

BRICK UNDERGROUND

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Considering a NYC studio? They're not all alike—here's what you can expect to find



Is this the quintessential New York City studio? CORE

Consider the studio apartment. While not a New York City invention (these diminutive, all-in-one living spaces exist worldwide) they occupy a special place in the New York City real estate market landscape thanks to their flexibility. They can be starter apartments, or an affordable way to live in NYC, or even a very fancy \$1.6 million pied-à-terre.

And while you could say that not all studio apartments are created equally, it's probably more accurate to simply say that not all studio apartments are created the same. A studio is not a studio is not a studio; there can be big differences in these small spaces, and buyers' preferences will vary according to individual needs and tastes.

We asked around to find out variations on the studio theme, who likes what, and which are most attractive to buyers when you're ready to move on up to the big one-bedroom.

What are the most desirable studio layout?

How a studio space is designed can have a huge impact on its appeal. Alcove studios, with a sleeping area that's separate from the main living space, are very desirable. "L-shaped alcove studios that can be converted to one-bedrooms are at a premium," says Josh Sarnell, a broker at Citi Habitats. "A lot of studios will be the same size in terms of square footage, but the alcove layout leaves room for a bedroom area and all-important privacy."

Other layout variations, such as a foyer or sunken living room, demarcate an entryway and the main living space. "There are studio buyers who prefer to have a transition area, like a foyer with a closet, at the entry to the apartment—instead of stepping right into the living space," says Jana Angelakis, a Citi Habitats agent.

There are still other variations, such as ones with elevated platforms and loft beds.

Kitchen: Open or not?

"I've noticed that there's quite a divide between people wanting a completely separate kitchen versus one that is open to the rest of the space in a studio," says Hannah Bryon-Staples, an agent at Citi Habitats. "Some people like open concept living at any cost. In both scenarios though, ventilation for the kitchen ends up being pretty important, especially if cooking smells are having to travel across the living area to get to the windows."

In CORE broker Ben Jacobs' experience, buyers are expressing a strong preference. "A lot of studio buyers now want to see an open kitchen," he says, citing a 76th Street studio he recently showed. "The kitchen was a decent size, but almost everybody wants it opened up." Jacobs also points out that an open layout may be able to accommodate an island, which presents an opportunity for additional counter space, as well as storage above and below the island.

And if you cook, having a full-size stove and ample counter space is an important consideration.

Storage

Some people want creative ways to store (and hide) their stuff. Studios can feature basic built-in shelves, or elaborate custom closets and storage solutions. Of course the ultimate disappearing act in studios is the Murphy bed, which furniture manufacturers have refined to be not only subtle, but even attractive, or useful, such as models with closets on either side.

Space

How many square feet a studio is will definitely be impacted by when it was built. Studios in new construction tend to be smaller than older apartments. "Space is compromised,

because for developers, when space is expensive, they make the apartment as small as possible," says Jacobs.

But in a new building with common areas, space in the actual apartment may be less of an issue.

"Studios in new buildings, while there are not as many on the market as larger residential properties, will offer great advantages in terms of amenities," says Elliot Bogod, managing director of Broadway Realty. "For example, if you want working space, you won't have to waste the square footage in your studio on the 'office corner' because you can just take your laptop to the lounge where you can work comfortably for as long as you'd like."

"Common building amenities make the apartment more desirable - because it makes buyers feel they are getting more for their money than just the unit itself," says Sarnell. "Common lounges, game rooms etc. become almost an extension of their home, and offer additional space in which to relax or entertain."

Charm

On the flip side, is character. Jacobs offers up a West Village studio he recently sold as ideal: over 500 square feet, large kitchen, big walk-in closets, skylights, and a fireplace. "For me, that's a deluxe studio," he says. "A quaint, West Village prewar studio...It's a wonderful little writer's den."