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PRIVATE PROPERTIES

BY SARA LIN

Designer's Storied Townhouse Offered for \$17.5 Million

Jewelry designer **Suzanne Sheik**, mother of Broadway composer and pop singer **Duncan Sheik**, is offering a townhouse on Manhattan's Upper East Side for \$17.5 million. Excluding restoration expenses, it's more than twice what she paid in 2007.



The five-story, 15-room house of roughly 7,000 square feet has six bedrooms, 6½ baths, a parlor room with 14-foot-ceilings and a Zen garden. For many years it was the home of **Bennett Cerf**, co-founder of publisher Random House, and his wife, **Phyllis**, who co-founded Beginner Books, publisher of such Dr. Seuss classics as "The Cat in the Hat." (**Truman Capote**, **Judy Garland** and **Frank Sinatra**, among others, attended family parties, a son says.) Later Phyllis Cerf married former New York Mayor **Robert F. Wagner Jr.**

In 2007, Ms. Sheik, known as Zonnie, bought the 1880s-era brownstone from Ms. Wagner's estate for \$8.5 million and hired craftsmen who renovated for two years. (Ms. Sheik's son wrote the music for "Spring Awakening.") Barbara Evans-Butler of Stribling & Associates has the listing.