



TALL
Buildings

Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street Tower

New York, New York
Project, 2002

Architect: Steven Holl | Steven Holl Architects

Engineers: Robert Silman, Nat Oppenheimer | Robert Silman Associates

585 FEET (178 METERS) HIGH

This tower was designed by Steven Holl to mark a critical intersection of two of Manhattan's most celebrated thoroughfares, Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street. It rises over the northeast corner of this juncture, diagonally opposite the block occupied by the grand neoclassical New York Public Library, with its terraced front facade and its rear parterre garden, Bryant Park.

The diagonal axis between the vertical tower and the horizontally composed library and park is reinforced by Holl's structural and spatial solution for the building. It is a hybrid of concrete shear walls that stiffen the structure along the east and the north, making it read in plan "like an open book," and a lattice of steel columns and beams forming the curved glazed surfaces of the west and south facades.

Within the deep concrete walls' lateral zones, glass-backed elevators move up and down the blue-green zinc-paneled facades. These, along with other service elements, are visible from the north and east. From the elevator cabs, views up Fifth Avenue toward Central Park and east to Grand Central Station, the Chrysler Building, and the East River orient the viewer.

The complexity of the tower's glazed surface appears to be a gridded scrim wrapped over a still-life composition of stacked rectangles, cylinders, and other geometric forms. Beyond its monumental sculptural presence at a key crossroads, its somewhat mysterious forms can be read in a consistent way. At each point where the tower "warps" to a concave form—street level, the

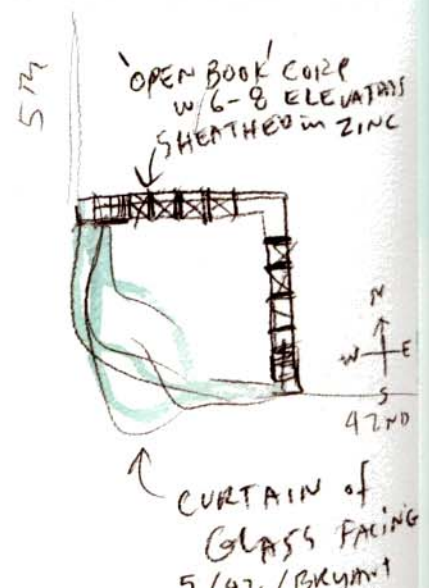
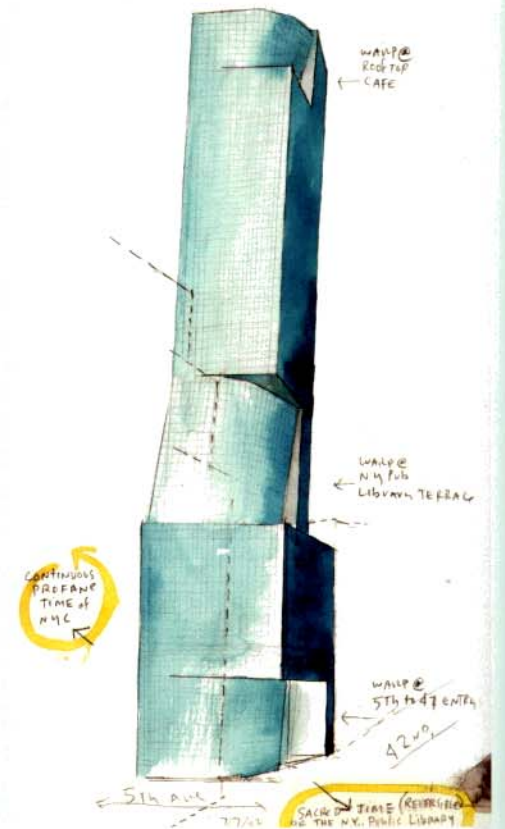
ninth floor, and the apex—a public or semipublic space is created. At the street, this space becomes a place to survey the intersection itself with commercial space behind it. At the ninth and the thirty-sixth floors, terraces flow out from cafés overlooking the library and the park. From the upper-level café, spiraling ramps lead up to a "sky space," a spherical room conceived by the architect and the artist James Turrell.

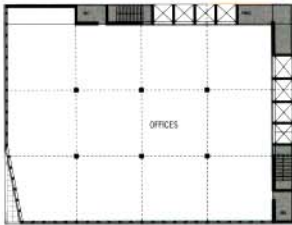
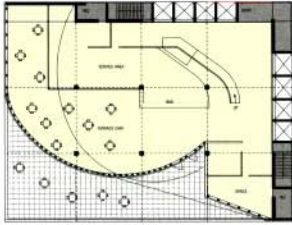
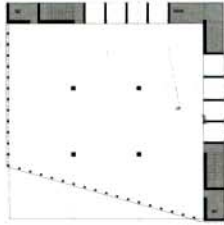
The south and west orientations ensure that the glazed surfaces, embedded with photovoltaic cells can generate enough power to illuminate the entire building with low-voltage fluorescent lights. At night, the sculptural form emits a glowing presence. The measurable scale of the glazing system gives the whole structure a human dimension that reads through its urban presence. Each of the glass panels is roughly the height of a passerby and has the proportions of 1:1.6, the relationship between the horizontal and vertical elements underlying many of the compositions of the ancient Greek architects and artists. The building as a whole can be read as a very metaphoric composition, with its open book and slouching man-about-town figure standing across the street from the magnificent library.

Holl's project recalls the importance of the tall building in creating urban identity, both in its dialogue with the immediate surroundings and in its place among the canyons of high-rises of Midtown Manhattan.

—Terence Riley

TOP Isometric sketch
BOTTOM Plan sketch
OPPOSITE Model, corner of Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue

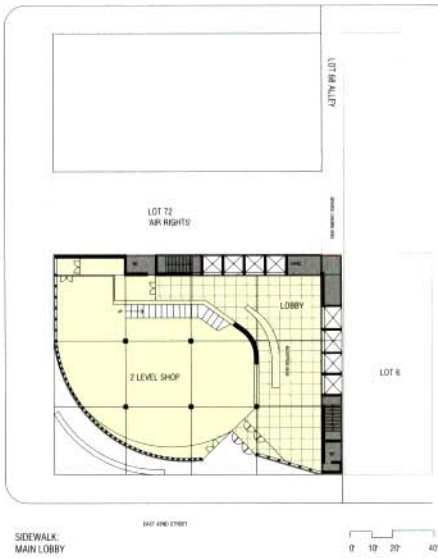




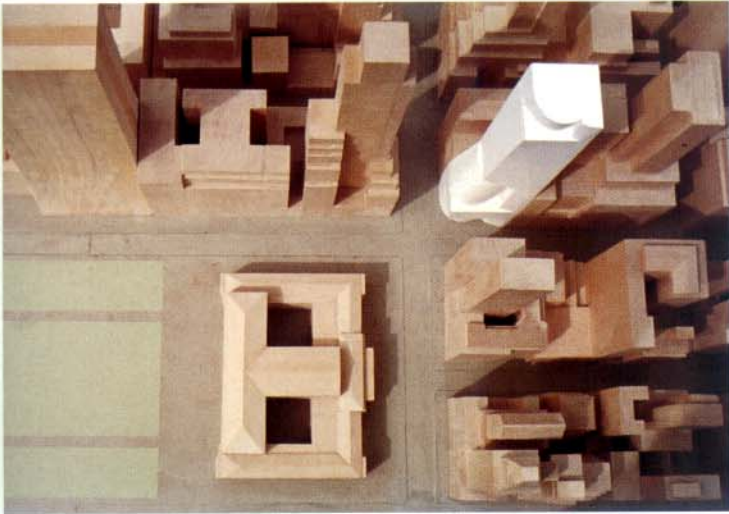
TOP TO BOTTOM
 Typical plan, floors 16-35
 Plan, library terrace café, floor 9
 Typical plan, floors 5-8



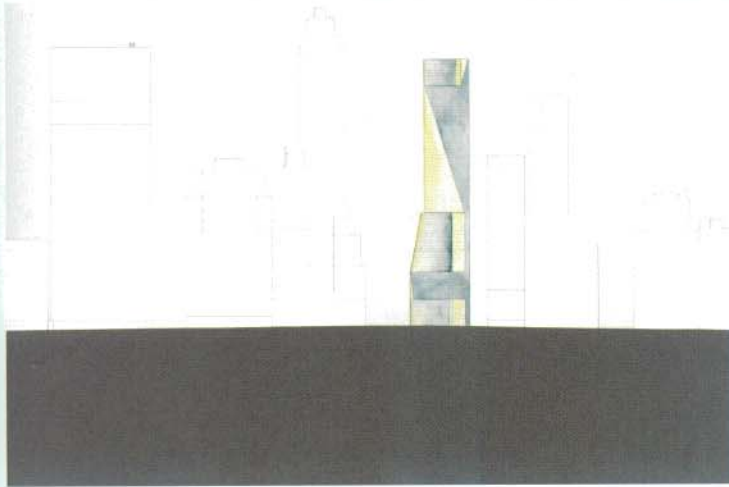
Sections, west-east



Site plan and ground-floor plan

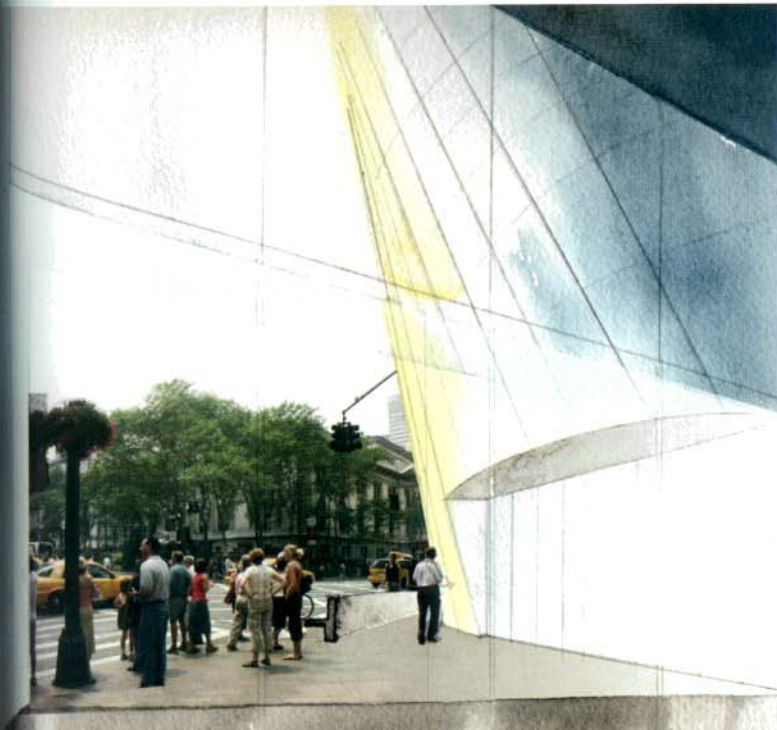


Model from above

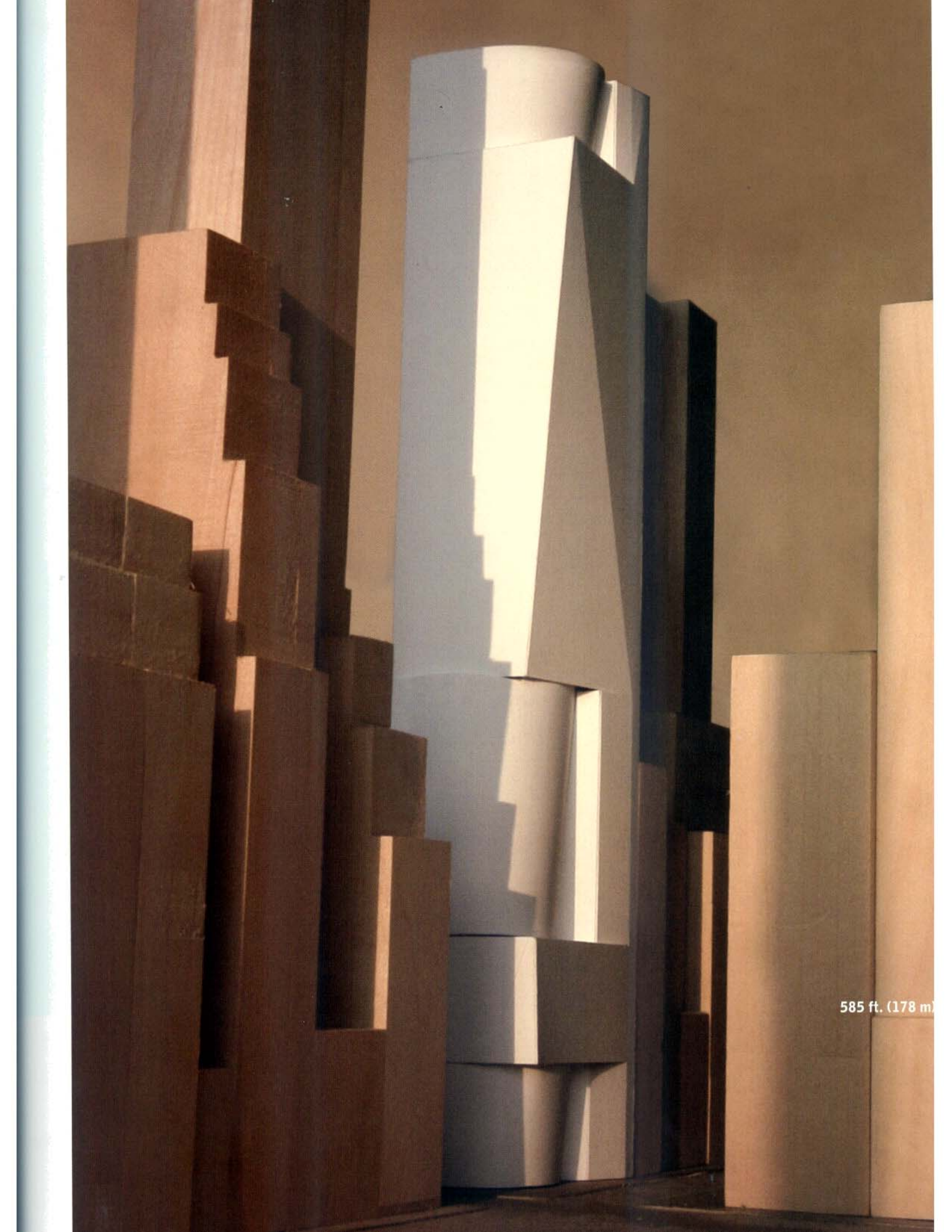


South elevation

BELOW Perspective sketch of entry looking southwest toward New York Public Library
RIGHT View looking northeast across Fifth Avenue from New York Public Library
(computer-generated image)



585 ft. (178 m)



585 ft. (178 m)

30 St. Mary Axe

Swiss Reinsurance Headquarters

London, England. Design, 1997–2000; projected completion, 2004

Architect: Norman Foster | Foster and Partners

Engineer: John Brazier | Ove Arup & Partners

Height: 590 feet (180 meters)

Inhabitable floors: 40

Site dimensions: 1.4 acres

Gross floor area: 693,950 sq. ft. (64,469 sq. m)

Program: Office, retail, catering

Foundation and soil: Straight-shafted concrete piles in London Clay

Floor structure: Lightweight concrete on metal deck over composite structural steel frame

Lateral system: Perimeter steel "diagrid" of inclined intersecting columns and horizontal hoops around building circumference

Principal materials: Glass, steel, and concrete

Developer: Swiss Reinsurance

Design team: Ken Shuttleworth, Robin Partington (principals);

Francis Aish, Gamma Basra, Geoff Bee, Ian Bogle, Julian Cross, Joel Davenport, Ben Dobbin, Michael Gentz, Rob Harrison, Paul Kalkhoven, Chris Kallan, Jürgen Koppers, Paul Leadbeater, Stuart Milne, Jacob Nørlov, Tim O'Rourke, Ben Puddy, Jason Parker, Simon Reed, Narinder Sagoo, Sebastian Schoell, Michael Sehmsdorf, John Small, Robbie Turner, Neil Vandersteen, John Walden, Tim Walpole-Walsh, Hugh Whitehead, Richard Wotton, Helen Yabsley; Paul Scott (project architect); Adrian Campbell, Paul Cross, John Hirst, Dominic Munro; Hilson Moran Partnership Ltd. (mechanical engineers); BDSP Partners (environmental engineers); Emmer Pfenniger & Partner (curtain wall); Derek Lovejoy Partnership (landscape architect)

New York Times Headquarters

New York, New York. Project, 2000

Architects: Frank O. Gehry | Gehry and Partners; David Childs | Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

Engineers: William F. Baker, Hal Iyengar | Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

Height: 606 feet (185 meters)

Inhabitable floors: 43

Site dimensions: 80,000 sq. ft.

Gross floor area: approx. 1,530,000 sq. ft.

Program: Office, retail

Client: The New York Times Company / Forest City Ratner Companies

Developer: Forest City Ratner Companies

Design team: Randy Jefferson, Jim Glymph (project partners);

Edwin Chan (project designer); George Metzger (project architect); David Nam, Sean Gallivan, Matthew Gagnon, Ana Henton, Steffen Leisner, Christopher Deckwitz, Anand Devarajan, Jose Catriel Tulian, Michelle Kaufman, Kamran Ardalan, Cara Cragan, Chad Dyner, Sean Gale, Eric Jones, Meaghan Lloyd, Diego Petrate, Birgit Schneider, Zohar Schwartz, Brian Zamora (project team); Marilyn Taylor (urban design and planning partner), Ross B. Wimer (senior designer); T.J. Gottesdiener (managing partner); Scott Duncan, Ursula Schneider, Donald Holt, Michael Fei, Tran Vinh, Samer Bitar, Simone Pfeiffer, Dale Greenwald, Shashi Cann, Peter Buendgen, Kaz Morihata (project team)

Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street Tower

New York, New York. Project, 2002

Architect: Steven Holl, Solange Fabião | Steven Holl Architects

Engineers: Robert Silman, Nat Oppenheimer | Robert Silman Associates

Height: 585 feet (178 meters)

Inhabitable floors: 37 (36 above grade; 1 below grade)

Site dimensions: 13,355 sq. ft.

Gross floor area: 401,330 sq. ft.

Program: Office, retail, restaurant

Client: Fifth at 42nd LLC

Developer: Axel Stawski

Design team: Ziad Jamaledine, Irene Vogt (architects);

Simone Giostra (project architect); Gordon Smith (curtain wall)