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DEVELOPMENT WATCH SANDS POINT, N.Y.

A Chat With the Developer and Marketer of the Gatsby Property

Tuesday, May 31, 2011, by Sarah Firshein

In mid April, **Lands End**, the 25-room Colonial Revival manse that was said to have inspired Daisy Buchanan's grand estate in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* was **razed** to make room for a development of five luxury homes priced at \$10M a piece. A quick recap: **Bert Brodsky** bought Lands End for \$17.5M in 2004 and hoped to turn it into a home. His family objected and Brodsky listed the 13-acre property for \$30M in 2006. It never sold.



Now, Brodsky's redeveloping the site into **Seagate at Sands Point** with the help of his two sons: Lee, of THINK Properties, who's handling the marketing, and David, of 4B's Real Estate Development. We had the opportunity to connect with both the elder Brodsky and Lee by email to chat with them about the controversial demolition of Lands End and what Seagate at Sands Point will actually look like.



Renderings: *Seagate at Sands Point*

Q&A with Lee J. Brodsky, principal, and Shawn Vardi, principal and president, **THINK Properties**:

You've been hired to market a group of five new luxury homes, but you're

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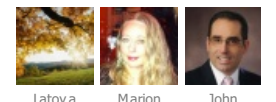
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certainly not going in with a blank slate. As indicated by reader comments on our [previous coverage](#) of the Lands End demolition, many folks are none to pleased, and vocally so, that Lands End was torn down. How do you begin to do damage control for the reputation of the developer?

It will certainly be a challenge to change the thoughts of many that feel that the developer simply tore down a historical property—something that was a very difficult decision to make. We hope to convey the message that he is preserving the locale by building beautiful homes worthy of this special site and its historic significance. Furthermore, we are looking for owners also worthy of being part of this—[those] who will also appreciate it.

In your marketing campaign, will there be any acknowledgment of the history of the property?

Of course we would acknowledge its history, which is a very important component to all of us. Furthermore, the developer understands and has accepted the challenge to honor its past by creating a contemporary environment and building residences worthy of its pedigree.

How, if at all, are you finding ways to tie in the Gatsby connection?

Again, the best way to tie in that connection will be to develop the project in a way that might attract and, perhaps inspire an erstwhile, contemporary Fitzgerald or Gatsby-esque character.

Had you ever visited the site before the demolition? If so, what was it like?

Yes. Because of its magnificent location, the size, and proportions of the building, and the mystique surrounding the site, one could close one's eyes and almost visualize the parties, the people, and the costumes described by Fitzgerald. But, when you open your eyes and see a building in terrible disrepair and recognize that, indeed, time and economics really took its toll on the property.

Do you feel that this is a case of history lost or an opportunity gained?

Why?

[We] would say that whenever a venerated place, thing or idea is supplanted by time and relevance there is an element of sadness associated with it. However, as with most such things, there can also be great opportunity.

Who are you targeting these homes for? In your opinion, who would find them most appealing?

The owners of one of these five exclusive homes are those who truly enjoy the finest things that life has to offer. These are discerning people who will appreciate the splendor of the outstanding location, the tastefulness of the architecture, and the quality of our build. And hopefully they will also appreciate its historical significance of where they will be living.

Q&A with Bert Brodsky, 4B's Real Estate Development:

So, why the the Lands End site in particular? What about it appealed to you?

Its location on the Sound, magnificent views, and, I must admit, it is Land's End.

Be honest: did you have any second thoughts about demo'ing the house?

Of course, who wouldn't have second thoughts? The original plan was to preserve it and make Land's End a family compound of sorts for my wife and me, and my four children and their families. Unfortunately, the reality of the condition of the main house and ancillary structures, and the costs and logistics involved in trying to renovate the property, set in. As a business man, I could only come to one conclusion—the existing structures would have to be taken down and replaced with something worthy of the site. And that is what I set out to do.

What can you say to appease outspoken readers on our site and others who have [voiced](#) their disapproval for this project?

Even though I would like to appease them, I know there isn't anything I could say that would satisfy them. What I will say, however, is that I intend to create something very special at Seagate at Sands Point: something that I will be proud to have my name associated with, and that my children and grandchildren will gladly have their names associated with. I view this project as a legacy project for the Brodsky family name.

Will you integrate the literary history of the site into the concept or design

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of the homes?

We'll let the architects use their talents and skills to determine how such concepts will be integrated in their designs. I can tell you that we have set the bar extraordinarily high for each of the professionals who will be involved in bringing this project to fruition.

Briefly describe the new community, and explain what you're envisioning in terms of specific square footage, price point, luxury amenities, etc., for the homes.

Seagate at Sands Point will include five beautiful and expansive homes, each totally unique while maintaining the classic and traditional elegance of what the homebuyers would expect from living in such an amazing location. From the landscape design to the flow of the interiors, these homes will be the pinnacle works of the notable architects we have assembled for this project. Private, secure, lush, and abundant—all gracing the 1/4 mile of beach front.

Do you think the homes you're building will be the sort of places where people will host the sort of fabulous parties that made F. Scott Fitzgerald's Daisy Buchanan so famous?

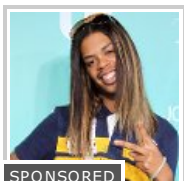
Lavish would describe the parties of Fitzgerald's imagination. And we would only hope the new residents of this location, so rich of lore and history, would feel any party they celebrate will be extra special.

We're suckers for classic American literature. Have you actually read *The Great Gatsby*? Perhaps a good beach read this summer?

It's been on my list of must-reads for some time. I'll let you know.

- [Gatsby House to Become True "Valley of the Ashes" Development](#) [Curbed National]
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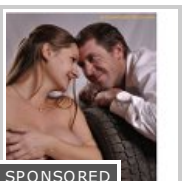
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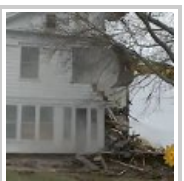
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