

MANSION

INSIDE STORY

An Organized Oasis in Tribeca

Architect Eran Chen gut renovated a sprawling loft to create four distinct zones, including a leafy indoor garden

By FRED A. BORNSTEIN

When the architect Eran Chen and his wife, Dafna Chen, a scientist and graduate student in Greek and Roman history, paid \$6 million for a loft in Tribeca in 2020, they could have moved right in. The 5,100-square-foot apartment, with four bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths, stretched a whole block south from busy Canal Street to quaint Lispenard Street, with rows of large windows at either end.

Instead, Eran, 53, spent two years and about \$3 million turning the loft into a home that felt right for him and Dafna, 47, and their three children, now 15, 16 and 17. That meant making it both more comfortable to live in and more compelling to look at. Photos provided by the real-estate agents in 2020 show a large, flexible space—but one in which modestly scaled tables and chairs form five separate furniture groupings in the living room alone. The effect is pleasant, but also somewhat chaotic, without any discernible spatial organization.

Now the loft is divided into four zones, with floor-to-ceiling, steel-framed doors and windows marking transitions from public to private spaces. “We love to have people over, so my highest priority was creating a layout that separated entertainment spaces from our bedrooms,” Dafna says. The most public zone,



Eran Chen, founder of the Manhattan architecture firm ODA, chose a very large two-sided sofa to anchor the living room of his loft, which sprawls beneath 14-foot ceilings.

right off the elevator, consists of a south-facing living room, dining room and open kitchen, which together total almost 2,000 square feet. The kitchen island alone is as big as some apartment kitchens. The island, Dafna says, “is where we all gather to cook, eat,

talk, work and study every day. Our previous apartment was much smaller, so for years we did those things in a very compact space. Even in the new loft, the children choose to spend time gathered around the island rather than alone in their bedrooms.”

The front room’s other anchor is a 25-foot-long, back-to-back sofa, part of the Extra Soft series designed by Piero Lissoni for Living Divani. It is big enough to define two separate seating areas: In one direction, there is room for the children and a dozen of their friends to watch TV. In the other direction,



The apartment before Chen bought it.

guests can watch the show at the Lacanthe range as Dafna or Eran prepares dinner for the family. Most meals are served at a table made from a 20-foot-long slab of reclaimed wood that Eran says was found at the bottom of the Panama Canal. Surrounding the table are 10 chairs by the great Pennsylvania woodworker George Nakashima. Above it is a light fixture that the Spanish designer Nacho Carbonell made by spraying pigmented concrete onto steel mesh. That puts it in a category—industrial materials made to look organic—that fascinates Eran. Indeed, it has an analogue in the credenza by the Campana Brothers—Humberto and the late Fernando—made largely of found materials.

Throughout the space, exposed ceiling joists and columns, bare brick walls and steel accents recall the building’s industrial past.

From that section of the apartment, doors open onto a zone of slightly less public spaces: a gallery, home office, family room and guest suite. The central parts of the apartment don’t have windows, but Eran installed a system, made by Ketra, that syncs interior lights to the color and intensity of the sun as it moves across the sky, mimicking outdoor conditions indoors.

The next zone contains the couple’s bedroom, three children’s bedrooms and three bathrooms that use the gridded glass-and-metal par-

titions as shower enclosures. That is not the last time the grids appear. All four bedrooms have glass walls that open onto a 300-square-foot indoor garden overlooking Canal Street. The black-tiled space is filled with plants and acts as an urban green zone for the family.

It isn’t quite a terrace, but it’s the next best thing, given that the bustle of Canal Street would make a real terrace impractical. And it is redolent of meaning for Eran, who as a boy lived with his mother in a government housing project in the southern Israeli city of Beer-sheva. The project consisted of three six-story buildings in a U-shape. Each apartment had a terrace facing into the U, which made the courtyard a kind of community playground and social hall, turning a place people lived into a place they loved.

Eran remembers that courtyard whenever he designs a residential building: his goal is to foster social interaction. Denizen, a one-million-square foot, 911-unit luxury rental building in Bushwick, Brooklyn, has every amenity you would expect (pool, gym, lounges) and many you wouldn’t: a baby grand piano in one section of the sprawling lobby, a bowling alley in another, maker spaces and outdoor ping-pong tables; and, on the roof, a functioning hydroponic farm next to a miniature golf course. One-bedrooms start at \$3,300 a month.

But as nearly every architect or planner will concede, it’s hard to provide communal spaces for the wealthy, who tend to live in gated communities or doorman buildings and aren’t likely to be seen chatting on stoops. Eran isn’t exactly living his life in public, but he says that buying a second floor



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In Brooklyn, ODA restored 10 Jay Street, a commercial building, and designed Denizen, a massive apartment building.



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FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2024 • VOL. CCLXXXIII NO. 56

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What's News

Business & Finance

◆ **The federal government** began taking steps this week toward collecting as much as \$20 billion in delinquent loans it made to small businesses and nonprofits during the Covid-19 pandemic. **A1**

◆ **U.S. stocks rose**, with the S&P 500 gaining 1% to close at a record and the Nasdaq and Dow advancing 1.5% and 0.3%, respectively. **B11**

◆ **Boeing, under fire** for production snafus, will overhaul how it pays employee bonuses to emphasize quality and safety over meeting financial targets. **B3**

◆ **NYCB slashed its quarterly** dividend to 1 cent a share, part of an overhaul aimed at shoring up confidence in the troubled regional lender. **B2**

◆ **Chemours executives** shifted cash flows at year-end to hit targets that determined their annual stock and bonus awards, an internal investigation found. **B3**

◆ **Rivian unveiled two new** sport-utility vehicles that the EV maker hopes will be a springboard for its sales. **B4**

◆ **Merck KGaA expects to** return to organic growth this year after reporting a slump in earnings for 2023. **B4**

◆ **Hugo Boss said it expects** sales and earnings to grow this year, but warned it might not meet 2025 sales guidance. **B3**

◆ **Kroger reported that** fourth-quarter sales rose 6% as the supermarket operator's CEO expressed optimism about consumer sentiment. **B9**

◆ **The ECB held its key** interest rate at a record and signaled it won't begin cutting rates before June. **A8**

World-Wide

◆ **Biden sought to convince** Americans that his policies have bolstered the economy and protected their freedoms in a State of the Union address designed to draw a sharp contrast with Republicans and Trump. **A1, A4**

◆ **The president announced** that the U.S. military will install a pier off the Gaza coast for cargo ships to unload emergency supplies, boosting the direct U.S. role in addressing the strip's humanitarian crisis. **A7**

◆ **Power lines ignited the** Smokehouse Creek Fire that burned more than a million acres in the Texas Panhandle, state investigators said. **A3**

◆ **A congressional probe of** Chinese-built cranes at U.S. ports found communications gear that doesn't appear to support normal operations, fueling concerns the cranes may pose a national security risk. **A2**

◆ **Russia attacked Ukrainian** forces at points along the 600-mile front line as it seeks to capitalize on its recent capture of the eastern city of Avdiivka. **A16**

◆ **Americans support both** tougher border security and a pathway to citizenship for longtime immigrants living in the country illegally, a new Wall Street Journal poll found. **A4**

◆ **More children visited** emergency rooms after ingesting melatonin in unsupervised settings, with at least half the admissions involved flavored products. **A3**

◆ **The centrist group No Labels** is expected to proceed with plans to pick an independent "unity" ticket for the presidential election. **A6**

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President Biden gave his State of the Union address in front of Vice President Kamala Harris and House Speaker Mike Johnson.

Biden Paints Stark Differences With GOP in State of the Union

By KEN THOMAS
AND TARIQ PARIZI

WASHINGTON—Confronting congressional Republicans, President Biden on Thursday sought to convince Americans that his policies have bolstered the economy and protected their freedoms in a State of the Union address that repeatedly drew contrasts with former President Donald Trump.

Biden's speech before a joint session of Congress focused heavily on his case for a second term. It came two days after Trump cemented his position as the presumptive Republican nominee with victories in nearly all of the Super Tuesday states, setting the stage for an unusual rematch between two candidates who have both sat behind the Resolute Desk.

Biden, a Democrat, said his lifetime "has taught me to embrace freedom and democracy. A future based on the core values that have defined America: honesty, decency, dignity, equality." He added, in a veiled reference to Trump: "Now some other people may see a different story: an American story of resentment, revenge, and retribution. That's not me."

Biden never uttered Trump's name but referred to his "predecessor" more than a dozen times, repeatedly comparing his record with Trump's. He appeared to relish a give-and-take with congressional Republicans who largely oppose his agenda. At one point, he referred to the bipartisan border agreement in the Senate that would have allowed the government to expel migrants if crossings surpassed a daily threshold of 4,000, prompting jeers from Republicans.

"Oh, you don't like that bill, huh?" he asked. Trump opposed the plan and urged congressional Republicans to reject it. "I'll be darned," he said, adding later he is ready to fix the border if Republicans pass the Senate agreement.

Biden also went off-script. Please turn to page A4

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- ◆ **Americans back deal on border, poll finds**.....A4
- ◆ **Biden to boost aid to Gaza with offshore pier**.....A7

Apple Confronts Headwinds From EU's Tech Law

By SAM SCHECHNER
AND KIM MACRAEL

In the battle for smartphone dominance, Google stands out to gain an advantage over Apple from an unlikely source: a new European law.

Starting this week, the world's largest technology companies have to comply with the European Union's Digital Markets Act, a sweeping new law aimed at boosting competition from smaller companies in the realm of digital advertising, online search and app ecosystems.

In the near term, one of its biggest impacts could be in the rivalry between Apple and Google.

The law is pushing Apple to open up certain parts of its app ecosystem in the EU, allowing third-party app stores for the first time and permitting alternative in-app payment services on iPhones across the bloc.

Apple lobbied heavily against the moves, which reshape a part of its business that brings in billions of dollars in revenue.

Google lobbied in favor of mandating a more open approach to how apps are downloaded. The Alphabet unit already allows outside app stores on its Android mobile operating system and could seek to take advantage of other provisions.

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TOMORROW



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MAGAZINE

KEVIN HART

Step Aside, Pickleball, Cricket Is America's New Local Battlefront

Cities weigh stadiums for unfamiliar sport, sparking confusion: 'Like in England? Why?'

By SCOTT CALVERT

Tara McDade is a big sports fan, but like many Americans, she doesn't know much about the game of cricket.

"You swing at a ball, I believe," says the Fairfax, Va., resident.

What she does know is she has real concerns about a proposed venue for the sport that could rise close to her Northern Virginia home.

She and her neighbors have organized to press nearby George Mason University and the Washington Freedom pro cricket team to halt plans for a new combined cricket-baseball stadium that could host thousands of spectators.

Local pickleball feuds have spawned name-calling and even lawsuits. But lately, cricket projects have rolled New York City, suburban Chicago, Sacramento and elsewhere. Worries include traffic, noise and balls flying about during the game—whatever it is.

When Oswego, Ill., posted a Please turn to page A9

China Intensifies Push To Delete American Tech

A directive known as Document 79 ramps up Beijing's effort to replace U.S. technology with homegrown alternatives

By LIZA LIN

For American tech companies in China, the writing is on the wall. It's also on paper, in Document 79.

The 2022 Chinese government directive expands a drive that is muscling U.S. technology out of the country—an effort some refer to as "Delete A." for Delete America.

Document 79 was so sensitive that high-ranking officials and executives were only shown the order and weren't allowed to make copies, people familiar with the matter said. It requires state-owned companies in finance, energy and other sectors to replace foreign software in their IT systems by 2027.

American tech giants had long thrived in China as they hot-wired the country's meteoric industrial rise with computers, operating systems and software.

Chinese leaders want to sever that relationship, driven by a push for self-sufficiency and concerns over the country's long-term security.

The first targets were hardware makers. Dell, International Business Machines and Cisco Systems have gradually seen much of their equipment replaced by products from China.

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- ◆ **Probe feeds worries on Chinese cranes**.....A2
- ◆ **Foreign minister throws barbs at U.S.**.....A16

Putting Best Paw Forward



SHOWTIME: A standard poodle awaits an appearance in the Toy and Utility class on the first day of the four-day Crufts dog show in Birmingham, England. The show dates to 1891.