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Starbucks to Open Its Largest Store in the World in Manhattan

Coffee retailer takes 20,000 feet in Chelsea neighborhood for roastery

By KEIKO MORRIS | Updated April 5, 2016 8:40 p.m. ET



PHOTO: DAVID RYDER/BLOOMBERG

Starbucks Corp. aims to go bigger and bolder in New York City, planning to make southwest Chelsea the home of its largest store in the world.

The Seattle-based coffee retailer said Tuesday that it would set up its second roastery in a 20,000-square-foot space at the bottom of a boutique office building at 61 Ninth Ave. The massive store, expected to open in 2018, will be modeled on the company's Seattle roastery, which the company describes as "coffee-as-theater" and a highly sensorial experience.

"In New York we want to take elements from what we originally created and build something even bigger and bolder," said Starbucks Chairman and Chief Executive Howard Schultz.

Starbucks now has about 94 locations in the New York metro area. The decision to bring a roastery to the city is the company's way of distinguishing itself from the competition, said Arlene Spiegel, a Manhattan

restaurant and retail consultant, who is unaffiliated with Starbucks.

"What they [Starbucks] have to do is reinforce their dominance as a premium coffee supplier and this is how they do it," Ms. Spiegel said.

The New York megastore will be on two levels in a 170,000-square-foot office building being developed by Vornado Realty Trust and Aurora Capital Associates. The retailer chose a spot at the border of Chelsea and the Meatpacking District, an area anchored by office tenants like Google and attractions such as the High Line park and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

The nine-story office building, designed by Rafael Viñoly, will feature a terrace for each floor. Vornado and Aurora said they have several commercial developments under way in the area, which has very little office vacancy and high demand from office tenants. ●