

Every major city in the world is home to an enclave that is populated solely by the super wealthy. LA has Beverly Hills, which has been celebrated and satirized in both television and movies. Across the world in Seoul, Gangnam briefly became one of the most famous city districts in the world due to the inexplicable phenomenon that eponymous tune. And the United Arab Emirates have become virtual playgrounds for the super-rich and their tagalongs.

However, there are only a few places in the world that can claim to play host to the wealthiest of the wealthy. The people who don't get out of their 1500 thread count sheets on their \$150,000 Hästens mattress for less than 1.5 million dollars a day. For those, there is an even more exclusive area in the most vibrant cities in the world. The first is London, where, in a quintessentially British manner, their riches are obscured behind iron gates and stone walls. And the second is in New York City where the world's wealthiest residents stand apart in the only way they know how—from above.

While the palatial manors in London sprawl across hidden acres, the expanse of which no one aside from their owners will ever be able to grasp, in the Big Apple, from miles around, everyone can look up to imagine what the lives must be like for these financial giants among men. Towering above the brick and mortar luxury buildings of various European style and architecture, are the wealthiest, most powerful and people in the world, the residents of New York City's Billionaire's Row.

The Mansions of the Gilded Era

Ask any New Yorker and they'll tell you that this area of the city isn't exactly a stranger to wealth. In fact, Billionaire's Row is located just a stone's throw away from what at the turn of the century was known as Millionaire's Row. When the mansions of the members of the Gilded Families all lined 5th Avenue and spread out not up. The Vanderbilt Mansion, for example, one comprised an entire city block.

Those edifices, many of which have now been destroyed or converted boasted an ode to European architecture that these new buildings now eschew. One need only take a visit to the Frick Museum to see the influence of Neo-Greek style or the Plaza Hotel to see how its façade bares a striking resemblance to a classical French Chateau.

As such, the majority of the buildings in this vicinity boast turrets, copper roofs and marble from the industrialists who built them a century ago. However, the new tycoons have shrugged off their symbols of wealth are more streamlined and vertical. In fact, these new towers dart above their surroundings and cast shadows upon their neighbors. And while they stand out now, like a prepubescent child who stands heads above his classmates, this growth is just the first sign of the changes to come.

A New Standard

Seated at the foot of Central Park, Billionaire's Row isn't so much a single stretch of houses as it is a collection of exclusive, high-rises located on and around 57th street. As it stands now, there are roughly eight buildings that comprise the Row: 53 W. 53rd Street, Steinway Tower, One57, Central Park Tower, 520 Park Avenue, 432 Park Avenue, 252 E. 57th Street and Central Park South. While New York has never had a shortage of towering edifices, the impossibly stretched skyline hadn't necessarily been built primarily for residential purposes. Or this close to Central Park.

Until construction was completed on One57 in 2014, most of the city's highest towers had always been located further downtown. While the Empire State Building is located just a few blocks away from the Row, One57 was the highest building to be located so closely to Central Park—until 432 Park Ave was completed in October of that same year. 432 Park Ave then became the highest residential skyscraper in the world, the second largest tower in New York and the third tallest building in the United States. From there the race was on to construct the most luxurious and exclusive residential skyscrapers in the world.

There Goes the Neighborhood

The ironic thing about the Row is that it is located in a part of the city that is now not generally favored by actual New Yorkers. After the destruction of the Gilded Mansions, most of the city's wealthy began to migrate to the Upper East and West sides. With museums on the East side and trendy restaurants on the West, these sections flanking the city became the ideal place to live for those who wanted to partake in the best that New York had to offer.

However, roughly ten years ago, a new area sprang up. What was once a haven for artists and intellectuals, soon became an enclave for the super trendy and incredibly rich—Tribeca. In the abandoned factories, the wealthy found an opportunity to take barebones lofts and turn them into their ideal apartments. The turn-around there was so great that Tribeca now holds the title of the wealthiest neighborhood in the country with a median income of upwards of \$800,000. How long this slice of the city will hold that title remains to be seen. But the only thing sure in both life and New York is change. And as more super-luxurious spaces become available in the Row, it may soon take over that crown.

New, Now, Next

As of now, while it is located next to the park, the neighborhood surrounding the Row boasts no trendy film festivals, amazing museums or charming cafes. Instead, the area is a crowded mess of tourists, businesses and high-end shopping. It is an area most New Yorkers head to work, go to the theater or shop, but not to live.

And to be quite honest, most of the people who buy these apartments won't live in them full-time either. So, what exactly is the draw of Billionaire's Row? Well, for starters, many of the world's rich want to purchase apartments there just because they can. What better way to show off in front of people who have everything than to spend \$200 million dollars on an apartment that you will never use?

And in the rare time that you are there, you can spend your time enjoying what everyone is really paying for on Billionaire's Row—unobstructed views of Central Park. While many of the wealthy residents on either side of the green space have enjoyed the unobstructed views that came with Penthouse and or Park facing apartments, others have had to sneak glimpses from their side windows or take a walk to a park to see it up close. However, for the residents of Billionaire's row, the entire isle of Manhattan remains in your line of sight at every hour of the night. And Central Park serves as your personal garden all throughout the day.

So, while the layman may not ever be able to call one of the sky-high apartments on Billionaire's Row home, they can visit and look up. And admire and aspire to leave an impact on the world much like the Gilded Families, Industrialists and self-made billionaires who came before. And if you are ever in New York, you can find inspiration in these towering giants as they cast their long shadows in the only way they can—from above.