

# Art Department

27 W O O S T E R

Thomas Loof

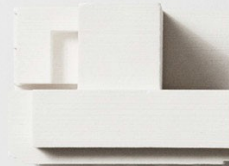
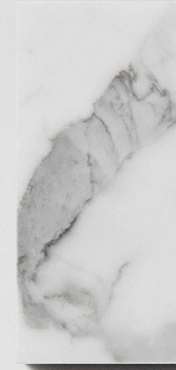
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## FOREWORD

We have developed buildings in New York City for more than 30 years. And for each one, we have considered what is most appropriate for the site and how it can best work in harmony with the lives of its residents. For 27 Wooster, we have striven to build a contemporary structure with modern materials that is also carefully woven into the historic fabric of its neighborhood. Located below Broome Street and west of Broadway—in close proximity to the renowned Drawing Center—this project sits in one of SoHo's most peaceful corners, where the surrounding blocks exude a quiet, amiable charm amid the area's creative, downtown atmosphere.

By building on an empty corner lot, a true rarity in New York, we had a unique opportunity to create a comprehensive vision of New York architecture from the inside out. We obsessively studied the architectural character of the community, focusing on SoHo's grid-like, cast-iron buildings, originally designed to accommodate commercial tenants, with tall windows channeling in large amounts of air and light. They were architectural marvels of their time, and this project modernizes that concept. Elegantly wrapping around a corner, 27 Wooster's façade—designed by architects at Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates—is lined with full-length glass doors that fully open from floor to ceiling, synthesizing past and present. →



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We shy away from some of the grand architectural statements made by certain condos inserted into New York neighborhoods, which use materials selected only for their aesthetics—they are designed to sell, not necessarily to last. In planning 27 Wooster, we assiduously chose superior, honest materials and design elements that will age gracefully. We know that our building will remain notable and modern in 20 years, not just 20 months.

The same respect extends to our interiors. We have learned from our long experience in developing luxury loft spaces that while many residents desire an open plan at first, they ultimately add discrete spaces as their lives develop and their needs increase, turning their lofts into apartments. Working with our interior designer Thomas Juul-Hansen, we anticipated these needs: 27 Wooster's standard unit is 2,500 square feet and includes three bedrooms. No smaller units are offered.

Our team has lovingly compared 27 Wooster to a Swiss watch, in which elegance, quality, craftsmanship, precision, and longevity are paramount. The comparison informs everything from the luxurious wood floors and the expertly handcrafted kitchens to the acoustically dampening glass doors that shield the units from the outside world. In the following pages, we explore the inspirations, details, and architectural innovations of 27 Wooster through the eyes of our designers, uncovering what truly sets this discerning project apart. •

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## LIFE ON THE EDGE

The designers behind 27 Wooster took full advantage of the building's position on a previously vacant corner lot.



## A SALUTE TO CLASSIC SOHO

Douglas Hocking, a principal of Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF) is the lead architect of 27 Wooster. Hocking has a wealth of experience creating progressive projects around the globe, from Tokyo to San Francisco, but the foundation of his portfolio is here in New York City. Hocking's body of work illustrates the skilled eye he brings not only to different building types, from commercial and institutional to residential, but to each project's distinctive surroundings. By combining his love of SoHo with a respect for the area's landmark status, Hocking, in collaboration with job captain Rebecca Doyle and senior designer Min Kim, designed a building that lives in true harmony with its prized neighborhood.

How did you consider SoHo when designing 27 Wooster? As a new construction in a landmarked district, the site must have been critical.

I think of myself as a contextual architect. The context here plays an incredibly important role, just as much as the structure, technology, and detailing, as well as the cultural influences around the site. The building has its roots in the site. There are two paths for developing architecture in a historic district: You can either choose to have no relationship to it—building something that is clearly different—or you can develop a piece of



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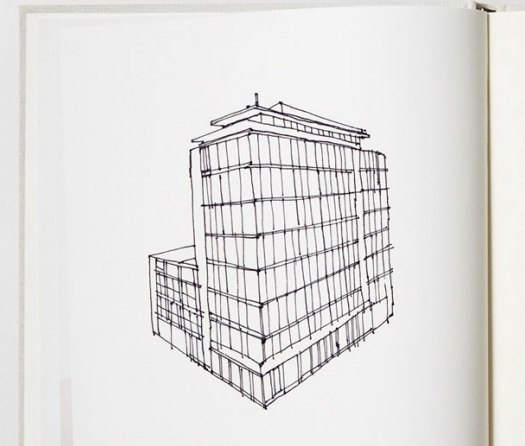
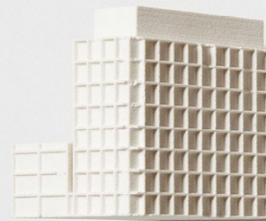
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architecture that is consistent with the warp and weave of the neighborhood. I felt it was important to do the latter, to look at the neighborhood and actually heal the site. This corner has been a parking lot for 50 years. It has been empty, and empty corner sites are a crime. For us, that was one of the biggest and easiest decisions, to look at the site and say, "This is what it really needs to be."

What was your main concern in connecting this project to its neighborhood?

This neighborhood has been a rich part of our growth as architects. We know the area very well. It is part of our New York experience. And height is the first thing. The neighborhood has an amazing scale that distinguishes it from the rest of the city. Its cast-iron buildings were cutting-edge technology when they were built, and they were beautiful. For us, one of the challenges—and in the end, one of the joys—was standing in front of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, explaining to them what we were proposing, and hearing the fellow board members' feedback. Many of them lived in the neighborhood, too. It helped us develop a skin that was incredibly elegant in its proportion, while also befitting to the neighborhood. →



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Although cast-iron façades have lots of formal articulation, they are actually only a foot or two deep, transitioning at that point into the typical New York City brick party wall that would extend into the heart of the block. 27 Wooster honors this with an iron-glazed party wall façade system of its own for interior walls, celebrating the distinctly New York inner-block conditions such walls create.

The all-glass doors to each apartment's balconies are a major feature. What do they add to the building?

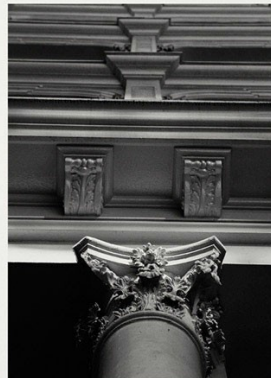
Many of the buildings we have in New York City feel hermetically sealed. They are all glass and very striking. The notion of being inside and out is stark. But the full-length glass windows of 27 Wooster—and the fact that all of them open—bestow residents with the option of creating a condition where they are inside and outside at the same time. They maintain privacy, but still let in a significant amount of air, which is incredibly unique.

In terms of materials, why did you choose this palette?

When you walk around the neighborhood, there are some buildings with a lot of vibrant color, but typically SoHo expresses itself monochromatically. The cast iron is usually painted white, beige, or in light colors. For 27 Wooster, I wanted the palette to be developed in a monochromatic way. Whoever lives inside the building will not have to tackle a color pattern that might conflict with the décor decisions of their space. Instead, it allows for something very elegant. Even though it is not white and black, it is white with an added flair—a darker, mid-tone gray.

This really gives it depth.

Yes, and a sparkle. The work that we do in London, for example, is always challenged by the weather in terms of the gray sky and clouds. This two-toned system used for 27 Wooster will act differently depending on the light. On a very bright day, you will see the white. On an off-color day, the white will still be there. But in that case, the dark color will actually start to shine. We also have both north-facing and east-facing façades. Light will hit them in very different directions.  
→



“THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAS AN AMAZING SCALE THAT DISTINGUISHES IT FROM THE REST OF NEW YORK CITY.”



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What was your strategy for the lobby?

Lobbies are tricky—they become the first room. It is not like designing your apartment, where each choice becomes very personal. The lobby needs to be a reflection of the progression from the outside into your apartment. The materials are very simple and elegant. We needed a resilient floor, so we chose terrazzo. We then used a beautiful walnut along some of the walls, paired with a painted-metal balustrade.

This is an intimate building with very few units. How did you factor that into the design?

As we speak, there are only 15 apartments planned. At that number, there will only be about 30 people that come in and out of the building at any given time, on any given day. So it has to feel very discrete. Also, the retail spaces on either side are not large, so they are not going to have a high volume of traffic. We are giving up a lot of potential retail space to do that, which goes back to the exclusivity of the project.

Is that rare for a project like this?

I definitely think so. During construction, we visited the site frequently—seeing it get built, and the scale of it in the neighborhood after we spent six years designing it, is incredibly special. And it was fun to create 27 Wooster with Axel and Tony. Axel also has a special appreciation for this, since he lives nearby. I think both artistically and architecturally, we are on the same page. It was a pleasure working with them.

Speaking architecturally, what is the one part of this project that you would like a potential homeowner to understand and appreciate?

The way that this building is situated, and the amazing opportunity the plans give you to have a number of different environments within your own apartment. Many times, what you see in other similar projects is just a square with a corner. One might have two corners, but that is it. This building is T-shaped. It has a light well and a trapped courtyard. It looks down at another

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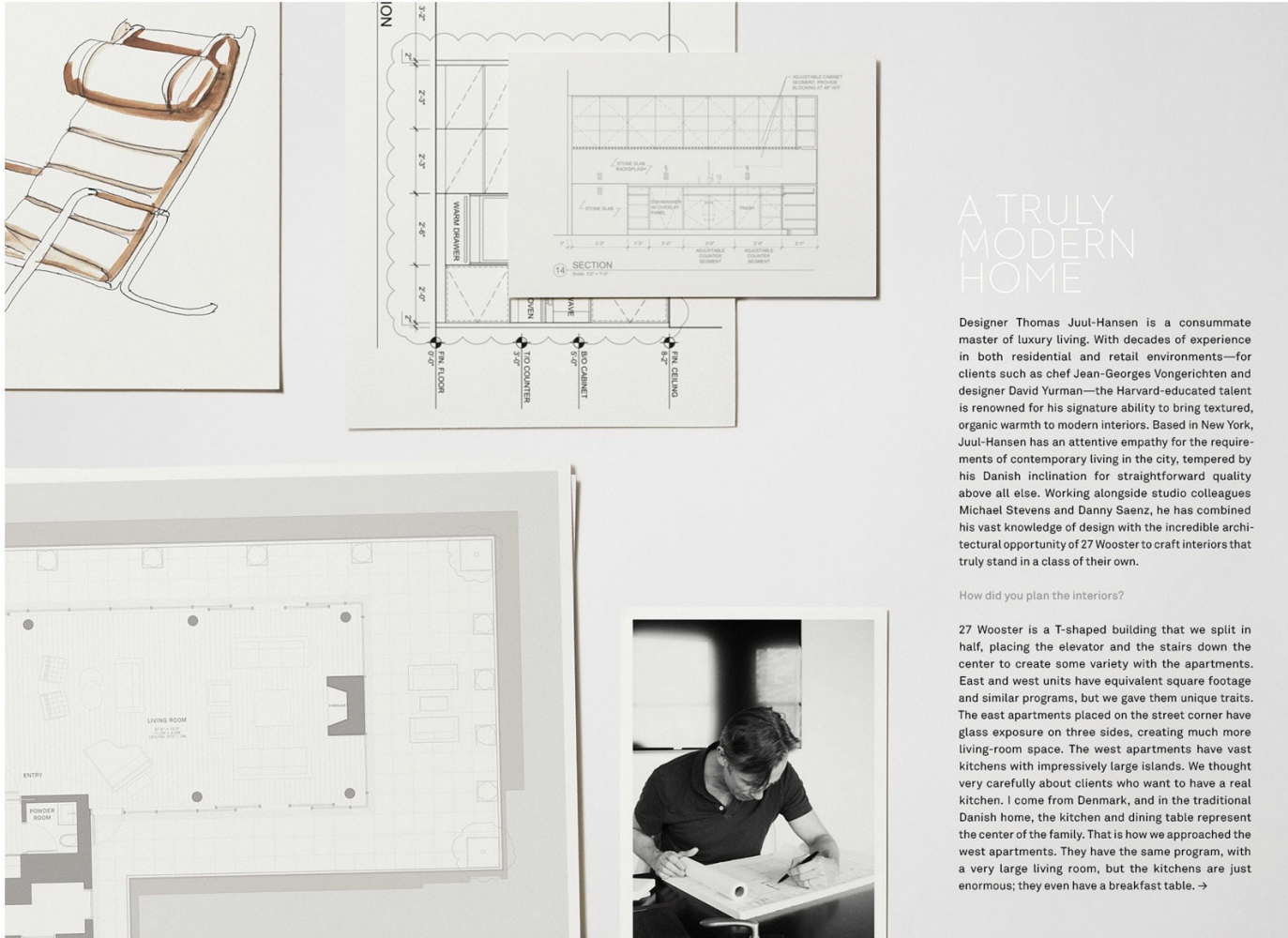
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## A TRULY MODERN HOME

Designer Thomas Juul-Hansen is a consummate master of luxury living. With decades of experience in both residential and retail environments—for clients such as chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten and designer David Yurman—the Harvard-educated talent is renowned for his signature ability to bring textured, organic warmth to modern interiors. Based in New York, Juul-Hansen has an attentive empathy for the requirements of contemporary living in the city, tempered by his Danish inclination for straightforward quality above all else. Working alongside studio colleagues Michael Stevens and Danny Saenz, he has combined his vast knowledge of design with the incredible architectural opportunity of 27 Wooster to craft interiors that truly stand in a class of their own.

How did you plan the interiors?

27 Wooster is a T-shaped building that we split in half, placing the elevator and the stairs down the center to create some variety with the apartments. East and west units have equivalent square footage and similar programs, but we gave them unique traits. The east apartments placed on the street corner have glass exposure on three sides, creating much more living-room space. The west apartments have vast kitchens with impressively large islands. We thought very carefully about clients who want to have a real kitchen. I come from Denmark, and in the traditional Danish home, the kitchen and dining table represent the center of the family. That is how we approached the west apartments. They have the same program, with a very large living room, but the kitchens are just enormous; they even have a breakfast table. →

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Do you have a favorite feature here?

The proportion of the spaces. They are very generous, with very large rooms. The amount of light in the spaces is very, very important and makes for fantastic apartments. We have wide-plank floors that boast the craftsmanship of fine cabinetry. The floors are pristinely done, with micro-beveling between the planks. In the master bathrooms, we have massive floor-to-ceiling slabs that are book-matched. If one uses really high-quality materials, one does not have to insert much more. You have to make sure things are organized and designed with precision, but if you have a beautiful floor, you will not need to add gold inlays. You let the materials do the talking.

How does 27 Wooster illustrate the evolution of home design in New York?

When we first began work on the 27 Wooster project in 2006, we intended to make some of the units in the building larger than normal. We predicted back then that the market would require apartments better suited for real living, in the sense that they have real bathrooms, real closets, real kitchens, and everything is proportioned. We were fortunate to have this special insight into the future.

This was a very brave project back in 2006, when people were just building terrible buildings, because everything traded on paper. Nobody really cared how their buildings were going to turn out, because they had sold three times over on paper before they were even finished. The first person that bought a unit did not care what it would look like in the end, because he or she would never live there.

For myself, as a Dane, I think, *You do it once, and you do it right.* We are firm believers in that ethos. Sometimes you cannot afford to do it right away. Then you wait, and you save up. I often tell the tale about a Danish country farmhouse, where visitors are shocked to find that the only objects are a Bang & Olufsen television next to an Arne Jacobsen Swan Chair.



“THE AMOUNT OF LIGHT IN THE SPACES IS VERY, VERY IMPORTANT AND MAKES FOR FANTASTIC APARTMENTS.”

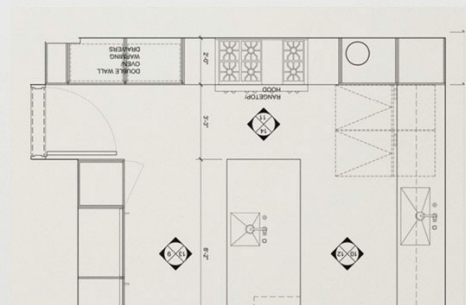


The SoHo neighborhood had a large impact on the façade. Did that history influence your interiors as well?

These are loft apartments, but then again, they are not lofts at all. They have private bedrooms, private bathrooms, ample closets, and entry vestibules. We believed that we needed all of these features, alongside oversized, open living rooms. The apartments have kitchens that open into the living rooms, but they are not in the living rooms. Residents will not feel as if they are always in the kitchen.

With so many glass doors that open to balconies, light must have played an important role.

This building has natural light everywhere. In the morning, when entering the bathroom, you are covered in light, which is an extraordinary luxury. Having natural light in a bathroom in that way changes your day. At 27 Wooster, you are never further than 20 feet away from massive windows. Most of the old loft buildings in SoHo are built on lots that are 25-by-100 feet, so they will have some windows in the front and some in the back. Then, typically, they will have an elevator that occupies a third or a quarter of the front façade—so if there were four windows in the front, one is occupied by an elevator. Then there would be all this space in the middle that has no light. So the old SoHo lofts—even though they tried to put as much glass as they could into the architecture—were very, very dark. That's why the enormous luxury of light is the most radical difference between buying an apartment in 27 Wooster and one in an old cast-iron building down the street. •



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## MATERIALS

From door hinges and wood flooring to kitchen countertops and bathtubs, the materials used in the construction of 27 Wooster were chosen to reflect an honest and tactile approach to interior design and contemporary architecture. With special regards to interiors, designer Thomas Juul-Hansen believes that apartment residents should place their investments into things they can actually touch and feel.

As such, the design details throughout are uncompromising, and include handcrafted Smallbone kitchen cabinetry, hardware from The Nanz Company, and white terrazzo flooring for the lobby that subtly contrasts with rich wood walls. Each element selected has been carefully considered to withstand the demanding needs of modern living.

### SOOTHING MODERNISM

Inviting design elements, such as the white oak used for apartment flooring (top, left), copper-colored marble used for the penthouse fireplace (top, middle), the Grigio Classico marble found in the kitchens (top, right), and the paldao wood used for the lobby (bottom, left), all give the clean lines of the units sincerity, depth, and warmth.

### SMALLBONE OF DEVIZES

Custom-designed in a collaboration between Thomas Juul-Hansen and Smallbone, the kitchens of 27 Wooster are handcrafted in the brand's workshops in Wiltshire, England. Using solid American black walnut frames and American walnut door and drawer fronts, the units feature a natural finish selected to celebrate the beauty of the distinctive grain.

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