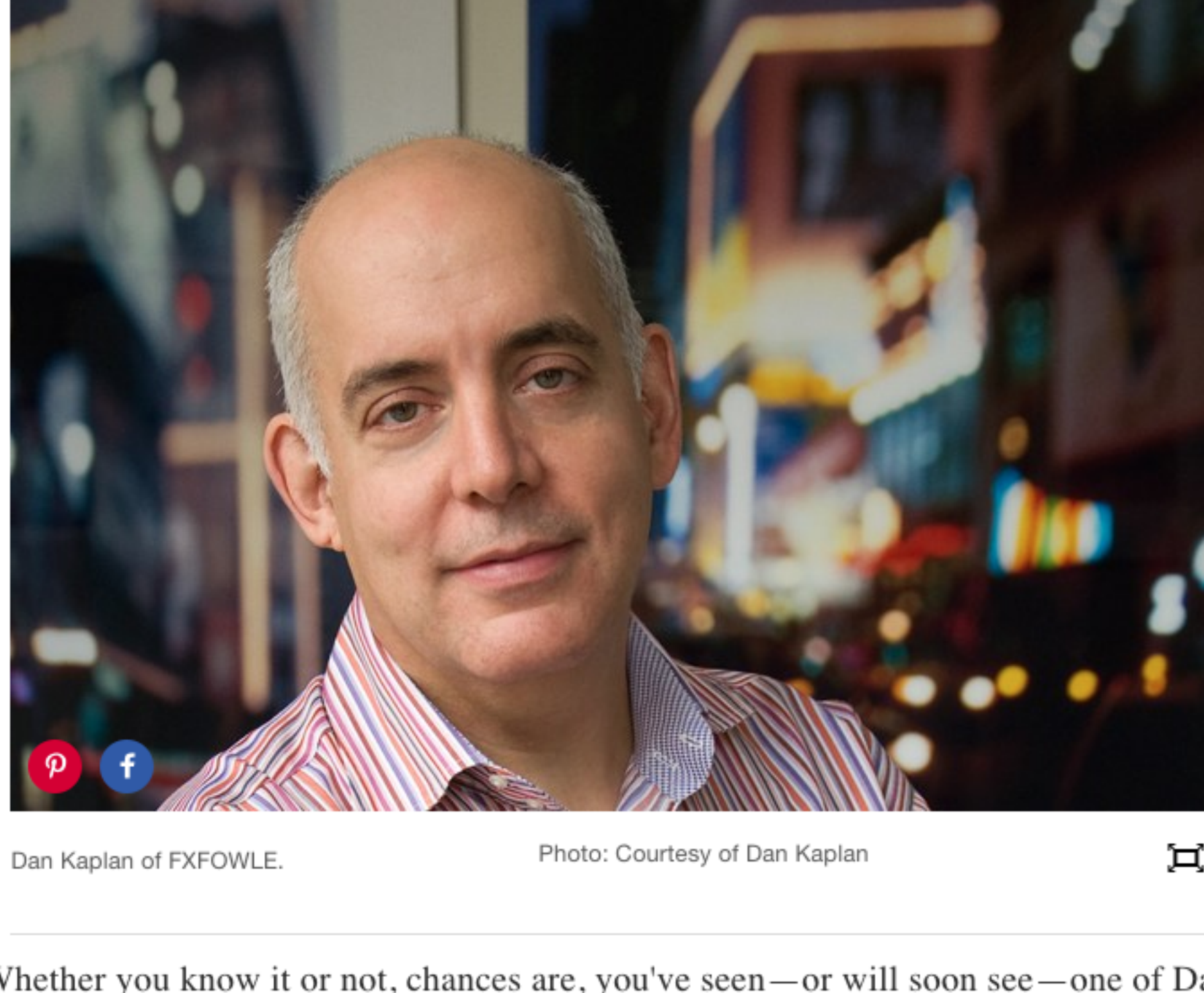


A Day with FXFOWLE's Dan Kaplan

The architect is responsible for some of New York's hottest buildings

TEXT BY [HADLEY KELLER](#) · Posted January 5, 2018



Dan Kaplan of FXFOWLE.

Photo: Courtesy of Dan Kaplan



Whether you know it or not, chances are, you've seen—or will soon see—one of Dan Kaplan's buildings. As senior partner at FXFOWLE, the architect is responsible for such groundbreaking residences as *The Greenwich Lane*, the cream-of-the-crop luxury condo building decorated by Thomas O'Brien, and *Circa Central Park*, an arched architectural feat offering some of the city's best views. These days, Kaplan's hard at work on *1 Willoughby Square* (or, for those in the know, 1WSQ), Downtown Brooklyn's upcoming office building, which will be the first of its kind in decades (and where Kaplan's own team will eventually move its offices). *AD* shadowed Kaplan for a day to learn how he finds inspiration and juggles multiple large-scale projects (hint: it involves Nespresso and New York City views).

6:00 A.M. After getting up and showering, I begin my day with two essentials: feeding the cat and making an espresso with my beloved Nespresso machine. While my wife meditates and reads the paper, I spend two hours or so of quiet time reviewing design progress on various projects. I compare it to looking at the "dailies" in the movie business. I have a beautiful view of Washington Square Park from our living room. I get my best, most creative thinking done while sitting on my sofa as the sun rises over the city.



FXFOWLE's Circa Central Park.

Photo: Courtesy of FXFOWLE

8:00 A.M. Since my wife and I moved back to Greenwich Village from the suburbs, I relish my walk to work: up University Place, through the farmers market in Union Square—where I pick up a fresh Pullman loaf from SheWolf Bakery—and then a few blocks to the office in Chelsea. It's a feast for the eyes. I like to find some good architectural detail or moment to shoot and share on Instagram. And then, just before I head upstairs to our office, I stop in at Gotham Coffee for my second cup of coffee and arguably the best scone in the city.

8:30 A.M. Once in the office, I dive into multiple work sessions with project teams. On a typical day, I will have three to four focused project reviews. My role is editor, teacher, and critic to some of the most intelligent, committed, and creative designers in the world. In some cases, every hour I spend with a team corresponds to 200 hours of their collective time—so there is a great deal of pressure to make our time together count.

Lately, I am spending lots of time looking at details and profiles of the façade panels for 1WSQ, the first new office building in Downtown Brooklyn in a generation. Our model shop has created some beautiful mock-ups of the unique blue glazed brick we are considering for the tower's exterior surfaces. The tactility of these mock-ups and models is so helpful; they always tell you something that computer renderings or hand drawings never can.

12:30-ish P.M. During one of these work sessions, my assistant, Ram, will appear at just the right time with my lunch smoothie (a special concoction that the smoothie place downstairs calls "the Dan"). My team rolls their eyes. . . .



One Willoughby Square in Downtown Brooklyn.

Photo: Courtesy of DBOX

2:00 P.M. I run out to Downtown Brooklyn with a developer to look at a site he is considering for a new residential tower. This neighborhood, one of the most dynamic in the country, is a fascinating combination of the historic, the gritty, and the brand-new. The site under consideration presents all of the complexities and interests inherent in the context.

3:30–4:30 P.M. On the way back to Chelsea, I stop in at JEMB, the 1WSQ client, to talk about the possibilities for synergies between our design for 1WSQ and the design of an adjacent park. JEMB—like many of my clients—is a multigenerational family business. In this case, three generations of the family are at the table in most meetings. I grew up in a large, boisterous family and have a natural affinity for this environment.

5:00–6:30 P.M. Making calls, returning calls, and beating back the tsunami of emails!



The Chamberlain, a condo building by FXFOWLE on the Upper West Side.

Photo: Courtesy of FXFOWLE

6:30 P.M. On a day when I don't have an evening presentation or an event, I look forward to the walk home (while also looking for a good pic to post on *Instagram!*). I then change and go to the gym, which overlooks Astor Place. As I work out on the elliptical, I look out on Morphosis's 41 Cooper Square building at Cooper Union; in a fit of admiration and competitiveness, I pick up my pace.

8:00 P.M. My wife and I recently moved back to Manhattan from New Jersey and, more often than not, we will go out for dinner. Our adult children are a bit bemused by their parents' newfound spontaneity. Tonight, it's a casual dinner at Loring Place on 8th Street. Food is a very important part of our lives.

10:00 P.M. After a few more emails, I crawl into bed and read for about an hour. I read almost exclusively nonfiction, alternating between history and that curious genre of leadership: self-help. I just finished an engrossing book about Edward Curtis, who took iconic photographs of Native American tribes between the 1890s and the 1930s. I am now in middle of Ray Dalio's *Principles*.

11:00 P.M. Lights out.