By 1927, the commanding apartment buildings along Park Avenue were not just tall; they were immensely tall, true towers, the first skyscrapers built for permanent living. The tallest of them was the Ritz Tower, shooting up from the pavement at the corner of Fifty-seventh Street and Park Avenue. Built for blue-bloods[1] and tycoons by Emery Roth, […] it opened in October 1926 and was one of the first residential buildings in New York constructed in sympathy with the city's landmark zoning law[2] of 1916.

Concerned about diminishing sunlight and fresh air in the canyon like streets created by the closely massed skyscrapers of lower Manhattan, the city placed a limit on the maximum height and bulk of tall buildings. Height limits were based upon the width of the street a building faced; if a developer proposed to exceed the legal limit, the stories above it had to be set back, roughly one foot for each four feet of additional height. […]

Forced to work within the confines of the so-called zoning envelope, architects began constructing "set-back" skyscrapers, with sections of the buildings set back further and further as they rose from their bases into the island's sky. "Wedding cake" architecture, some New Yorkers called it […].

The Ritz Tower […] was forty-one stories high. The tallest inhabited building in the world, it dominated the skyline of Midtown Manhattan as the Woolworth Building did that of lower Manhattan. Residents of its upper stories had unobstructed views in all directions for a distance of twenty-five miles on clear days, "panorama[s] unexcelled in all New York," Emery Roth boasted.

It was a new way of living for the rich. They became sky dwellers, their "mansions in the clouds" higher than anyone had ever lived. In its architectural aspirations alone, the Ritz Tower expressed the shoot-for-the-moon spirit of the Jazz Age. Sculpted in rusticated limestone[3], it rose from its base "like a telescope," up through its set-back terraces to a square tower crowned by a glistening copper roof.

Donald L. Miller, Supreme City: How Jazz Age Manhattan Gave Birth to Modern America, 2014

RED = WHO

GREEN = WHERE

YELLOW = WHEN

PINK = WHAT