

= The St. James =

The St. James is a luxury residential skyscraper in Washington Square West , Philadelphia , Pennsylvania , United States . The 498 feet (152 m) , 45 @-@ story high @-@ rise stands along Walnut Street and Washington Square and is the 12th tallest building in Philadelphia .

The Chicago @-@ style , glass @-@ and @-@ concrete skyscraper incorporated into its design several historic 19th @-@ century buildings that lined Walnut Street . These buildings included three Federal @-@ style rowhouses built in 1807 called York Row and the Italianate @-@ style former headquarters of the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society , built in 1868 ? 1869 . After lying vacant and neglected for years , the only part of York Row preserved were the rowhouses ' facades . Only a back portion of the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society building was demolished , the rest being incorporated as retail and office space .

Developer P & A Associates first attempted to develop the site in 1995 , but was delayed because of a lack of investor confidence in the project . When the Philadelphia residential market improved in the late 1990s , St. James Associates Joint Venture , a joint venture of P & A Associates and others , began construction in November 2001 . The high @-@ rise building , completed in 2004 , features 306 units , with each but the studio apartments having a private balcony . Its amenities include a 60 feet (18 m) swimming pool , a private courtyard , and a nine @-@ story parking garage that makes up the base of the building .

= = History = =

= = = PSFS headquarters and York Row = = =

The site of The St. James was formerly occupied by a group of historic 19th @-@ century buildings that lined Walnut Street in the Washington Square West neighborhood in Center City , Philadelphia , Pennsylvania . The most notable of these was the former headquarters of the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society (PSFS) . Designed in 1868 by Addison Hutton , the granite @-@ faced Italianate @-@ style building was the second headquarters building that PSFS had built . Construction began on the building on June 13 , 1868 and it was opened for business on October 11 , 1869 . An addition designed by Hutton was added in 1885 , and another designed by Frank Furness in 1895 . The building served as the PSFS headquarters until 1932 when the company moved to the PSFS Building on Market Street .

The other buildings are a group of three brick three @-@ story rowhouses called York Row . Built in 1807 in the Federal style , they are an early example of speculative housing development . York Row was built at a time when Philadelphia 's population was shifting westward , away from the Delaware River .

The buildings were bought for US \$ 4 @. @ 7 million in 1988 by real estate investor Samuel A. Rappaport . Rappaport , who made a fortune by buying , improving , and then selling run @-@ down properties , announced in 1989 that he planned to turn the building into his own personal headquarters and add a glass @-@ enclosed ballroom on its top . Rappaport also planned to have an apartment in one of the York Row houses . However , like many other Rappaport @-@ owned buildings , they ended up being left vacant and neglected , becoming a target for vandals and the homeless .

Rappaport died in 1994 , and in January 1995 developer P & A Associates announced its agreement to buy the properties from his estate . The developer also disclosed plans to build a luxury residential tower at the site . The plan called for dismantling part of Furness 's additions to the PSFS headquarters , which would serve as the tower 's lobby . The York Row houses would have been completely demolished . The plan was controversial as preservationists wanted the buildings to remain unchanged . P & A Associates met with representatives of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia and in February 1995 advanced a new plan that would preserve most of the PSFS headquarters and the York Row facade . The new plan , which was approved by the

Philadelphia Historical Commission , included renovating the PSFS headquarters and converting it into restaurant and office space . The York Row building interiors had been stripped of everything except for one fireplace mantle and could not be restored . P & A Associates would instead preserve the front facade of the houses , back to the roof ridge line .

= = = Construction = = =

After its announcement in 1995 , the project stalled because P & A Associates was unable to find investors to finance the project . Investors were skeptical that luxury residential apartments outside the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood in Center City could be successful . The delay allowed another developer to announce an agreement to acquire the property . In March 1999 , Chicago @-@ based developer the Barton Group announced its plan to build a 37 @-@ story , 322 @-@ unit luxury residential tower . The Barton Group 's plan would also incorporate the PSFS headquarters building and York Row into the tower .

At the end of the 1990s , Philadelphia was experiencing a condominium boom , with more than 70 Center City office and manufacturing buildings being converted into rental and condominium apartments between 1998 and 2004 . With the residential market in Center City growing , P & A Associates found financing by going into a partnership with real estate firm Boston Financial to fund its planned residential tower . Around the same time , the Barton Group ended its intentions with the site and sold its interest in the property to P & A Associates and Boston Financial . The tower announced by P & A Associates and Boston Financial would be a 300 @-@ unit luxury rental tower called St. James Court , named after an adjacent street . The high @-@ rise would still incorporate the preservation efforts for the 19th @-@ century buildings it agreed to in 1995 .

P & A Associates received final approval from the city zoning board and the historical commission in August 1999 , but continued to seek more financing , which it was able to secure from Corus Bank of Chicago in September 2001 . To develop the tower , now called The St. James , P & A Associates formed the St. James Associates Joint Venture with Clark Realty Capital LLC and Lend Lease Real Estate Investments , which represented an undisclosed client . With financial backing from its partners and tax breaks for new residential construction passed in 2000 , construction began on November 28 , 2001 . BACE Construction (Philadelphia based) was awarded the construction of the project . Philadelphia had not seen any residential high @-@ rise development since the 1980s , and The St. James was one of the first to begin construction in the city , preceded only by the 16 @-@ story Residences at the Dockside , which broke ground in 2000 . It became the largest residential building in the city .

By the beginning of March 2004 , 20 percent of the 306 units in The St. James had been leased . Construction was completed later that month , with finishing touches added later in the year . In March 2005 , a year after the building was completed , P & A Associates and Clark Realty Capital , under the name of 700 Walnut LP , announced The St. James was for sale . At the time , 45 percent of its units were being rented . P & A Associates sold off its interest in the building that same year .

= = Building = =

The St. James is a 45 @-@ story , high @-@ rise luxury residential skyscraper in Center City . At 498 feet (152 m) tall , it is the 12th tallest building in Philadelphia . The US \$ 80 million , Chicago @-@ style high @-@ rise was designed by Solomon Cordwell Buenz & Associates Inc. with assistance by architectural firm Bower Lewis Thrower . Located between 8th Street , Walnut Street , St. James Street , and Washington Square , The St. James stands two blocks from Independence Hall . The glass and concrete skyscraper 's east and west facade is split between a curved wall , a squared @-@ off wing , and a strip of blue glass that separates them .

The St. James contains 415 @, @ 790 square feet (39 @, @ 000 m²) of residential and commercial space . This includes 8 @, @ 290 square feet (770 m²) of office space , 14 @, @ 500 square feet (1 @, @ 300 m²) of retail space , and 393 @, @ 000 square feet (37 @, @ 000 m²) of residential space . The 306 residential units feature 9 feet (2 @. @ 7 m) ceilings and floor @-@ to

@-@ ceiling windows . The building features a four @-@ pipe heating and air @-@ conditioning system , and every unit , except for the studio apartments , has a private balcony . Building amenities include an 11th @-@ floor health club and a 60 feet (18 m) swimming pool .

The first nine floors of The St. James house private parking for building residents . The street @-@ level retail floor is occupied by a Starbucks and an Oceanaire seafood restaurant . Along Walnut Street , The St. James incorporated the front facades of the York Row houses , while the rest of the buildings were demolished . The main tower is set 15 feet (4 @. @ 6 m) from the York Row facades to preserve the Row 's original look . All but the rear wing of the PSFS headquarters building was incorporated into the tower . The demolished portion of the PSFS building was converted into a hidden courtyard for residents .

Preservationists were critical of how the York Row houses were preserved . Calling them " facadectomies " , vice president of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia J. Randall Cotton felt that saving the facades did not preserve the essence of the buildings , but that it was better than nothing . Cotton said , " At the eyeball level , it will give something of the coherence of the Philadelphia cityscape , which is a human scale . The beauty of Philadelphia is that its lots were 20 to 25 feet , which allowed for a door and two windows . It 's a falsehood to put a big building behind them . But it 's preferable to demolition . " The Philadelphia Inquirer architecture critic Inga Saffron was critical of the parking garage on the lower floors , saying it " detracts from [The St. James 's] crisp , vertical lines and bumps clumsily against the historic buildings . The garage also makes the tower feel distant from the life of the city . " The St. James has won several awards , including the 2006 National Association of Home Builders awards for Best Luxury Rental Apartment Primary Market and Best High @-@ Rise Rental Apartment .