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As spring approaches, what's old is new again in NYC real estate. We take a look at the regal past made de rigueur in cool residential conversions.

By Shira Levine

New York is all about statement-making, and our skyline of residential and commercial real estate is no exception. Developers and architects with generous budgets design and market homes to be bragworthy, enabling buyers to relish in sharing their home's quirky back story.

When it comes to cocktail party appeal, luxury living by way of conversion is a showstopper. Carriage house conversions are plentiful, but how about a former brothe? A repurposed insane asylum? Renovated church or firehouse? An adapted schoolhouse, bank, hotel, pencil or sugar factory—you get the picture. Here are some of the city's best.

OUT WITH THE OLD

From top left: The kitchen of Unit 4L in the Brooklyn Trust building, a former bank; a stately living room of an apartment at 34 Prince St., once St. Patrick's Old Cathedral School.

A HOLY PLACE TO RESIDE IN

Back in the year 1900, when 34 Prince St. was known as St. Patrick's Old Cathedral School, it probably wasn't a place to get cozy. Today, it's the **Residences at Prince**, where two town houses replete with seven condos will officially inhabit the Nolita landmark by the end of 2016. There's a 3,763-square-foot duplex



penthouse with three terraces listed for \$13.1 million, and a 2,743-square-foot three-bedroom currently on the market for \$7.74 million. Personally, we're feeling the 9,830-square-foot seven-bedroom listed at \$25 million. *Condos listed by Javier Lattanzio, Time Equities; town houses listed by Patrick V. Lilly, Core Group, princetmott.com*

A PROPERTY YOU CAN BANK ON

This is adaptive reuse at its finest in the treasured Brooklyn Heights neighborhood. Located at the corner of Pierrepont and Clinton streets and first constructed in 1913 in the Italian High Renaissance style, the six-story **Brooklyn Trust Company Building** was once a regal bank; now it's where a 12-unit condo holds court. The lovely thing about bankatecture is the gift of salvaged features from the iconic structuring, and this project is no exception. The building has masterfully integrated preserved wood-burning fireplaces along with original windows that shine as design features all on their own. There's even a cleverly converted cash vault that serves as a storage room for bikes and strollers. Speaking of cash, check out Unit 6L, a four-bedroom, three-bathroom, 2,911-square-footer for \$4.36 million, and Unit 2A, a four-bedroom, 3 1/2-bathroom, 3,093-square-footer for \$4.17 million. *Both listed by Vanessa Connelly of Brown Harris Stevens, bhhsa.com*

THE FORMER LIFESAVER

If you wanted to meet a hot doctor, chances were good this was the address to get some attention—albeit of the medical type. What is today a 6,300-square-foot, five-bedroom, five-bathroom



LET THE SUNSHINE IN Clockwise from top left: Outdoor space at The Sorting House, a former post office; an inside look at 9 Jay St.'s skybridge, which connects the town house to a condo unit at 67 Hudson St.; the 108-year-old skybridge overlooks the Staple Street Alley.



home with ceilings spanning more than 11 feet and windows numbering 50 was previously a hospital clinic built in the early 1900s. Uniquely sold as one big gem, **9 Jay St.** is a 25-foot-wide town house with a skybridge that connects to a condo apartment at **67 Hudson St.** The footbridge, a Manhattan icon dating back 108 years, looks out over the Staple Street Alley—originally a stable for horse-drawn ambulances. On a clear day, the rooftop terrace views reach out to the Atlantic Ocean, putting you in the company of neighbors who only hate out of envy. *Listed for \$50 million by Kapitan Ungur, Nest Seekers International, nestseekers.com*

A HOME FOR SNAIL MAIL

The Internet hasn't totally won all forms of communication—the post office still gets business! That said, the **Sorting House**, a

30-unit condo project at 318 W. 52nd St., has taken over some of the Radio City Station Post Office's real estate. Cadence Property Group will demolish the top floor of the three-story red brick station and rebuild with an additional two stories. The nearly \$46 million project is expected to be completed by 2017 and will feature homes ranging from studios to three-bedroom units. Twenty-eight out of the 30 units will score private outdoor space along with a common roof deck. *Expected to be listed for between \$1 million and \$3 million, sortinghouse.com* ■

WHAT'S NEXT?

We catch up with **Christine Miller Martin** of **Engel & Volkers NYC** to find out what's trending this spring. —SL

Who are the people buying in your world right now? Families. The week following spring break is really busy—people come back from a trip focused and ready. There's also the period when families find out what school their children were—or weren't—accepted to attend. If something doesn't work out, they might sell and move to the burbs. Or their kid got into a school in, say, the upper Carnegie Hill area and they now want to live in the 70s. A lot of big and fast decisions have to happen in such scenarios.

We talk about Billionaire's Row because there's so much far-out real estate there. Do you see another stretch of Manhattan enjoying such a level of residential wealth? I don't think there will be any more Billionaire's Rows, but there's a unique confluence of events, a perfect storm that's made Yorkville an area to pay attention to. It's near the Second Avenue subway—there are 900 condo units under construction in that area—and there's a lot of turnover in the retail space, with many opportunities in commercial real estate. A recent law change increased the amount of square footage allowed for retail in residential buildings.

Are there any significant trends or changes you're seeing? There's a big shift away from the glass box. I see a renewed appreciation for pre-war details—as long as they come with 21st-century amenities. Shining examples are Robert A.M. Stern's 15 Central Park West, 230 East End Ave., the Toll Brothers' 1110 Park Ave.—and then there's the huge success of Peter Pennoyer's 151 E. 78th St., where Simon Cowell, of all people, allegedly bought a penthouse. *evuso.com*

