

# BREAKING GROUND

Covering four of Chicago's biggest and brightest



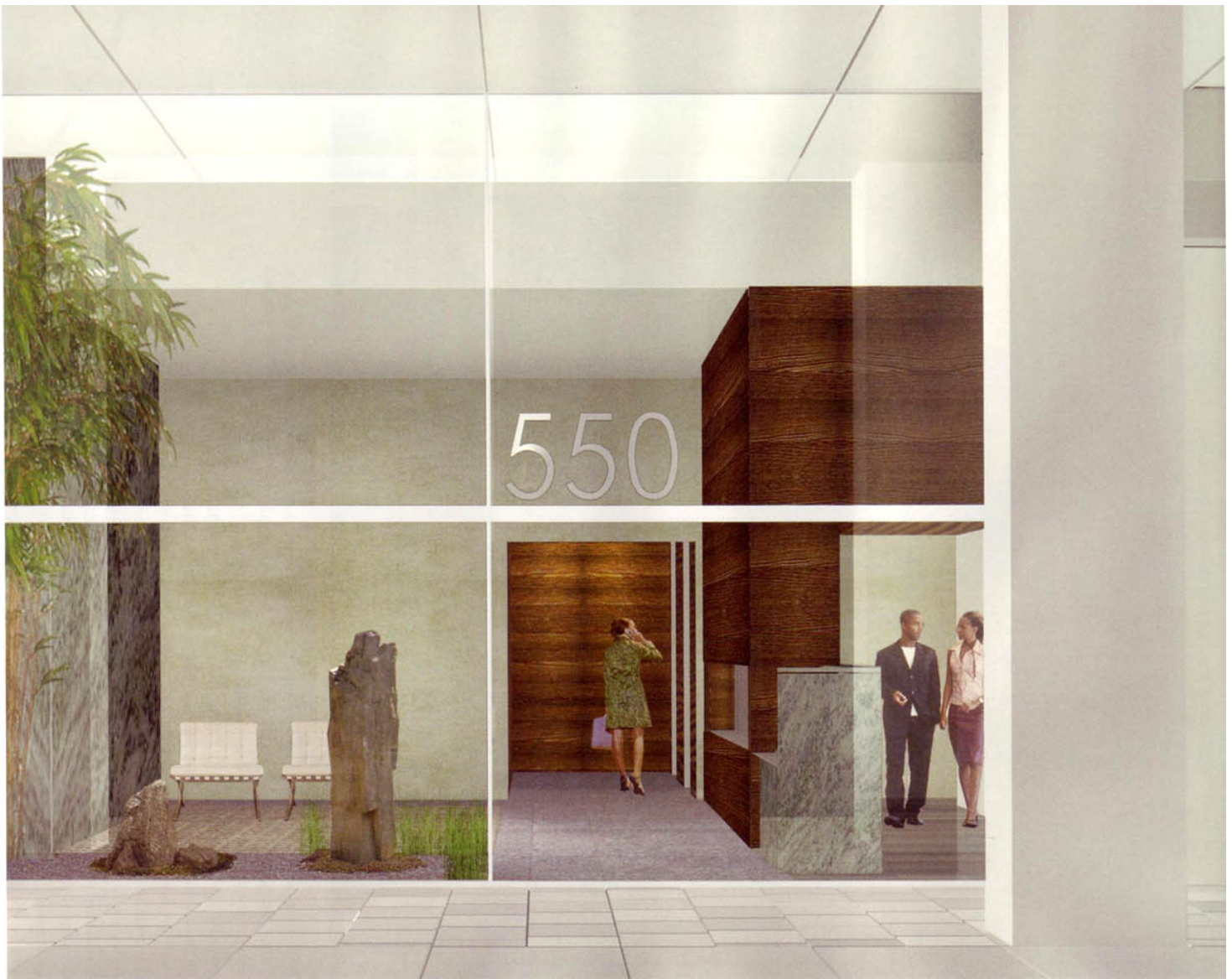
## MODERN LIVING

550 St. Clair St. Will Bring Luxurious Modern Boutique Living to Heart of Michigan Avenue

INSTEAD OF FOCUSING on developing a conventional residential floor plan that would accommodate cookie-cutter-style units, the Chicago architecture firm Brininstool + Lynch Ltd. decided that the 112 apartments in a small condominium building off Michigan Avenue on St. Clair Street should reflect the firm's more individualistic modern aesthetic, as well as the prospective high-end buyers' desire for unique interiors, says firm principal David Brininstool. "If you go into most projects, the floor plans are driven by a unit count and all sorts of efficiencies that harm the design. We wanted these units to reflect a richness of design in a progressive manner," says Brininstool, whose firm also designed Gallery 24 of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Racine Art Museum.

The layouts of the studios, one-, two-, three-bedroom and penthouse units will have more flowing plans, with multiple entries and pocket doors providing flexibility between rooms. "A bedroom might become a media room, den, or a dining room," says Brininstool. Terraces also will be a much wider 8' so that they can be better used for living, and sliding glass doors to interior rooms will increase the feeling of spaciousness. Finishes throughout will be at a very high-end with Brazilian cherry on floors in living areas and bedrooms. For bathrooms, owners will get to choose between a "light" package of Italian carrera marble on walls and floors or a "dark" charcoal slate package. Kitchens will be fitted with Italian cabinetry with high-end Sub-Zero

Above: The high-rise 550 St. Clair St. building is going up right in the heart of Michigan Avenue shopping.



**Above:** The lobby is an elegant expanse with seating.

**Below:** A typical floor plan.



and Bosch appliances integrated into them for a seamless look.

Much of the inspiration for the attention to detail came from the firm's experience in building custom single-family homes. "We took that thinking and applied it to a residential development. We felt such ideas hadn't been readily accommodated on this scale," Brininstool says.

Because the architecture firm and developer believed they were selling an "efficient lifestyle," as much as a design package, they also included a two-lane indoor lap pool, separate fitness center, and shared outdoor terrace to pare the need to go elsewhere to exercise or unwind, Brininstool says.

The building's smaller scale also suits its tony neighborhood, though exterior materials echo the cutting-edge interior design and some of the newer construction in the area. While the majority of the facade has floor-to-ceiling backlit translucent glass, floors two through seven are parking levels. Yet the double metal walls used

on the lower floors camouflage well cars, ramps, and guard rails and reflect sunlight, lights of surrounding buildings, and street lights. "Those floors don't say 'parking,'" Brininstool says.

The site's location with proximity to stores, restaurants, museums, and offices has proved a decided drawer for the "urban achievers" whom Brininstool says are buying. Already, 80 percent of units have been purchased, despite occupancy still a little less than a year away.

**Where:** 550 St. Clair St.  
**Architecture Firm:** Brininstool+Lynch Ltd.  
**Developer:** Sutherland Pearsall Development Corp.  
**Number of Floors:** 26  
**Completion Date:** Summer 2007

