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REAL ESTATE

A Chelsea Townhouse, Mansion-Ready

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A stately four-story townhouse on a historic Chelsea block is about to enter the market for the first time in more than two decades; the listing price for 440 West 22nd Street, nestled mid-way between Ninth and 10th Avenues, is \$17.95 million.

The annual property taxes on the 25-foot-wide brick building, which houses an elegantly appointed parlor-floor owner's apartment and five renovated rental units, are \$50,074. The seller occupies the parlor-level space, but all five other apartments are currently empty to expedite the sale.

Built as a single-family home around 1835, and enlarged to mansion proportions in the 1880s, the 6,700-square-foot Greek Revival-style townhouse has seven marble fireplaces, an 800-square-foot perennial garden, new plumbing, soundproofed windows facing the street, and hand-carved pine front and foyer doors that date to the 1880s. The pine wainscoting in the foyer is original, though the checkerboard marble floor there required replacement rather than restoration when the owner/seller, Michael Minick, bought the house in dilapidated condition in 1993.

Mr. Minick, a former magazine publisher and author with a sideline in commercial real estate development, commenced a gut renovation of the property soon after acquiring it, but he didn't move into the parlor unit until 2000 and concedes that he isn't quite finished making improvements, repairs and embellishments. "It was in horrific shape when I bought it," he said, "but I realized it was the best opportunity I was ever going to get to live downtown in a grand, 25-foot-wide townhouse."

Mr. Minick shares the parlor apartment with his wife, Ann. They have decided to part with the townhouse to enable a life-altering relocation to the West Coast, where they have their eye on a hillside property in Mill Valley, Calif. "I've gotten tired of being a landlord," he said.

Although the parlor level has been restored, with acanthus leaf crown molding, 13-foot ceilings, rebuilt pilasters, marble fireplaces and oak floors with cherry, maple and oak marquetry trim, the remainder of the townhouse was renovated on a thoughtful if slightly less elaborate note, with rental units in mind. The kitchens, despite granite counters and specialty appliances, are small; the bathrooms are tastefully renovated, but utilitarian.



There are, however, sporadic original details in the four one-bedroom apartments on the two upper floors, where the ceilings are 10 and 12 feet high, as well as on the garden level, where a two-bedroom two-bath apartment with a 32-foot-long great room has access to the rear garden through glass French doors with wrought-iron grillwork. All seven fireplaces, which Mr. Minick is in the process of converting to gas, have antique marble mantels; the garden apartment also has original details like a sculptural overhang above the fireplace and an arched alcove built into the wall of the dining area.

On the parlor floor, pocket doors separate the living room, which has two tall windows facing north onto the street and an ornate white marble fireplace surround, from the formal dining room, with its built-in bookcases and black-and-rose marble fireplace. Another set of doors opens onto the master bedroom, where south windows overlook the garden. The master bath is fancifully outfitted and hides a stackable washer/dryer; the eat-in galley kitchen has maple cabinetry, granite counters and a Tuscan tile backsplash.

According to the listing agent, **Matthew Lesser of Leslie J. Garfield Real Estate**, the appeal of the residence is its mansion potential on one of Chelsea's quaintest and quietest blocks, steps from the High Line and its retail, gallery and dining options. Buyers have the option of retaining the six-unit configuration or completing the seller's original goal of creating an owner's duplex, but the townhouse is primarily being marketed as a single-family trophy.

"Inventory is razor-thin for this product," Mr. Lesser said. "To be able to take a historic home with all the features a discerning buyer seeks and transform it into a grand single-family home is a unique opportunity."