

Firehouse Condos (Minus the Pole)

By C. J. HUGHES

WHEN it comes to making homes out of municipal buildings, New York developers have been very creative, fashioning luxury living spaces out of former factories, hospitals, police stations and banks.

One of the most recent transformations is of a firehouse in Brooklyn.

At 735 Dean Street, between Underhill and Vanderbilt Avenues in Prospect Heights, is the Firehouse Condo, which features seven units in a space where Engine Company 219 used to stow its hoses. (A firehouse-turned-condominium also exists at 31 St. Felix Street in Fort Greene.)

The new condos range from a 712-square-foot one-bedroom to a 1,912-square-foot duplex with a small garden. There is also a 1,454-square-foot ground-floor triplex, which has a sidewalk-level entrance.

Besides wide-plank ash floors and stone countertops, each unit has a Jenn-Air refrigerator, Bosch dishwasher, Faber oven hood and General Electric range, all stainless steel. And each unit, except the ground-floor triplex, has access to a terrace, private or shared.

With the opening of the sales office on Sunday, the units will be priced at \$495,000 to \$989,000, said Erol Bayraktar, president of Technic Realty of Smithtown, N.Y., which is the project's developer. The architect is Mark Gould of Manhattan.

Despite modern amenities inside, the exterior of the red-brick Gothic Revival building looks much as it did in 1880, when it was built as a firehouse.

The Fire Department left the building for bigger quarters in 1977, and until 1994 the building was used as office space by the Department of Sanitation.



Photographs by Ozier Muhammad/The New York Times

HISTORIC BUILDING

The seven new units at 735 Dean Street in Brooklyn, a former firehouse for Engine Company 219, below, feature wide-plank ash floors, stone countertops and stainless steel appliances.



"Local people come by and look at it, say they're glad we didn't knock it down," Mr. Bayraktar said. "They have an emotional attachment to it."

Arty Herlihy, a firefighter who used to be a member of Engine Company 219 and is now with Ladder Company 105 in Fort

Greene, certainly feels an attachment. "Some people see it as a building," he said. "I see it as something nobler."

Mr. Bayraktar said he paid \$775,000 for the building at a city auction in 2004 and spent \$3 million on renovations, which included gutting the interior and adding a central staircase and two-story penthouse. The building also needed new plumbing and electrical systems and central air-conditioning, according to Mr. Gould.

"We wanted to figure out a way to incorporate the existing facade, to make the units somewhat respectful of what was there," Mr. Gould said.

To this end, he retained the firehouse's signature bay door, now in-filled with glass, but still looking as if a fire truck could be sitting inside. In addition, some of the staircase walls are painted a fire engine shade of red.

"Unfortunately, there was no fire pole when we got there," Mr. Gould said.