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# DAILY NEWS AMERICA

## Posh condos fill the 19th-century Watchcase building in Sag Harbor

Ranging from \$1 million bungalows to \$10 million penthouses and townhouses, Watchcase has accepted offers or signed contracts on 19 of 47 residences.

BY [JASON SHEFTELL](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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The seaplane took off from the East River into the Manhattan sky for Sag Harbor. Skirting the coast at 1,500 feet, traveling 170 mph, the nine-passenger aircraft hit the water in the Hamptons village 28 minutes later.

That's one way to beat the traffic. It's another way for developers to get buyers, brokers and journalists to the town's one-of-a-kind condominium in an 1881 watch factory.



The seaplane sits in Sag Harbor as the Daily News arrives to visit Watchcase.

Ranging from \$1 million bungalows to \$10 million penthouses and townhouses, Watchcase has accepted offers or signed contracts on 19 of 47 residences. The restoration, conducted by New York-based preservationist specialist Beyer Blinder Belle, turned a dilapidated and abandoned building into a national model for historic revitalization.



**The seaplane sits in Sag Harbor.**

“This was a deteriorated hulk of a building with a horrible parking lot,” said architect Jack Beyer, whose firm worked on Grand Central Terminal and the U.S. Capitol. “But it had lots of air and light.”

Before electricity, hundreds of jewelers worked in the old Bulova factory using natural light from the oversized windows to execute their craft.



**A view of Manhattan from the seaplane.**

“There are so many windows it’s like a glass factory,” said Beyer. “It converts to perfect residences. It’s a preservationist’s dream.”

**“There are so many windows it’s like a glass factory,” said architect Jack Beyer.**

It’s also a designer’s quandary. The building has old-growth Southern yellow pine beams and various types of stone including granite used in three-story vaults.

“The architecture in here is muscular,” said Manhattan-based architect/designer and Sag Harbor resident Steven Gambrel, who handled the interiors.

**The 1881 Watchcase building is now home to million-dollar abodes in Sag Harbor.**

“We needed a kit of materials that could soften the weight of the brick and masonry. We wanted homes that look like they belong here forever.”

**Amazing views are plentiful inside a Watchcase home.**

Wide-plank fumed oak floors, white farm kitchen sinks, and beige tile in the master bath make the interiors feel lived in and beach-town at once. Resort-style amenities include a house driver, year-round heated pool and gym. Townhouses designed in different styles pertinent to local architecture include an old-fashioned “Captain’s House.”

Cape Advisors, the developers of a hotel and residential portfolio principally in New York City and Cape May, N.J., made a commitment to Sag Harbor to transform Watchcase. In the process, the building reenergized the 17th-century whaling town- turned-artsy haven.



**An aerial view.**

“We wanted to bring the building back to what it could be,” said Cape’s co-managing partner Craig Wood.

“We believe in old American towns. We think it makes people feel good just to be here. Buildings like this are a big reason why.”

Most homes go for \$2.5 million to \$4 million, including two-bedroom lofts. Interest is heavy because of the project’s uniqueness.



**“There is nothing like this anywhere,” said Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group’s James Lansill.**

“There is nothing like this anywhere,” said Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group’s James Lansill, a key member of the sales team. “I don’t know many places you can live in a factory loft in a waterfront village with this character.”

As for the seaplane trip — that’s reserved for top brokers and high-end buyers who pay to skip the hassle of the drive. But it’s worth it — with those up-close views of midtown and the mansions of Long Island’s north shore.

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**Architect Jack Beyer.**  
[jsheftell@nydailynews.com](mailto:jsheftell@nydailynews.com)