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Former city gyms make for some stunning homes

In a city full of claustrophobic apartments and workout addicts, New Yorkers are now moving into their gyms. Or former gymnasiums, at least, which offer an unexpected source of airy and light living spaces (with some serious architectural weight to back them up).

One of the most beautiful apartments currently for sale in New York is the aptly named Solarium Penthouse at 555 West End Ave. Built in 1908, the William A. Boring-designed building started life as the gym of the St. Agnes Boys High School. Now the top floor, which features a 19-foot arched ceiling with a skylight and a glass wall, is in the process of undergoing an intense makeover.



213 W. 23rd St. CORE

The 3,420-square-foot, three-bedroom, three-bathroom space will include a white-fumed-oak kitchen with Arabescato marble counters and slab backsplashes by Christopher Peacock, and a master-bedroom suite with a Calacatta Gold marble bath.

“It’s the coolest downtown property you have ever been in, but on the Upper West Side,” says listing broker Alexa Lambert of Stribling. “People come in and they don’t talk because they don’t know what to say.”

The unique city retreat, which hit the market last month, is asking \$18 million. The rest of the schoolhouse will reopen as condos in the first quarter of 2019.

Another skylight-filled stunner lives at 240 Centre St. in Little Italy. In a prior life, Apartment 5H was a gym in the former New York City Police Headquarters building. It was converted into a 6,600-square-foot, four-bedroom apartment back in 1988 by renowned architect Charles Gwathmey, then came back to the market four years ago, asking \$31.5

million. Today, the owners are asking just \$12.7 million — more than a 50 percent price cut. Sara Dai and Raphael De Niro of Douglas Elliman have the listing.

This spring another gym — the former YMCA McBurney branch (featured in the Village People's famous music video tribute to the club) at 213 W. 23rd St. in Chelsea — traded for \$12.3 million.

Designed by Annabelle Selldorf and Jeffrey Beers, the 7,000-square-foot, four-bedroom home features a central glass-enclosed walnut staircase, 29-foot ceilings and, of course, lots of light.

Talk about sweat equity.