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New York Developer Seeks Designs for Iconic Office Tower

By David M. Levitt

New York developer L&L Holding Co. is soliciting architectural firms to design an “iconic” office tower on Manhattan’s Park Avenue, just north of the street’s landmark Seagram and Lever House buildings.

L&L, whose principals include developers David Levinson and Robert Lapidus, are seeking a replacement for the 32-story tower that currently sits at 425 Park Ave., between East 55th and 56th streets. That 552,000 square-foot (51,000-square-meter) building was completed in 1957, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

L&L invited 11 architects to compete for the design, including Norman Foster, designer of London’s “Gherkin” skyscraper; Renzo Piano, architect of the New York Times (NYT) headquarters tower; and Zaha Hadid, designer of the Guangzhou Opera House in China, according to a statement today from the company. Midtown Manhattan’s Plaza District, where the site is located, boasts the highest office rents in the city.

“An opportunity like this has not presented itself to New York in half a century, and it is unlikely that another opportunity will materialize again in our lifetimes,” Levinson, L&L’s chief executive officer, said in the statement.

The new tower would be about 650,000 square feet and have Central Park views on the upper floors, the company said. L&L expects construction to start in 2015, with completion by the end of 2017.

The architects’ responses are due in early May and L&L expects to select finalists by the middle of the month. Final selection probably will be in October, the company said.

The other invitees are Atelier Christian de Portzamparc, Ateliers Jean Nouvel, Herzog & de Meuron, Kohn Pederson Fox Associates, Maki and Associates, OMA/Rem Koolhaas, Richard Meier and Partners, and Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners.