

CUSTOM BRICK COMEBACK, NEW YORK

Petersen bricks take centre stage in New York's custom brickwork comeback



Is it glass tower fatigue, the hard pull of nostalgia or a brick's warmth and texture? That's what Joanne Kaufman wondered in her article 'Bricks Return with Style in New High-End Buildings,' in the New York Times.

In it, Andrew S. Dolkart, a professor of historic preservation at Columbia University, says "I've seen a return to the use of clay-based masonry in the past few years ... I think there's a reaction to the homogeneity of those apartments that have gone up in Long Island City: glass, glass, glass."

Whatever it may be, one thing's certain: Handmade Petersen bricks shine front and centre in brickwork's welcome return.

In fact, two Petersen brick projects feature prominently in Kaufman's article:

- 100 Franklin Street, TriBeCa completed in 2020; and
- 180 East 88th Street that opened in 2019.

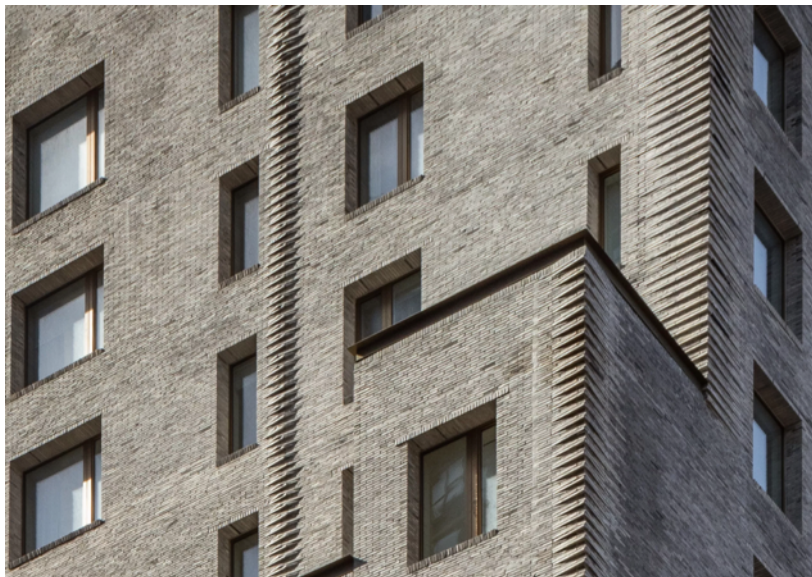
180 East 88th Street, in particular, is spectacular; a handcrafted brick skyscraper that connects the past and celebrates the future in timeless architecture.

Now a landmark building in Manhattan's Upper East Side, this elegant 21st century 50-storey residential tower stands 160m tall. A concrete structure cast in-situ with facades clad in brick on site, combined with parabolic concrete arches in the crown, middle and base.

Peter Guthrie, Founder, Chief Creative Officer, Head of Design & Construction, DDG, says:

"Brick turned out to be the most economical façade for this project due to its complex location mid-block making large crane 'picks' over neighbouring buildings costly and logistically prohibitive for a precast system.

It was simply the best choice architecturally because the scale, texture, pattern and overall feel of masonry allowed us to juxtapose our massive, poured-in-place concrete arches and state-of-the-art windows with a material not only rooted in the neighbourhood's history, but one that gives us a human scale and handmade crafted construction."



While Joe McMillan, chairman and chief executive of DDG, explains the use of handcrafted brick more simply saying, “We wanted to give a nod to the old time bricklayer.”

Peter Guthrie and his DDG colleagues made several trips to Petersen Tegl in Broager and, along with Christian A. Petersen, inspected the clay for their chosen bricks: Petersen K91 (95%) and K56 (5%) bricks, D91FF (99%) and D55FF (1%) bricks, as well as custom-made curved bricks to help delineate and accentuate the building's front entrance.

180 East 88th Street wasn't Peter's first foray into Petersen bricks, having successfully completed his first Petersen brick building, 345 Meatpacking on 14th street in 2013, another spectacular apartment building, also standing tall in a refined and functional partnership with surrounding buildings. At 11 storeys high it also has a solid, light grey base of handmade Petersen Kolumba bricks (K91) combined with brick in a Flensburg format, and with beautiful textured brick detailing, including a change in brick pattern at the corners and various relief effects on the façade at street level.

These three buildings may not be Peter's last use of Petersen bricks in New York: “The old-world character and essence of these bricks are so incredibly useful for our schemes where we are building in historic neighbourhoods,” reflects Peter.

Of course, the return of custom brickwork in Manhattan is not just about being respectful of, and celebrating, what's already there. It's about adding in that splash of innovation. That's what makes it so exciting and transformative.

So, whether it's nostalgia, speaking to humanity, becoming part of a neighbourhood's fabric, or making a transformative statement, there are some spectacular buildings coming to the fore in Manhattan. You're really missing out if you don't take a look for yourself.

Read the New York Times article [here](#).

Product: Petersen K91, D91 bricks

Architect: DDG

Images:

180 East 88th Street, Richard Barnes, DDG

345 Meatpacking, Tom Eckerle

