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From left to right: [On 810 Fifth Avenue's 16th floor, a fully renovated residence contains two wood-burning fireplaces, one in the living room and one here in the library; An interior view of the South Penthouse at 40 Central Park South, a luxury rental building overlooking the park's southeast end; The Harrison's 14th-floor apartment: the building is steps away from both Central and Riverside Parks.]

Living on the Park

Stunning Central Park residences strike the perfect balance between a bustling and bucolic lifestyle.

By Kaitlin Ahern

Of all the coveted addresses in this great city, perhaps the most universally desired are those that frame the public park at its center. Even a view—however distant—of this famous green space is often a key factor in the purchase of a residence. And the park's charms—which draw 35 million visitors per year, making it the most visited urban park in the nation—are no mystery. Central Park, a vibrant National Historic Landmark that initially opened in 1857, spans 843 acres (59th to 110th Street, between Fifth and Eighth Avenues), and with its rolling hills, ponds, playgrounds, and quiet pathways, it provides an oasis-like retreat to residents and visitors from The City that Never Sleeps.

"Central Park is the biggest real estate engine in the world, empowering the buildings surrounding it to attract both celebrities as well as the city's top financial services executives," says Joseph Barbaccia, director of ATCO Properties & Management's residential division, Essential New York Real Estate. "Living in the Central Park area underscores the term 'living in the center of it all.'"

Beyond the Essentials

Barbaccia's Essential New York Real Estate is the sales team behind **40 Central Park South**, a luxury rental building overlooking the southeast corner of the park, situated on 59th Street between Fifth Avenue and Avenue of the Americas. Like many buildings that bear Central Park in their moniker, 40 Central Park South provides sweeping, tree-lined views of the green space from its residences, a select portion of which feature Juliet balconies and spacious terraces.

Since its construction in 1941, a number of notable New Yorkers have called this high-rise home, including a Tour de France champion, a New York State governor, and several actors of the stage and screen.

Of the building's 169 pre-war apartments, five are currently on the market, Barbaccia says. Monthly rental prices begin at \$3,250 for a studio apartment and climb to \$18,500 for a three-bedroom duplex. The 2,250-square-foot duplex includes seven rooms (three bedrooms, two bathrooms) and a sunny, south-facing terrace. In addition to the apartment's luxurious amenities (nine-foot ceilings, an oversized formal dining room, walk-in pantry, and full washer and dryer), the building features electronically keyed elevators, a fitness center, 24-hour doorman/concierge in two attended lobbies, and a private sculpture garden that includes a cast steel Isamu Noguchi torso titled *Man Aviator* from the late 1940s. Residents of 40 Central Park South are neighbors not only to the park, but are also just a few blocks away from bustling midtown and its legendary theaters, cultural institutions, and restaurants.

Notable Neighbor

Around the corner, on Fifth Avenue (the only street to keep its numeral name where it meets the park) between 62nd and 63rd Streets, sits **810 Fifth Avenue**, a cooperative built in 1926 and designed by the late, great architect J.E.R. Carpenter. Noteworthy figures like Nelson Rockefeller, William Randolph Hearst, and Mrs. Hamilton Fish have all dwelled within its pre-war walls.

According to Bonnie Chajet, senior vice president with Warburg Realty, two

of the building's 12 residences are currently for sale. Most notable is the fully renovated, full-floor, \$24.925 million apartment featuring 10-foot ceilings and breathtaking views of the park from both the west and south. The apartment is currently configured into nine rooms (two bedrooms, four-and-a-half bathrooms), though it has the potential to allow for 13, Chajet says. In addition to a private elevator and two wood-burning fireplaces, the residence has a humidification system and ultraviolet air-cleaning system throughout.

Though 810 Fifth Avenue is claimed by the Upper East Side, residents again have easy access to midtown. In terms of park access, the building is stationed about midway between the Central Park Pond and the Central Park Zoo.

Contemporary Charm

About 40 blocks north of 810 Fifth lies **1212 Fifth Avenue** in East Harlem, a condominium at 102nd Street that pre-dates 810 Fifth by one year. After a complete renovation, the building opened for sales this summer. The result of the condominium's rehab, says Harold Fetner, president and CEO of Durst Fetner Residential, is a property that has "all the charm you find in a pre-war building, yet the layouts are of a modern sensibility." Fetner lists large, open windows, spacious bedrooms and en suite bathrooms, increased closet space, and a four-pipe cooling system (which eliminates the need for air-conditioning units) among the modern touches given to the building's residences. The building is also striving for LEED certification, Fetner says.

Of the property's 55 apartments, one available unit, a penthouse on the top floor, Fetner describes as "a house built on top of a building." The 3,300-square-foot, \$7.9 million residence features several glass walls, which allow residents to enjoy the apartment's sweeping Central Park views from just about any room—and then there is the additional 3,000 square feet of outdoor terrace space.

Building amenities include a health club and swimming pool, children's room, and residents' lounge. The lobby is a gem in itself, Fetner says, with the original plaster mold ceiling, stripped of a century's worth of paint and restored

to its early 20th-century grandeur. "It would've been a shame to destroy such a beautiful old ceiling."

Though the building does not have a traditional Central Park address, Fetner says it's a great value for those who covet their own space by the park. The property has easy access to the park's Conservatory Gardens and Harlem Meer, and it is also located on Fifth Avenue's Museum Mile.

On the Western Front

The park's west side is also rich in real estate, including buildings like **The Harrison** at 205 West 76th Street. Though not a typical Central Park West address, the condominium's architecture is reminiscent of these legendary homes. It offers both easy access and stunning views of the park, and is equally close to Riverside Park on the Hudson River.

It opened for sales in 2007, and currently seven of the building's 132 units are up for resale, says Lisa Lippman, senior vice president and director at Brown Harris Stevens. The four-bedroom, almost 3,000-square-foot apartment on the 14th floor is listed for \$9 million. In addition to 10-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows, the apartment includes two terraces with a total of more than 850 square feet of outdoor space. "The great thing about this apartment is the nice open exposures," Lippman says. "Every single room has great views." The unit also boasts walk-in closets, an eat-in kitchen with access to one of the terraces, and custom-made window treatments. Building amenities include two common outdoor spaces, a private party room, garage, and a reduced membership to Equinox gym.

Lippman says the property's location is a perfect balance between bustling city life and bucolic retreat. "One of the things we all miss living in the city is outdoor space, greenery, and trees," says Lippman, also a resident of the Upper West Side, in explanation of Central Park's appeal. "When you're close to the park, you feel like you have a backyard garden or that you're in the country—but only temporarily."