topped by a penthouse. The design of the facade reflects this division in program. On the upper floors, the design approximates its cast iron neighbors by couching floor-to-ceiling windows in a grid of bottle-green glass "bells," the term the architects use to describe the bell-shaped mullions. Though the entire facade appears to be a monolithic panel—a tribute to detailing and execution—it is composed of multiple layers. "It's a rain screen over a window wall," explains Asheshh Saheba of executive architect Handel Architects. Operable windows, featuring insulated Viracon vision glass panels with a green tint to meet the shading coefficient, are anchored to the building's frame forming a window wall. The rain screen is constructed of aluminum carrier frames adhered to the windows using silicone. A decorative mirror-finished stainless steel plate covers the carrier frame and is topped by the curving green glass—also adhered using silicone—that borders the edges of each window. Variable frits on the bells conceal the carrier frame, opaque at the edge dissolving to clear at the apex of the curve. The entire facade was installed piece-by-piece by ornamental ironworkers using mechanical lifts. Viewed from certain angles,





the curved glass reflects the steel plates, making them nearly as reflective as chrome. From other points of view, the glass reads simply as glass, which, because of its unconventional application, is enough to stop passersby in their tracks. “We wanted the building to look like it was shrink-wrapped in glass,” said Saheba.

Below, on the first and second floors, things get even more unconventional. Richly detailed cast aluminum gates, forming a filigree pattern inspired by graffiti tags, provide privacy and security for residents of the street-level townhouses. The architects worked with Munich-based designer/producer EXYD in creating the gates. Using photographs of graffiti from around the city taken by the architects, scanned, and converted into vector files. EXYD digitally combined the images to create the unique pattern, a kind of controlled chaos of graffiti swirls. It then added depth to the pattern in order to generate a digital model in three dimensions. CNC milling was used to transform the digital model into a full-scale foam model. The foam model was then packed into a form with wet sand, and molten aluminum was poured into the mold, instantly melting the foam model and filling the cavity with what would become the finished gating.

The architects and engineers worked together to design nearly invisible hardware for the massive gates, which enclose 25-foot

bays along the street. For residents, these gates keep their duplexes from feeling like storefronts. “The townhouses are meant to read as a different portion of the building,” Saheba said. Behind the gates, a concave alcove, clad with embossed 1/8-inch-thick stainless steel panels attached to the building with “Z” clips, serves as a small front porch area. The same graffiti-inspired pattern was machine hammered using a CNC router into the stainless steel panels, giving them a slightly raised decorative surface pattern.

40 Bond’s rear, or north, elevation echoes the street facade, but uses blackened copper, a slightly less expensive material, instead of curved glass in the rain screen. The copper, however, will change with time, eventually developing a green patina, bringing it closer to the color of the south side. This tension between the shining south side and the more subdued north side creates a fascinating contrast that remains in harmony with its surroundings. Contemporary design rarely takes this kind of long view, acknowledging the life of buildings long after the pages of glossy magazines have begun to yellow. There is no question that the rich detailing and superb workmanship at 40 Bond helped make this acknowledgment an entirely successful one. ■

**Previous** While the facade appears as though it’s a monolithic panel, it is actually composed of a rain screen over a window wall.

**Above left** Ironworkers used mechanical lifts to install the wall system.

**Above right** The courtyard facade features blackened copper mullions that will develop a green patina to resemble the street facade.

**Opposite** The graffiti-inspired gates that shelter the townhouses were cast from a foam model made with a CNC milling machine.

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#### 40 BOND STREET

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 Developer: **Ian Schragger Company**  
 Design Architect: **Herzog & de Meuron, Basel, Switzerland**  
 Architect of Record: **Handel Architects, LLP, New York, NY**  
 Client’s Representative: **David J. Spector & Associates, Inc., New York, NY**  
 Structural Engineer: **DeSimone Consulting Engineers, New York, NY**  
 Mechanical Engineer: **Ambrosino DePinto & Schmieder, New York, NY**  
 General Contractor: **Bovis Lend Lease LMB, Inc., New York, NY**  
 Facade Consultant: **Israel Berger & Associates, Inc., New York, NY**  
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