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Big Ticket 18 Gramercy Park South | ROBIN FINN

One More Trophy

THE DUPLEX PENTHOUSE at 18 Gramercy Park South, the luxuriously upgraded former Salvation Army rooming house for women, designated as a landmark, sold for its full asking price of \$42 million and was, by a landslide, the most expensive sale of the week, according to city records.

The buyer, no stranger to trophies, is Leslie Alexander, the billionaire owner of the Houston Rockets of the National Basketball Association. The team won the N.B.A. championship the same season Mr. Alexander paid \$85 million to acquire it in 1993.

\$42,000,000

Mr. Alexander put in a pre-emptive bid for this trophy penthouse at the first opportunity.

The 6,300-square-foot duplex, PH17, has pride of place on the 17th and 18th floors of the condominium, and a full arsenal of bells and whistles dreamed up by Robert A. M. Stern Architects, Zeckendorf Development and Eyal Ofer's Global Holdings, the same team that built the global billionaire magnet 15 Central Park West. The monthly carrying charges are

\$19,407.89, and like the other privileged owners, Mr. Alexander gets a key to Gramercy Park, a perk that evidently appealed to him for his New York City pied-à-terre



Residents here get keys to the park.

(he owns five residences, among them an oceanfront estate in Southampton).

"Mr. Alexander loved the location because it was on Manhattan's only private park in a pre-war condo designed by one of America's top architects," said his broker, Melanie Lazenby of Douglas Elliman Real Estate. Zeckendorf Marketing handled the sale

for the developer.

Besides scoring an aerie in the tallest, and most exquisitely renovated, building on the park, Mr. Alexander has nearly 2,000 feet of outdoor space divided among four terraces, one of which is 40 feet wide and provides views of the Chrysler Building. There is a heated infinity pool and sun deck on the top level and a 132-square-foot south terrace with a whirlpool.

The powder room is black onyx, and there are four en-suite marble baths. The master suite upstairs has 11-foot ceilings, a Calacatta Caldia marble slab bath with a steam shower and cast-iron tub, and access to two terraces.

On the lower level, there is a reception room, library, gallery, custom kitchen, formal dining room, staff suite, three guest bedrooms, and a living room with 40 feet of park frontage. A grand salon with a wood-burning fireplace completes the upper level.

"This penthouse sale affirms the great confidence that the market has shown in 18 Gramercy Park," said Arthur Zeckendorf. "This one-of-a-kind home has commanded the highest price paid for a downtown apartment."

Big Ticket includes closed sales from the previous week, ending Wednesday.