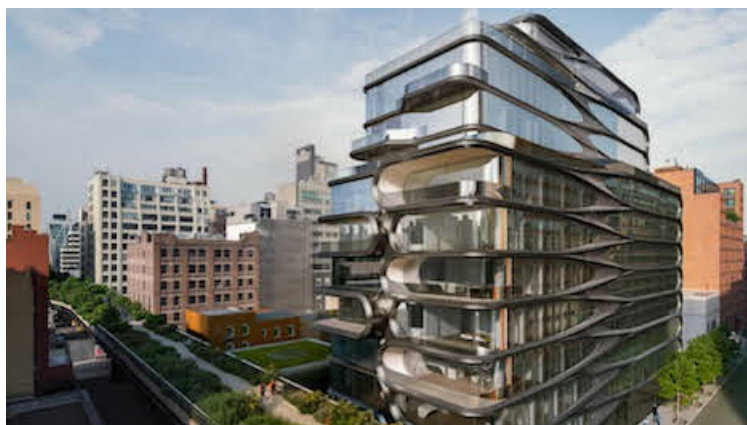


REAL ESTATE

Technologically advanced real estate development offers window to future

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520 West 28th Street in New York, designed by the late Zaha Hadid. Image credit: 520w28

By JEN KING

NEW YORK A glimpse into the future can be gleaned from real estate development and the technological advances implemented in new builds, said a senior executive from Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group.

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During Luxury Interactive's "Futuristic Lessons from Real Estate Development: How Technology is Transforming the Planning and Marketing of Luxury Residences" keynote on Oct. 19, Corcoran's executive compared the George Jetson-like advertisements of the 1950s to today's building projects to explain how elements of these blueprints offer a window into the future. Residential housing's future rests on the technologies of today and their impact on architectural programming to exterior and interior design.

"I think the key thing to look at in terms of scales and interventions, is how is technology shaping towers, residences and how is it shaping our consumers?" asked Elisa Ours, senior vice president, planning and design at [Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group](#).

"How are they more sophisticated than they were maybe five years ago? Especially when they come to our sales design centers, they know more about the properties sometimes than we would want them to know because of the Internet itself," she said.

Future's housing and housing's future

Ms. Ours broke down real estate development's futurism by tower, home and techie consumers. Understanding these three at scale helps to show their relationship and how each impacts the way the world may look in the future.

Residential towers are very complex and data gleaned at the planning and engineering stage is essential to a building's development. Naming only a few of the tests a new build undergoes, Ms. Ours mentioned view, shadow, solar and wind studies required to begin construction.



56 Leonard Street in New York

The building system technologies are similarly complex and must run smoothly and be well-placed to not impede on residents' daily lives. A residential tower's water, heating and cooling, elevators, fire and other systems are all self-contained.

Using New York residential towers as a reference point, Ms. Ours explained that a building's studies and systems have an intrinsic relationship.

For example, the tower at 53 West 53 Street has a crisscrossing exoskeleton on the building's facade, which creates unique views from each of the residential units within the building. The builders had to understand how the sun and views would be affected from the structure to format its interiors and better market the tower to potential owners.



53 West 53rd Street in New York

To this point, Ms. Ours explained that there is a bevy of technology on the backend that homeowners are, intentionally, never truly aware of.

Technology is also integrating into spaces within the home at an increasing rate.

"I find it interesting because technology is not only making the homes, but technology is helping how we live in them," Ms. Ours said.

Digital components are now common in homes, often without the consumer being aware, through the use of futuristic tools such as 3D printers, laser cutting and CNC milling machines. These technologies are used for everything from fabric to furniture.

Appliance makers are using technologies of the future in a more meaningful way through smart and connected ranges, ovens and refrigerators that assist homeowners in cooking, stocking and shopping their kitchens, for example.

Jenn-Air, a kitchen appliance brand, for example, is furthering the connectivity of its product offerings with the introduction of a WiFi-enabled refrigerator.



Jenn-Air's WiFi-connected refrigerator

Similar to its connected wall oven, Jenn-Air's counter-depth French door refrigerator features wireless connectivity and a fully functional application available for iOS and Android devices. Jenn-Air's WiFi fridge app allows homeowners to activate the appliance's settings and serves as a remote control for the unit ([see story](#)).

Internet of Things, such as Amazon's home automation system Alexa and thermostats by Nest, are also poised to become more accessible to the population at large, rather than limited to affluent homes.

Selling the future

The evolution of real estate marketing has also seen an impact from technology.

While floor plans have stayed relatively the same, advancements in computer renderings and virtual reality have presented real estate brokerages with an opportunity to wow potential buyers before a residence is constructed or physically visited.

For example, Sotheby's International Realty is taking a page from Google Maps and allowing interested buyers a chance to tour properties without leaving their homes.

The real estate firm will be including an option to view listings via 3D and virtual reality capabilities in which users can tap around the screen to tour homes of interest. Viewable on smartphones, VR headsets and desktop sites, the Sotheby's 3D tour user experience resembles Google Maps, making it easy on new users ([see story](#)).

When asked for advice on how technology can be included on the selling floor of retail bricks-and-mortar, Mr. Ours said it is essential to "always stay ahead [of new technology]. The key thing is really bringing collaborators to the table day one that have the information at hand that is going to help us understand technologies that will be revealed in six to nine months from now. So we're always a little bit ahead of it.

"Also, just research. We have an amazing team of people that are constantly researching other disciplines so we can see what else is coming," she said.