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Historic on the Outside, Modern on the Inside

This federal-style townhouse in Manhattan, built in the early 1800s, underwent a renovation that made the staircase a big attraction.

Location: Manhattan, United States

Price: \$8,750,000

Ten years ago, Sarah Bartlett took advantage of something that rarely presents itself in Manhattan: the opportunity to buy a historic home in a quiet neighborhood that still has cobblestone streets. 'You get a sense of being in the country,' said Ms. Bartlett, dean of City University of New York's CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. The purchase price of the federal-style townhouse in Tribeca was \$3.6 million in 2006, she said. The architect was John McComb Jr., who also designed New York's City Hall. Built in the early 1800s, the home and two others were designated for historic preservation and relocated nearby in the early 1970s.





The home had been two duplexes. When Ms. Bartlett moved in, she wanted to turn it into a single-family home, which are few and far between in the neighborhood. Though the townhouse has a historic-looking facade, it looks modern inside, said Ms. Bartlett, 60 years old. The home, which has a basement, has an atrium-like feel on the first floor with the ceilings at least 20 feet high, she said. 'It's like a loft on the ground floor, yet you have all this privacy that a loft doesn't offer.'

Ms. Bartlett estimated she spent about \$1 million for the gut renovation by Dean/Wolf Architects that opened up the ground floor to give her more space. Major changes included replacing a wooden staircase, putting in a new kitchen and reconfiguring the upper-floor layouts, she said. The townhouse is 3,700 square feet; its width is 25 feet.



The home gets plenty of natural light on all floors.



The living room overlooks a private garden in the back and has one of the home's seven fireplaces.



Ms. Bartlett said one of the first things that visitors notice when they walk is the door is the modern, stainless-steel staircase, which was moved away from the wall. On one side of the staircase is stainless steel ribbons; the other side is made of glass. Guests often remark that the staircase resembles a piece of art or a gigantic sculpture, Ms. Bartlett said. During the three-year project, architect Kathryn Dean said her firm opened the center of the house, joined the duplexes and inserted the stairway to tie together the floors. 'Dynamic Descent,' the name of the staircase, brings light from the roof skylight down through the center of the house, she said.



On the second floor are two spacious bedrooms. The staircase leads to the master bedroom on the third floor. The skylight lets light cascade to the ground floor, Ms. Bartlett said.

Ms. Bartlett is selling her home because her children are living on their own and the place is too large for just her. She plans to find a smaller place in the neighborhood. Tribeca is a family-friendly neighborhood with parks and good schools, she said.

The master bedroom has a vaulted ceiling and a fireplace. The room is large enough that Ms. Bartlett has a workspace there. On the right is a plexiglass wall, which Ms. Bartlett said can capture the sunlight and the movement of the clouds.

The home has an asking price of \$8.75 million and is listed with Shaun Osher, founder and chief executive of the real-estate brokerage CORE.



Ms. Bartlett enjoys spending time outside in the garden. It is quiet and a peaceful place to read and enjoy a cup of coffee. It also is a great area to entertain, she said.



Ms. Bartlett has lived 35 years in Tribeca and described it as Manhattan's loveliest neighborhood and a 'haven of calm.'

