

THE REAL DEAL

NEW YORK CITY REAL ESTATE NEWS

Au revoir, Central Park! French embassy exiting 5th Ave. digs

Consulat général picks up six pads as it relocates staff from Carnegie Hill townhouse

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By [Rich Bockmann](#)

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From left: Maura Jarach and 60 East 13th Street (Credit: Matt Vacca)

Let them eat cake — from Trader Joe's!

In a beau geste to the French citizenry, attaches to the Consulat général de France à New York are saying au revoir to their 5th Avenue townhouse and its Central Park views as the Euro-pinching government substitutes the Carnegie Hill property with half a dozen nice — but not too nice — apartments for staffers to call home.

To come up with some cash to keep its debt and deficit in check, the French government has over the past several years been selling off international real estate holdings. One of those properties is the 30-foot-wide, 1923 townhouse at [1143 Fifth Avenue](#) that for decades served as housing for staffers in the French embassy.

Jed Garfield of Leslie J. Garfield has the \$32.5 million listing and declined to comment on the search for a buyer. But officials in Paris have already gone ahead and bought five apartments, and are in contract on a sixth, that present staffers — and those who will come after — will now call home.

Finding suitable digs for staff with continental tastes proved no short order, according to Keller Williams NYC's Maura Jarach, who along with colleagues Han Huang and Leisa Aras, represented the government in six sales.

"They were kind of spoiled living over the park," said the French-speaking Jarach, who got the referral from a Keller Williams broker in the D.C. area. "It was not a great neighborhood when they bought 35 years ago, but it is now. The challenge was to keep them happy and give them similar apartments in market where it's a seller's market and there's very little inventory."

The new pads, ranging in price from \$1.8 million to \$4.3 million, include a trio of three-bedrooms in Yorkville, a convertible-three in Turtle Bay and a renovated condo in Greenwich Village fit for entertaining.

"It's part of a very lavishly renovated building by a very well-known designer. It's just a very loft-like, open space with bells and whistles like double-paned windows," Jarach said. "When you walk in it's got a beautiful cache about it."

The Stuart Narofsky-designed, 2,575 square-foot condo on 13th Street features 10-foot ceilings, 16 oversized windows, wood finishes and an open kitchen with a 140-bottle wine cooler, according to the listing with Harriet Norris of Douglas Elliman.

Jarach said the apartment has an entertaining space appropriate for "that particular eschelon of staffer," but in a concession to a price-conscious Paris, the building doesn't have a doorman.

"The French government doesn't want anything too opulent," she explained. "They want something right in the middle where the French taxpayer doesn't say 'Why do they get to live in that house?'"

No word yet on how the attache feels about trading in the apricot linzers at Carnegie Hill's Champingon Café in for pumpkin-flavored croissants from the freezer at the Trader Joe's on 14th Street.

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