



## Developer Anticipates Future In Green Building Design

**Andrew Liebhaber** “It’s good for the environment...and future development...is moving toward sustainable design methods and materials.” **Silverpoint Builders Corp.**

Andrew Liebhaber has always had a certain passion for creativity and innovation in building construction and business.

So it’s no surprise that the longtime construction executive and now developer finds himself at the forefront of New York’s sustainable building design movement with his latest project, Observatory Place, the first new Harlem condominium to be built according to national green building design standards.

Liebhaber’s Silverpoint Builders Corp. is the construction firm for the project. Together with his brother Michael, they are constructing the 38-unit, 39,000 square-foot residential condominium. Liebhaber’s partners in the project include: Gary Silver, an architect and Albert Marengo, a finance expert.

“As the developer of this project we felt this was the right thing to do,” Liebhaber said of the green design. “It’s good for the environment, it helps us in our marketing and sales efforts, and future development in Manhattan and all around the country is moving toward sustainable design methods and materials.”

Liebhaber got his start with buildings and business early, when he ran a construction company during his high school years. After college Liebhaber honed his business skills as a CPA for a big-five accounting firm for the next five years. At the time, one of the main clients Liebhaber worked with was an international construction firm, giving him the opportunity

to become intimately familiar with a construction company’s financial workings.

He then pursued a master of science degree in real estate with a development concentration from New York University, and after receiving his degree founded Liebhaber Construction.

Over the next 15 years, Liebhaber Construction established itself in the construction field for its high-end renovations of residences along Park Avenue, Fifth Avenue, and Central Park West, as well as luxury lofts and condominiums in the 2,500- to 5,000-square-foot range in SoHo and TriBeCa. The firm has also done numerous townhouse renovations, commercial spaces, and restorations of historically significant properties.

In 2005, Liebhaber had the opportunity to branch out as a developer as well. As someone who always had an eye toward developing buildings as well as constructing them, he believed that succeeding as a developer required three key elements: a good construction background, strong business and finance skills, and an affinity for great design.

Those three elements all came together two years ago when a mutual developer friend introduced Liebhaber to two colleagues with whom Liebhaber eventually formed a partnership: Silver, whose architecture firm was well established in New York, and Albert Marengo, who holds a doctorate in economics and has a distinguished career advising and participating in property development. After

a few meetings the three decided to become business partners.

It was fortuitous that Liebhaber, who lives on the Upper East Side, had been becoming increasingly aware of development opportunities in the changing landscape of Harlem, and that Silver and Marengo were already sourcing a deal in East Harlem – a vacant parking lot, ripe for development.

“There was just an incredible synergy between the three of us that was there,” Liebhaber said.

Liebhaber established Silverpoint Builders Corp., an offshoot of Liebhaber Construction that specializes in ground-up construction for new development. Observatory Place is its first project.

Liebhaber said it only made sense to build Observatory Place as a green building, and to establish Silverpoint Builders as a firm that is steeped in green building design. “Down the road, these will be requirements,” he said. “It’s only a matter of time, so we feel we’re early adapters for what’s coming in the future of building construction in the United States.” ■

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