

DELOS WELLNESS REAL ESTATE

by Katrina Balmaceda



HOME FOR GOOD

THE NEW YORK WAY
TOWARDS A HEALTHIER
LIVING SPACE

If one has a radical idea, what better place to test it than in New York's Greenwich Village, once home to the Beat Generation and to the eccentric Andy Warhol? And if by chance that idea involves an unusual house, it would not hurt to build it in The Village, the place where America's first architectural school took root.

By the end of this year, Greenwich Village will become the testing ground for the Delos Wellness Real Estate concept, which says that structures — be they residential, commercial or public — must help enhance their occupants' health. Sounds simple — but it took more than five years of research, testing and consultation with some of the world's most influential people and institutions (*see box*) before construction could even begin last year.

Like many buildings in The Village, the pre-war structure on 66 East 11th Street to be used for the first Delos condominium has gone through many reincarnations. It was once a factory, then an office, then a parking garage. This time, Delos co-founder Morad Fareed hopes the Delos concept will stay — and even become the norm worldwide.



OPPOSITE

The lighting system in the Delos condominium will be programmed to enhance the quality of its occupants' sleep

THIS PAGE

Delos hopes to promote gastrointestinal health by equipping homes with kitchens designed for optimal food preparation and storage

That will require changes in the way property developers use science, design and technology, for the ideal Delos home encompasses all these. For instance, the team has partnered with the Cleveland Clinic to provide the condominium's residents with online sleep-enhancing programmes. Each condo unit's lighting system will align with the body's circadian rhythm and simulate dawn light. Sound-wave technology and melatonin-enhancing blackout shades, as well as the more conventional methods of aromatherapy and acupressure, may further improve the quality of sleep.

Air filters, purifiers and ionisers throughout the residence are aimed at improving respiratory health. Stress-relieving features, such as reflexology paths and botanical therapy, are said to help prevent heart illnesses. A Delos home will have posture-supportive flooring, wheat grass stations and juicing equipment, as well as spaces for meditation and exercise. Colour therapy aims to enhance residents' concentration, while light therapy (among other design strategies) may help to maintain one's memory health and mental clarity. Shower water will be infused with aloe vera and vitamin C.

The idea continues to evolve. Says Fareed: "Everyday we ask, 'How can we push the needle further?' For example, what if we recommend guidelines for a room for a mother during prenatal care? My brother and his wife just gave birth. Can we [create] guidelines to help an infant develop the circadian rhythm more quickly, or to keep germs away from the baby?" Future projects will also incorporate new scientific discoveries and medical advances.

The concept may be applied across the board. Fareed says the team is talking to a large hotel operator to create Wellness Rooms, and discussing office renovations with several companies. It is supporting efforts to build transitional housing in earthquake-stricken Haiti and is working on a school project with the Clinton Global Initiative (a network of global leaders that tackles pertinent issues in more than 180 countries).

The Delos team hopes its concept will be officially adopted in the same way that the LEED system is now the worldwide standard for green building. Fareed says that these guidelines "will teach people how to impact their air quality, sleep, nutrition and cardiovascular health, even if they have smaller budgets". Any third party will be >>



FUTURE PROJECTS WILL INCORPORATE NEW SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES AND MEDICAL ADVANCES

>> able to use the guidelines. Delos will enter into “very serious and legitimate policy discussions” once it gathers enough empirical evidence of the benefits of its properties’ features.

Meanwhile, it has the faith of certain politicians, celebrities and entrepreneurs who have reportedly expressed interest in the concept. One homeowner in Santa Barbara, California, has asked Delos to renovate a 12,000-sq ft (1,115-sq m) estate and retrofit it with wellness features. The company says that a loft it was asked to design in Lower Manhattan’s Meatpacking District “addresses 23 pathways to improve the quality of the occupants’ air, water, light, nutrition and sleep”.

Delos is also looking east. A day after conversing with *Palace*, Fareed flew to Shenzhen city to speak at the US-China Investment Summit. Delos plans to expand into Beijing, Shanghai, Singapore, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong, and is talking to two companies in China, though no deals have been finalised yet. Fareed explains the team’s interest in the continent: “I think we are extremely excited by a lot of the different architectural designs, and the scale of these projects, throughout Asia. There is a tremendous amount of excitement around, a boldness of risk-taking — whether it’s through new forms of engineering, or unseen-before architecture, or urban planning.” It may not be a Bohemian dreamland, but it seems that Asia is as good a place as any to begin testing Delos’ radical housing idea in the global village. 🏰

A Delos home will have plenty of space and therapeutic facilities to promote relaxation and stress relief

ROUND TABLE

“It was informal, it was conversational. We came from different states. It was a simple question that we bounced off one another,” says Delos co-founder Morad Fareed of the genesis of the company’s Wellness Real Estate concept. From a small group of friends, the team has grown to include international experts and respected institutions. Some of the luminaries in its advisory board are Deepak Chopra, a mind-body healing authority; Jason McLennan, a consultant on green building and sustainability; and Dick Gephardt, a former US House Democratic Leader. Its partners include the Columbia University Medical Center, Cleveland Clinic and Clinton Global Initiative. Fareed formerly worked with Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide and helped initiate its green hotel brand, Element by Westin.