

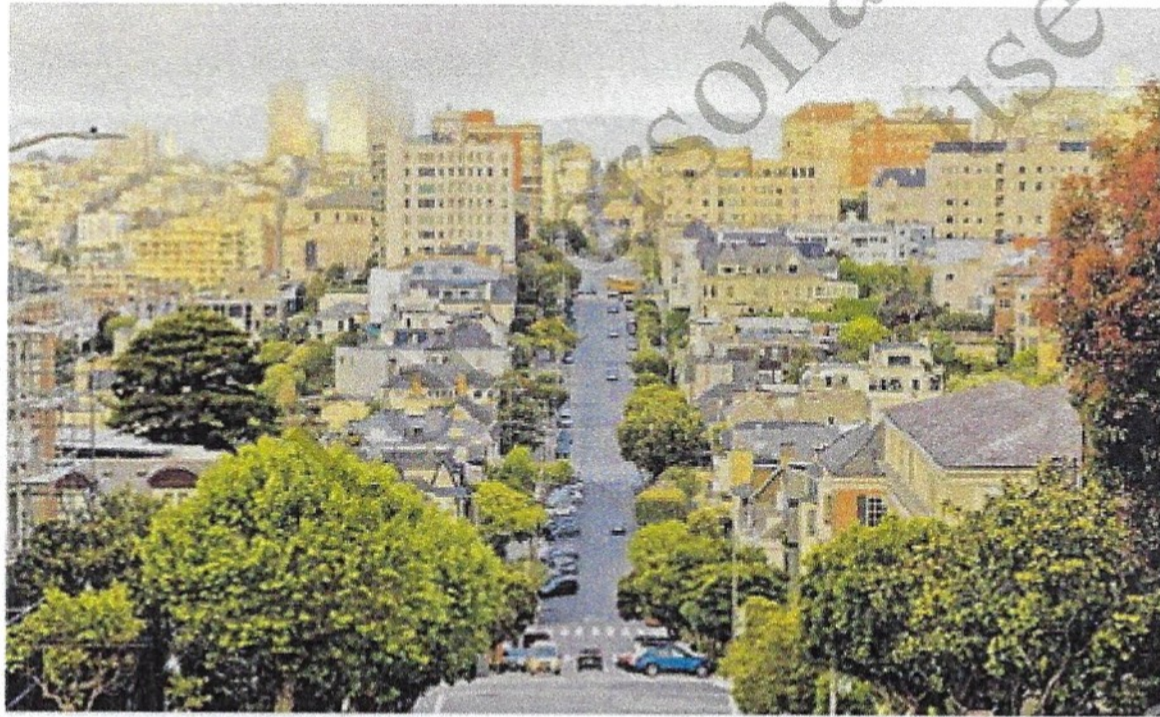
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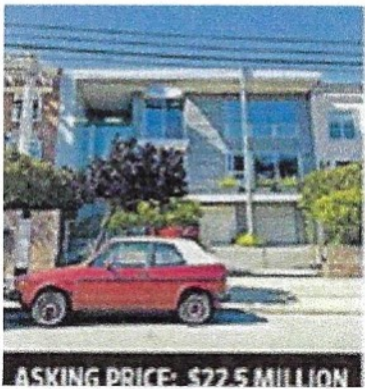
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The six-bedroom house was built around 2017. SARAH TILTON/ WSJ

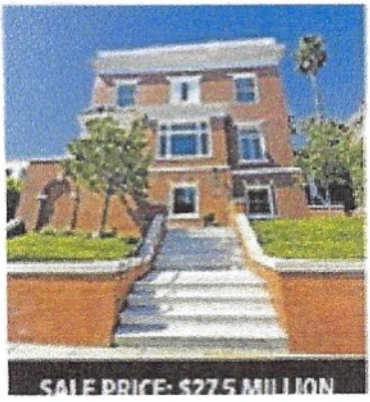


FROM TOP: JASON HENRY FOR WSJ; RICHARD DREW/ ASSOCIATED PRESS (STRETCH); SARAH TILTON/ WSJ The view toward Russian Hill from Pacific Heights. The city is 'lively and exciting again,' a real-estate agent says.



ASKING PRICE: \$22.5 MILLION 3 bedrooms, 7,500 sq. ft. Pacific Heights

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SALE PRICE: \$27.5 MILLION Georgian Colonial Pacific Heights



Leslie Stretch, second from right, is shown in 2019.

What One Home Sale Tells Us About San Francisco's Comeback

The Russian Hill house just sold for more than double its 2023 price; 'Since the Gold Rush, this has been a boom-bust city'

BY SARAH TILTON

A **CONTEMPORARY HOUSE** on San Francisco's Russian Hill has sold for its full asking price of \$24 million, property records show. The six-bedroom home went into contract a week after going on the market, according to the multiple listing service.

The speedy sale is a far cry from the last time the house went on the market, for \$19.995 million in 2022. That time around, it took more than a year to sell for just \$9.99 million—about half its asking price.

The home's history reflects the recent ups and downs of San Francisco itself. The city weathered a severe post-Covid-19 downturn, garnering national attention for its high crime rate, growing homeless encampments and empty store fronts. Now, with a new mayor and at the epicenter of

\$24 MILLION

2026 sale price

\$9.99 MILLION 2023 sale price

AI, it is seeing a dramatic uptick in luxury home sales.

"Since the Gold Rush, this has been a boom-bust city," says longtime resident and real-estate agent Annie Williams of Sotheby's International Realty. "And we're in a boom phase."

In the first quarter, the number of luxury sales in San Francisco jumped 22.2% from the same period of last year, according to a new report from Redfin, which defines luxury homes as those priced in the top 5% of the market. The median luxury sale price rose 9% to \$6.8 million during the same period. By contrast, luxury home sales nationwide were down 2% for the same period, according to Redfin.

Note

(2)

“Because of the nature of the AI boom, there are some people in the Bay Area that have more money to spend than ever before, and it’s inflating luxury prices more than the rest of the country,” says Daryl Fairweather, chief economist at Redfin.

The Russian Hill home, completed around 2017, sold for \$20 million in January 2020 to a trust linked to Leslie and Heather Stretch, according to public records. At the time, Leslie Stretch was president and CEO of Medallia, an AI-driven software company.

When the house went back on the market in October 2022, the San Francisco market was in dire straits. A 2023 headline in The Wall Street Journal read, “Can San Francisco Save Itself From the Doom Loop?”

The house saw at least two price cuts. Finally, in November 2023, an unidentified buyer—using an entity called 2626 Larkin LLC—bought the home on the cheap.

Measuring about 8,900 square feet, the home has a landscaped roof deck with views of the Palace of Fine Arts, Pacific Heights and the Presidio, the listing says. An elevator goes to all six levels. Other features include a theater, twin fountains in the garden, a wine cellar that holds 1,000 bottles and a car-lift in the garage, according to the listing.

The identity of the Russian Hill home’s new owner couldn’t be determined.

These days, the city is “lively and exciting again. You can’t get into Four Kings,” Williams says, referring to the popular Cantonese restaurant. She credits the turnaround not just to AI but also to the leadership of the city’s new mayor, Daniel Lurie.

Williams says she is the busiest she has ever been in her 23 years of selling real estate, with clients ranging from young tech money to boomers returning to the city after raising their families in the suburbs.

Meanwhile, supply is limited, with the number of active listings in San Francisco’s luxury market down almost 15.2% year-over-year in the first quarter, according to Redfin. The typical luxury home in San Francisco went into contract in under 12 days in the first quarter, compared with 28 days in the same period in 2025.

While the number of home sales in San Francisco’s nonluxury market grew 3.8% in the first quarter from the same period of last year, the luxury market is performing far better, Fairweather says. “There’s a stark contrast between luxury and nonluxury in San Francisco,” she says. “With nonluxury, there are a lot of people in tech who are worried about being replaced by AI, and that is probably weighing down the nonluxury market.”

A modern Pacific Heights home that went on the market April 13 for \$22.5 million is now in contract after getting two offers overask within a week, according to Joseph Lucier of Sotheby’s International Realty, who shares the listing with colleague Stacey Caen.

“The strength of the city’s high-end market feels even stronger than 2021 and [is] very reminiscent of the dot-com market of the late 1990s,” Lucier said.

Earlier this month, a roughly 9,100-square-foot Pacific Heights home sold for \$29.954 million, according to public records. That’s significantly more than its last sale price of \$23.8 million in March 2024. And real-estate agent Max Armour of Compass announced on Instagram that a Georgian Colonial home in Pacific Heights closed for \$27.5 million this week.

Gregg Lynn of Sotheby’s International Realty had the listing for the Russian Hill house. He didn’t respond to a request for comment.

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