

Yorkville Is Turning Chic and Costly

Continued From Page 1

whole area will be totally developed. "And then the question is: Can it go above 96th Street?" he said. Now under way, he added, is the construction of 980 apartment units, and 1,300 more are possible in the next several years.

The newcomers pay rents that shock the old-timers living in \$200-a-month rent-stabilized railroad flats and are viewed with some wariness by people like Susie Faldetta, 21 years old, who grew up in a tenement on 96th Street and wistfully remembers the old days when "everybody knew everybody else and no one on the whole block was rich."

The newcomers have tastes that attract merchants like Beverly Fetter, who recently opened Main Course, a gourmet catering shop at 1008 Third Avenue near 90th Street. While Mrs. Fetter was at first skeptical about Yorkville — "I used to drive down Second Avenue with my doors locked," she said — a quick study of the people who wait each morning for the Wall Street Express on the corner of 92d Street and York Avenue convinced her that she would have no trouble finding takers for such offerings as coq au vin, duck à l'orange and chocolate mousse.

YOU could smell it — the young vital people who will be my market," she said as she supervised the final touches at her store, with its earth-tone walls and track lighting.

Like other new merchants and residents, Mrs. Fetter turned to Yorkville when she found she could not afford the rents elsewhere. She said she was paying \$1,750 a month for her 750-square-foot shop space; a comparable amount of space on Columbus Avenue, on the West Side, would have cost her \$3,700 a month.

Many of her customers will undoubtedly come from across the street, where the brick towers of the Ruppert Urban Renewal Project loom in place of the old Ruppert Brewery that once provided jobs for the neighborhood. The apartment buildings — Ruppert Towers, Yorkville Towers and Knickerbocker Plaza — were completed eight years ago and the presence of 1,838 Mitchell-Lama rental apartments is credited with spurring major redevelopment above 96th Street.

Three years ago, Eberhart Brothers Inc. bought five buildings between Second and Third Avenues on the north side of 96th Street — the unofficial dividing line between Upper East Side and East Harlem — and renovated 40 apartments. The rents began at \$350 for a studio and \$600 for a one-bedroom. "We're shocked at the rents we got," Frank Eberhart said. "We thought we'd do well. We didn't think we'd do that well. There are investment bankers living in those buildings."

Real-estate people and progress-minded residents invariably use the word exciting to describe such developments in Yorkville, a neighborhood that until the post-World War II years was overwhelmingly German, Irish,

Hungarian, Austrian, Czechoslovakian and, until recently, a less-than-fashionable address.

"Years ago," said Edith Fisher, chairman of the development committee of Community Board 8, with jurisdiction over Yorkville, "anything east of Third Avenue was déclassé."

Not everyone welcomes Yorkville's growing identification with the rest of the Upper East Side, however. Mrs. Fisher's board, for one, expressed its concern by asking the Department of City Planning to prepare an impact study. It also is trying to downgrade some of the zoning along the mid-blocks.

Some people think there has already been too much change. "The neighborhood's becoming sterile," said Tony Morenzi, who grew up there and now works as Assemblyman Granata's assistant. On a walk around the streets of his childhood, he lamented the loss of such landmarks as Louie's Pharmacy on Second Avenue near 94th Street.

"If you got hurt, you didn't go to the doctor," he said. "You went straight to Louie. He could give you a butterfly stitch." Louie's is now a Bimble's.

Yorkville has always been a neighborhood of contrasts, where the Mayor's residence, Gracie Mansion, and the East End Avenue enclave of elegant apartments are only a few blocks from the Stanley Isaacs and John Haynes Holmes public housing projects; where Elaine's, the saloon of the literati, is just around the corner from a soup kitchen, where five- and six-story tenements share the same streets as private brownstones and expensive high-rises. It always has been home to a mix of the rich, the middle class and the poor, but the poor used to predominate and now they are being pushed out.

Mr. Morenzi said Mr. Granata's office had received complaints of landlord harassment of elderly tenants who often pay less than \$200 a month for the same railroad flats that newcomers are willing to rent for \$600 and up.

DAVID STERN, executive director of the Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association, which serves a large part of the Upper East Side, agreed. "There are tremendous economic incentives for landlords to get people out," he said. "Three or four years ago, if an elderly person became confused and became forgetful about paying rent, the landlord would call us up and say: 'Could you look in on so and so?'"

"Today that same landlord will not call us, or will sue for dispossession or eviction. He'll say to himself: 'Hey — I want to make \$700 a month rent.'"

The first residents will soon move into a 12-story, 82-unit cooperative at 402 East 90th Street called River East Plaza, formerly a garage. The one-bedroom, priced between \$113,363 and \$167,475, are already sold out, according to John Cashman, a sales agent for J.I. Sopher & Company. "You go down 10 blocks, and you start at \$80,000 and \$70,000 more," Mr. Cashman said. "Down lower you get a glitzy lobby and smaller rooms."

The first occupants also are moving into

the Park East, a 22-story, 56-unit cooperative at 233 East 86th Street, where studios are priced at \$83,000 and a duplex penthouse is \$294,000.

In the next year ground will be broken for at least six major buildings:

• The Milstein family plans to erect a high-rise rental-apartment project of 939 units at 215 East 95th Street on the block bounded by 95th and 96th Streets and Second and Third Avenues.

• Solomon Equities will build a 292-unit residential development at 93d and 94th Streets at Second Avenue that will include a 32-story building, 12 town houses, a landscaped courtyard and commercial space.

The project, according to Jean Solomon, should attract an upper-middle-class clientele, families and singles. The construction manager is Tishman Realty & Construction. The architects are Schuman, Claman, Lichenstein & Efron, with the firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill as design consultants.

THIS is the new area for continuing development," said Mrs. Solomon, who owns Solomon Equities with her husband, David Solomon. The couple are completing Tower 49, an office building at Madison Avenue between 48th and 49th Streets.

• Glenwood Management will start next spring on two luxury residential rental high-rise projects totaling 498 units at York Avenue between 90th and 92nd Streets.

• At Third Avenue between 93d and 94th Streets, within the Ruppert Urban Renewal Site, Related Housing, Tishman Realty & Construction Company — builders of the Tower Trade Center and the John Hancock Tower in Chicago — and Wayne Kasbar, the developer, will build Carnegie Park, a 372-unit luxury high-rise.

• At Second and Third Avenues and 93d and 94th Streets, also within the Ruppert site, the New York Foundation for Senior Citizens will build 131 rental apartments for the elderly and handicapped.

According to a report by Community Board 8, the finished or nearly finished projects in the last five years include two luxury apartment buildings on East 96th Street, residential towers on Third Avenue at 96th Street and on East 93d and 94th Streets at First Avenue. In addition, a condominium tower has risen at 223 East 88th Street, and several older buildings in the neighborhood have been remodelled.

"It's not dramatic, but it's like a rebirth," said Mrs. Fisher, of Community Board 8. "This is the last frontier."

While developers and residents talk of a building boom in Yorkville, the assessment of Rebecca Robertson, a city planner, is more cautious. "I'm not sure it's changing as fast as people think," she said. "This area has not yet reached its development potential. I wouldn't say it's booming in terms of development. It's starting to happen."

Most of the pressure, she said, will be on the avenues, where there is prime space available for new high-rises. One such plot is

at the northwest corner of 94th Street and First Avenue, where three nearly empty and derelict tenements are being offered for \$2 million, an asking price predicted not on their current value but on their development potential.

Though Stanley Isaacs Houses are just across the street, any tall building erected on the plot would command river views with a high market value.

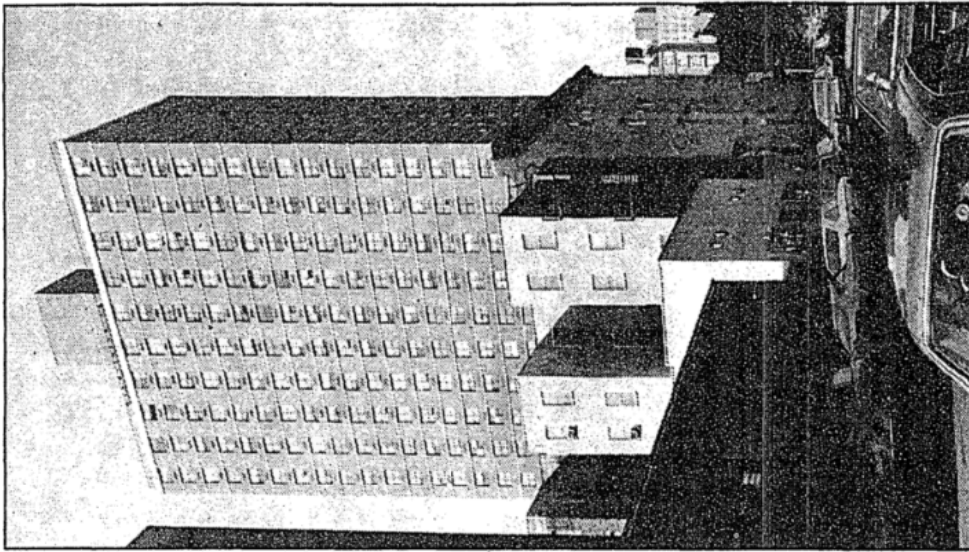
In addition to fears about the eroding character of the neighborhood, the new development has brought concerns that services will be overtaxed and overcrowded.

At rush hour, the Lexington Avenue subway already operates close to or at crush capacity, according to a recent impact study by the city's Office of City Planning. The rush-hour line of riders waiting to buy tokens at the 86th Street station stretches onto the street.

But even though Yorkville is changing, traces of the old neighborhood linger. The Ideal Restaurant, which opened 51 years ago, is still on 86th Street, its long counter packed at mealtimes with people who like German food and know a bargain when they see one — potato pancakes with applesauce for \$3.75, Wiener schnitzel, string beans and cabbage and potatoes for \$4.95.

Mr. Morenzi still lives with his wife and three children in the kind of apartment building that once prevailed, a five-story walk-up where the residents are not just neighbors but also friends.

The parents of a grade-school friend of his also live there, along with a former boxer, a 90-year-old man and an actor. Keeping the tenants happy is the resident super, Johnny



The New York Times/Jack Manning

New apartment tower at Third Ave. and 95th St. looms over typical low-rise Yorkville buildings.

Stanton, who also is a published short-story writer.

Mr. Morenzi works on First Avenue, next to Glaser's Bake Shop, where croissants were recently introduced. Despite its new offering, Glaser's, with its tin ceiling, solid oak cabinets and one of the bakers in residence upstairs, is much as it was 81 years ago, when it was opened by a German immigrant named John Glaser. Today his son and two grandsons run the bakery.

The newcomers could easily go to other, fancier bakeries, but they come instead to Glaser's — a sign, perhaps, of the continuing appeal of the old character of the neighborhood.