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Holier-Than-Thou NYC Real Estate

If you hadn't heard – and/or have been living in an atheist bomb shelter – the Pope is coming to NYC tomorrow and there is no shortage of fanfare and excitement. There's going to be a big parade, a concert featuring the likes of Jennifer Hudson and Gloria Estefan and a whole lot of school visits and praying. The last papal visit was in 2008, but the popularity of Pope Francis and his progressive message make this visit a big deal for many New Yorkers regardless of their religious beliefs.

His visit has been analyzed and opined on every which way from architectural studies of Saint Patrick's Cathedral to the reaction of local car wash workers and Malthusian traffic reports, but in a city where the long arm of real estate knows no bounds, we thought we'd take a look at the changing function of churches.

Only in a city where inventory is so low, land is so scarce and landmarks law is so full of loopholes would places of worship revert to homes. We took a look at the listings – both currently active, in-contract and past – and found a handful of amazing and surprising spaces that once were places of religious worship and are now places layman — like you and me — call home. Take a look at what we found.

Novare 135 West 4th Street



The penthouse at the Novare, FKA Washington Square Methodist Church

Built in 1860, Washington Square Methodist Church formerly occupied the site of the Novare condo at 135 West 4th Street.

The church was designed by Gamaliel King in the Romanesque Revival style and features a marble facade with four slim buttresses. Throughout the 19th century, the church served a traditional Episcopal community, but by the 20th century the church became enmeshed in politics, becoming a meeting place for the New York Christian temperance movement in the 1910s and 1920s.

It later became a mecca for social activism in the 1960s and supported groups like Vietnam protesters, the Black Panthers and Gay Men's Health Crisis. Facing financial hardship in 2004, it was sold to real estate developers. The architecture firm FLANK redesigned the church into an eight-unit luxury condo.

The three-bedroom penthouse is currently listed for \$12.495M and features 20-foot ceilings and a wall of vibrant stained-glass windows that are original to the church's design. The apartment also offers a 500-square foot terrace, a floating chrome staircase and a sprawling open floor plan living area.