

# The Dakota, New York's most exclusive building



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CNBC.com

August 20, 2012



The Victorian-era German Renaissance co-op apartment building at 72nd Street and Central Park West is best known as the home shared by John Lennon and Yoko Ono from 1972 to 1980 and the site of Lennon's murder. Ono still lives there, as do many other celebrities, but being famous is no guarantee of residency at the Dakota, and neither is simply having ample savings.

The gabled and turreted Dakota is a square structure with a porte cochère leading to a central courtyard that served as a turnaround for carriages. While the outside looks fairly tame, inside, no two of the luxuriously appointed apartments are alike, as many were tailored to the specifications and whims of their first occupants.

See even more pictures of the Dakota on [CNBC.com](#). And for more information on the “Secret Lives of the Super Rich: Mega-Homes,” [visit the show page](#).



When the Dakota opened in 1884, it was already impossible to rent an apartment, according to the book “Life at the Dakota: New York’s Most Unusual Address” (Syracuse University Press). A 2,500-word article praising the new building in the New York Times generated a flood of aspiring residents, but by then all 65 original apartments were occupied.

The following pictures showcase several apartments, including one that turned away a celebrity couple as buyers. The broker for that property, “Queen of Real Estate” Dolly Lenz, shows the space in the “[Secret Lives of the Super Rich: Mega-Homes](#).” We also have details of the Dakota’s most expensive apartment ever to sell and a photo illustrating just how difficult it is to get permission to call the Dakota home.



## **Famous residents**

The arts bent among residents began early, with the Steinways of piano-making fame among the first residents, as well as other names less recognizable in modern times, who in turn brought in guests like Tchaikovsky and author Stephen Crane.

The most expensive Dakota sale ever was the second-floor apartment where Leonard Bernstein lived, pictured above.

The first asking price was \$25.5 million, but it sold for \$21 million, and Lenz's real estate commission on this sale was over \$1 million. Apartment 23 has four bedrooms, four bathrooms, a great room with wood fireplace and park views, library, formal dining room, a windowed kitchen with breakfast room and both original and restored window details.

The Dakota boasts another jaw-dropping sale in recent years. It's a cellar storage room with four walls, electricity, a half-bath, and a small window—and a price tag of \$801,000. After a bidding war, it sold in 2008 to John M. Angelo, a hedge fund manager, CEO, and member of the board at Sotheby's, who has combined several co-op units into one residence elsewhere in the Dakota.



## Famous rejects

Lenz recently brokered the sale of this three-bedroom apartment—but not for Melanie Griffith and Antonio Banderas, who wanted it but were not approved by the co-op board.

“It’s a co-op, and they’re a club. And it’s an exclusive club, so it’s only by invitation. But that is also what makes it so fabulous, because you can’t get in here,” Lenz said.

The apartment features a library/family room, three full baths, a windowed kitchen, and it was listed at \$5.65 million — “a bargain by Dakota standards,” Lenz said.

The sellers are also including the remaining furniture and fixtures for another \$500,000.

“I was showing an apartment today where the chandelier in the living room cost over \$2 million,” said Lenz. “So \$500,000 for all those gorgeous light fixtures, the furniture that remains ... I think it’s a definite bargain.”

Others denied approval have included Cher, Billy Joel, Madonna, Carly Simon, Alex Rodriguez, Judd Apatow and Tea Leoni.



## The board package

Pictured here is the board package submitted by the Dakota's most recent applicants.

It includes years of tax documents and financial statements and requires the couple to pay thousands of dollars to submit themselves to investigation as well as a thorough background check.

Completing this process is no guarantee of acceptance.



## Celebrity legacy apartments

Sports figure John Madden's two-bedroom apartment, pictured here, is one of at least two apartments that went from celebrity

to celebrity. Madden purchased this apartment for \$625,000 from the late Gilda Radner, who purchased it in 1979 for \$150,000. It is on the market for \$3.9 million, reduced from a 2011 asking price of \$4.9 million.

When they first arrived at the Dakota, John and Yoko sublet their apartment from actor Robert Ryan (“The Dirty Dozen,” “The Wild Bunch”). And long before Ryan, in that same apartment, one of the first tenants is rumored to have buried \$30,000 under the parquet floors of the master bedroom, according to “Life at the Dakota.” Why hasn’t anyone investigated? According to the book, it wouldn’t be worth the cost of tearing up the flooring to find out.

[See even more pictures of the Dakota on CNBC.com.](#)

Miss the premiere of “Secret Lives of the Super Rich: Mega-Homes”? Catch it again at 7:30 p.m. ET Saturday, Aug. 25, on CNBC.