

# One Prospect Park West by Workstead

Brooklyn, New York, United States

Words by Vaishnavi Nayel Talawadekar • Photography by Matthew Williams



The precinct of New York's Grand Army Plaza is considered the bastion of pre-war Brooklyn style. After all, the history-rich, heritage-stamped neighbourhood is home to the triumphal Soldiers' and Sailors' Arch and a number of other pre-war relics, each with a past more storied than the last. One example is the circa 1925 residential building, One Prospect Park West. Originally commissioned by the Knights of Columbus as a clubhouse for society elites, it has changed hands several times. Now restored and reimagined by Surface Design Group and Workstead as a 64-residence, 11-storey condominium complex spread across 15,700 square metres, the edifice borrows from the past while staying true to the present.

The 11-storey Beaux-Arts structure is a striking antithesis to the towering, glassy condominiums that have altered the Brooklyn skyline in recent decades. Its restoration, helmed by Surface Design Group – a New York-based facade consultancy with particular expertise in historic preservation – was an exercise in tactful restraint. The firm's scope of work included rebuilding large portions of the terracotta frieze, stabilising the copper cornice at the roofline and replacing the rear elevation, which were all in a severe state of decay.

The sensitivity of the architecture set the stage for the interior design, with Workstead introducing a slew of heritage-inspired interventions. The building was stripped to its shell and the layout reoriented, and beams and columns were camouflaged. Throughout, the team took cues from pre-war design, employing fine woodwork, chrome fittings, narrow boards and reclaimed heart-pine flooring. Equal attention was paid to the interior architecture; each residence was treated like an independent realm and separated from the last via deep thresholds.

The materiality is a contemporary imagining of the past, with the bronze-toned lobby being a particular case in point. Thresholds clad in Giallo Siena marble highlight original proscenium arches, while uniquely patterned reclaimed pine flooring evokes the paintings of modernist American artist Frank Stella. Objects lend to the experience in equal measure. A burlwood desk embodies pre-war grandeur through a modern prism, while the adjacent lounge and library are enlivened by collectible vintage furniture, objects from Maison Gerard and soft furnishings from ZAK+FOX. In the playroom, Workstead eschewed formality with a teal and white palette that acts as a whimsical counterpoint to the theatre of sombre forms.



For the interiors of One Prospect Park West, Workstead blended heritage features with contemporary design motifs to create a considered whole.

History reverberates throughout the residences, courtesy of extruded windows that summon sunlight all around. Workstead modernised the layout, transforming the kitchen, previously banished from sight, into each unit's centrepiece. Notable additions include a monolithic Calacatta Vagli marble island, custom timber details, porcelain and enamel hardware, a splashback and countertops in honed Estremoz marble and a bevy of sophisticated appliances, including a Sub-Zero refrigerator and freezer, a Wolf gas range, wall oven, steam oven and warming drawers.

The firm similarly flipped the script in the primary and secondary bathrooms, upgrading the cramped 1920s layouts into spacious, serene sanctums that bask in natural light. Bespoke elements are a reigning hallmark across One Prospect Park West but are brought into particular focus in the bathrooms, where a sense of stillness provides energy to pause and reflect, paying particular attention to details, such as the Calacatta Nero marble-topped vanities and elegant luminaires.

For a building as historic as this, Workstead prioritised details that would remain unique to One Prospect Park West. This ethos extended to the lighting, leading the firm to develop a bespoke capsule specifically for the project. Christened the PARK Lighting Collection, designs are characterised by gently rounded edges and a delicate melange of enamel, porcelain and aluminium forms. Luminaires shapeshift throughout the building, ranging from more diminutive designs to more sculptural ones, as in the case of the multi-pendant chandelier in the lobby.

Equal parts classic and contemporary, One Prospect Park West steps out of the shadows of its predecessor. It is an ode to the 1920s, but also to the 2020s. And perhaps, by the same token, to all the decades to come.

