

# LILIAN H WEINREICH ARCHITECTS

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**LILIAN H WEINREICH ARCHITECTS** is a boutique architectural and interior design firm based in New York City with roots in Australia. LHWA's distinct, powerful, and elegant signature style carries a timeless aesthetic across the firm's portfolio of residential projects. Innovative use of materials, the precise sculpting of space and light, and the seamless integration of custom-designed, built-in furniture creates sustainable spaces of undeniable visual impact. The firm's work—ranging from integrated micro-spaces to high-end apartment, duplex, and townhouse renovations—includes several historic landmarked properties.

We approach each project as a set of individual programmatic possibilities revealed through the synthesis of consultation, research, and design.

LHWA's symbiotic exchange of ideas results in responsive solutions original to each client and informed by collaboration throughout the design

process. Two projects—the Richman Duplex on West 72nd Street and the NoHo Duplex, both in Manhattan, New York—illustrate the inventive ideas that emerge from creative synergy with the clients.

The Richman Duplex is an alteration of a 1,800 square foot apartment on the 36th and 37th floors of a post-war tower on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. LWHA created an urban retreat for a retired couple, devotees of classical music and ballet, on their frequent visits to New York.

Ancient Japanese design aesthetics, embraced by the couple during the years they lived and worked in Japan, inform the precise simplicity of the renovated spaces. The ideals of wabi (transient/stark beauty), sabi (beauty of natural patina, aging), and yugen (profound grace, subtlety) emerge in the striking yet subdued finishes, the graceful lines of the stair and integrated furniture,

and the serene, diffused planes of light and color. LHWA collaborated with the wife of the couple, an interior designer, on the project and its neutral palette of rich, subtle hues.

The duplex divides programmatically between public and private functions. The lower level's large, open utilitarian space enhances dining and entertainment with floor-width views. A Japanese Noh-mask, carved from a solid block of wood by the client's daughter using traditional techniques, welcomes visitors. When privacy in the den is required, translucent Shoji screens can enclose the area. Private bedroom quarters on the upper level feature a sequence of graceful, rhythmic, functional forms of locally lumbered striated walnut accenting the central core wall.

The lighting scheme enhances the spatial qualities and addresses the challenge of restrictive, low 8-foot ceiling heights. At the transition between











heights, backlit dropped-ceiling planes emit a warm glow.

The building's minimal construction tolerances required precision in execution—the completion of the project's Enso, or “circle”, from concept to completion. Like the Enso, the duplex's strength, elegance, and voids create a unified space that is both tranquil and energizing.

LHWA's NoHo Duplex project reconfigured and redesigned a 1,700 square foot first home for a young couple's casual lifestyle and expanding family. With thoughtful planning, the existing one-bedroom, two-bathroom duplex was converted into a three-bedroom, two and a half bath family

residence with large den/family room and open, flowing interior—greatly enhancing real estate value without sacrificing design, function, or space.

The kitchen, dining, and lounge spaces flow seamlessly to the private areas on both levels. A folded glass and metal privacy screen at the street level entry cleverly shields the apartment from view. At the rear of the reconfigured upper level, a series of 11-foot high, fully retractable, glass and steel-framed door panels separate the new guest powder room and compact master bedroom and bathroom suite. The glazed panels soften the glowing cove edges above the entries to the bathrooms.

On the lower level, pocketed sliding doors between two bedrooms meet an imperative client request. The doors create a flexible space for the children—open as a playroom during the day and subdivided at night for sleep.

The design and fabrication of the staircase to meet code and child safety requirements presented the project's most significant challenge. The staircase's co-planar, clear-tempered glass rails and childproof open slots elegantly comply. A sizable steel post concealed in the wall support the welded bent steel angles, attached with moment connections.

A fumed rubio-monocoat finish on the red oak wood flooring on the floating stair treads and throughout both levels lends warmth to a graphically neutral and steel interior. For a unique handcrafted industrial appearance, metalworkers forged all of the project's metalwork, including the stair supports and door panels, on site.

LHWA's distinct aesthetic—through clarity in design and uniqueness in resolution—is evident in both alterations.