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## If You're Thinking of Living in: Upper West Side

By KATHLEEN M. BERRY

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Now one of the few Manhattan neighborhoods where upper-income people live side by side with the poor and where moderate- or middle-income housing can still be found, it is in a mini-renaissance as buyers in the soft real estate market search for moderately priced homes.

Its neighbors are Columbia University to the north and the more established enclave of the Upper West Side to the south. Rundown apartments in the 100 block stand a block away from historic Beaux Arts marble town houses along Riverside Drive.

"Four years ago this area was the pits, and now it's Park Avenue," said Sandi Wallach, director of conversion sales for Gala Realty. "I was here during the boom when savvy New Yorkers took their money from the 70's and moved up to the 90's."

That boom, in the early and mid-80's, sent prices sharply up throughout the area. As development crept up along Broadway - the spine of the neighborhood - only one new building rose. That was the 302-unit Columbia, a William Zeckendorf Jr. project on the west blockfront between 96th and 97th Streets, which opened in 1983 and soon sold out. A two-bedroom unit now costs about \$300,000, but there are no vacancies.

There has, however, been a spate of conversions of prewar apartments into co-ops on streets just east and west of Broadway, among them the one at the 100-year-old, 54-apartment building at 229 West 97th Street in 1988 by Aaron Ziegelman.

Housing prices tend to be high on Riverside Drive and West End Avenue and get lower going east toward Amsterdam Avenue. Along upper Riverside Drive, where a green island separates the drive's lower roads between 97th and 113th Streets, Beaux-Arts town houses and mansions are valued in the millions. Two-bedroom, 1,600-square-foot co-ops with a view of the Hudson River are on the market for about \$500,000 to \$600,000, said Nancy Sweetser, a broker in her eponymous firm.

A typical one-bedroom co-op east of Broadway can be bought for about \$145,000 or rented for \$1,250

to \$1,400, said Ms. Wallach of Gala Realty, which has more than 50 buildings in the area.

Most of the buildings date to between the early 1900's and the 20's and are co-ops, rental apartments or mixed. The turn-of-the-century, white-brick Paramount apartment house at 315 West 99th Street is said to have given the founders of the Hollywood film company their idea for a name.

"I've always claimed that Hollywood and the Broadway musical were born on the Upper West Side," said Peter Salwen, whose book, "Upper West Side Story," (Abbeville Press, New York, \$24.95) was released last summer.

The connections are everywhere: Humphrey Bogart was born on 103d Street. Three West End Avenue neighbors - Samuel Goldfish, Cecil B. DeMille and Adolph Zukor - teamed up to form their first production company. The term "penthouse society" was coined by George Gershwin, who gave fashionable parties in his Riverside Drive apartment. William Randolph Hearst spent a million dollars remodeling a house at 331 West 105th Street, at Riverside Drive, for his companion, the actress Marion Davies.

Two of the nation's early movie theaters - the 1911 Riverside and the 1913 Riviera - on the west side of Broadway between 96th and 97th Streets, the site of the Columbia, were demolished by the late 70's. A few blocks to the north, on Broadway between 99th and 100th Streets, is the twin-screen Metro Cinema, built in 1933. Once the Midtown Theater, it was designated a city landmark last year.

As relics of the past disappear, the neighborhood's population seems to be getting younger. The Rev. David Warren, senior pastor at the West End Presbyterian Church on 105th Street and Amsterdam, said that the average age of his congregation started dropping about five years ago when younger people began moving into the area.

As late as the early 80's there were about 20 single-room-occupancy hotels, but about half have been converted into rental apartments or co-ops, according to Hank Perlin, a tenant organizer for the West Side S.R.O. Law Project, which represents hotel tenants in the area.

"The market may have slowed down recently, but development and gentrification is definitely the trend," Mr. Perlin said.

There are those, however - like Doris Rosenblum, district manager for Community Board 7, which also takes in neighboring Manhattan Valley to the north and east - who would rather have a "balanced" than a gentrified community.

"We didn't want to be another trendy West Side and we still don't," Ms. Rosenblum said.

"It always was a mixed neighborhood with a history of resurgence and reclamation," said Elliott Sclar, professor of Urban Planning at Columbia University.

Its modern history began with Theunis Idens, who built a farmhouse 300 years ago at what is now West End Avenue and 97th Street. He was the first of the Dutch settlers, who called the area Bloemendaal, or Valley of the Flowers, later anglicized to Bloomingdale. In a wealthy section known as Striker's Bay, fine homes lined the bluff along the Hudson, with humbler houses farther inland.

By the 1850's the population began growing, although it did not accelerate until the New York Elevated Railroad began carrying passengers up Ninth - later Columbus - Avenue in 1879.

The area's monuments include Straus Park, a minipark in the triangle where West End Avenue meets its end at Broadway between 106th and 107th Streets. Known briefly as Bloomingdale Square, it was renamed in 1914 for Isidor and Ida Straus, who died in the Titanic disaster on April 14, 1912.

A year ago, Community Board 7 created its Drug Task Force to work with law enforcement agencies to combat a problem that surrounds and frequently intrudes on the Upper Upper West Side. "The drug problem that is pervasive in Manhattan Valley is not as severe west of Amsterdam Avenue," said Ms. Rosenblum. "But there have been sporadic periods of car break-ins on Riverside Drive."

The area has four elementary schools and Booker T. Washington Junior High School and is part of the 14,000-student population of Community School District 3. Two elementary schools, P.S. 145 and P.S. 163, have magnet programs for gifted students. Students who score in the top 7 percent of their class are eligible to apply for the program, said Anton Klein, community superintendent of the district.

Because many families in the western part of the community send their children to private schools, the public schools do not accurately reflect the area's ethnic composition. The neighborhood is 60 percent white and 40 percent black, Haitian, Puerto Rican, Cuban and Asian-American. Except for Emily Dickinson elementary school on 96th Street and West End, which is 15 percent white, the area's public schools are almost 100 percent minority.

Small private schools like the Westside Nursery School at the West End Presbyterian Church, at 105th and Amsterdam, cater to younger families that have moved into the area. Tuition at Westside, which opened last year, averages \$2,900.

Mrs. Gross, the real estate agent, whose two children attend the magnet schools, said that more younger families are moving into the area. "It's a very stable and fine neighborhood," she said, "and it maintains a racially integrated community."

The area boasts several good restaurants. Santerello's, on 105th and Broadway, has an Italian menu with entrees averaging \$18. Birdland, a jazz nightclub, offers moderately priced American and Cajun cuisine. The Border Cafe, owned by the Yankees' outfielder Dave Winfield, specializes in Tex-Mex cuisine.

Among the cafes are Positively 104th Street and Au Petit Beurre on Broadway. There also are Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Greek restaurants and kosher delicatessens. Broadway Bagel on the corner of 100th Street, where a bagel and coffee costs \$1, is open 24 hours.

#### Gazetteer

Population: 85,000 (1990 estimate).

Median household income: \$45,000 (1990 estimate).

Median rent of two-bedroom apartment: \$1,100.

Median price of two-bedroom co-op: \$275,000.

Transportation: 1, 2, 3 and 9 (IRT) and B and C (IND) subway lines; buses on 96th and 110th Streets, Riverside Drive, Broadway, Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues and Central Park West.

Government: Councilwoman Carloyn B. Maloney, Democrat-Liberal.

Street of Jazz: Edward Kennedy (Duke) Ellington, the composer and band leader, had a town house at 333 Riverside Drive, at 106th Street, and owned two other houses on the same block, where his sister, Ruth Ellington Boatwright, and his son, Mercer, lived. To honor his memory, West 106th Street was officially renamed Duke Ellington Boulevard in 1977, three years after his death.

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