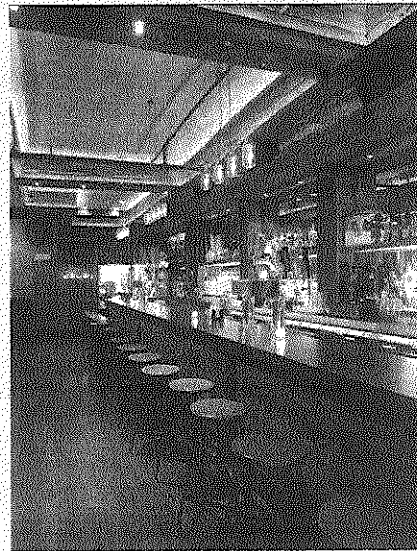


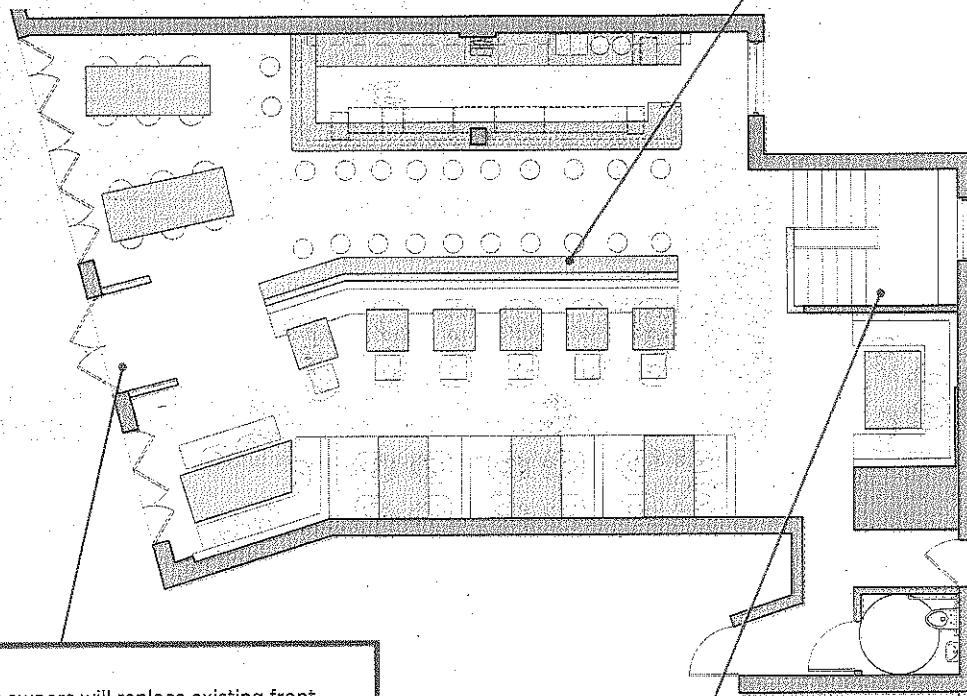
THE PLAN 2758 BROADWAY

When Meridiana, a fixture on the Upper West Side, shuttered after nearly two decades, Massey Knakal broker David Chkheidze exposed the Broadway storefront to what rapidly grew into a formidable crowd of more than a hundred would-be retail tenants, despite what he candidly described as a space in disrepair. After tours from both local and national restaurants, not to mention the owner of a Soho art gallery and one health club, Mr. Chkheidze selected Amsterdam Tavern owner Mark Harford, who intends to open an upscale bar and restaurant—named either *Five Lamps* or *Lager House*—early this spring. Mr. Chkheidze reviewed the floor plan with *The Commercial Observer* and discussed what, exactly, drew Mr. Harford and his investment group to the 106th Street location.



During its 20 years in business, Meridiana, a Mediterranean bistro, slowly lost its steam, with numerous promises of upgrades never materializing, Mr. Chkheidze said. When the owner finally closed up shop, retailers stormed the building, knowing that its proximity to Columbia University and several subway lines would nearly ensure pedestrian traffic. As such, Mr. Chkheidze was able to secure a taking rent above the initial \$175 a square foot.

The former restaurant was divided horizontally by a partition wall, but, under new management, the space will now include a far less obtrusive wall meant to divide the bar area and as many as eight aged-wood tables in the newly designed dining area. "But they're keeping the bar itself, which was originally built in 1940," said Mr. Chkheidze. "It's a nice antique bar and I believe they'll be restoring it. It's one of the few keepers."



The new owners will replace existing front doors and windows with brand new fixtures, all with an eye toward taking full advantage of the summer months. To be sure, with folding windows on Broadway, the space will open to what Mr. Chkheidze described as large sidewalk frontage that can easily accommodate even more space for patio dining.

While the dining area itself is relatively small, 1,500 square feet of basement space already includes ventilation, a kitchen, walk-in freezer and additional storage. Add to that wide stairs and a dumb waiter, said Mr. Chkheidze, and transporting entrees should be as easy as if the kitchen were on the ground floor. "And so with the high ceilings it should be good enough," said Mr. Chkheidze of what he described as stellar 14-foot heights.

Besides 1,550 square feet on the ground floor and an equal amount of basement space, the hidden gem, said Mr. Chkheidze, was an additional 1,200 square feet in the backyard, which he said would be used to seat additional guests. Meanwhile, in addition to three existing bathrooms, the newly restored garden will include another two restrooms. "All the original owners needed to do was hire an architect and build stairs, but they never did and so they were forced to shut it down," said Mr. Chkheidze. "It's a hidden gem."

