

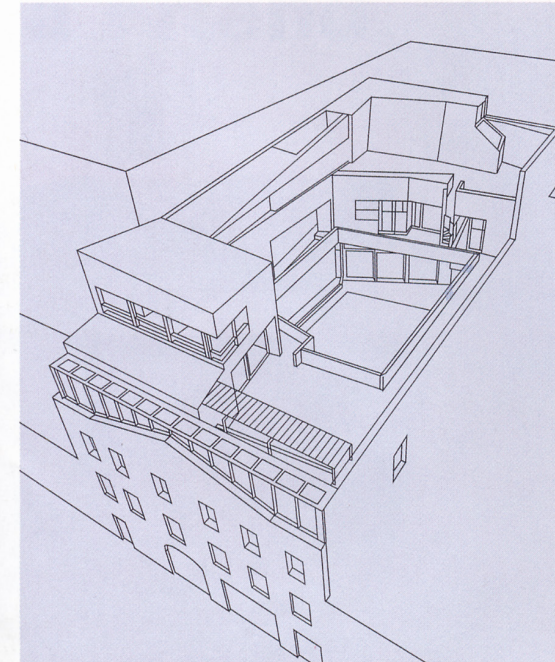


**The Gift of a Garden.** In crowded Chelsea, that may be hard to beat, but it's not the only thing Charles Rose Architects gave their client when they converted an old brick warehouse into a multilevel home.

Adaptive reuse—the preservation of buildings by altering their function—has been taken to the limit in what was once a light-industrial building in Manhattan's Chelsea district. All that remains of Heavenly Bodyworks is the sign and the skin. Within, architect Charles Rose inserted a double-height retail space and, above that, an almost 5,000-square-foot private home, its C-shape surrounding—incredibly—a lawn.

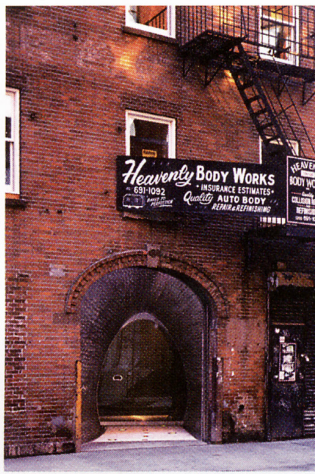
The owner, restaurateur Michael Weinstein, initially wanted a third-floor loft on top of a two-story store, which would have fit within the building's original container. Architect and owner thusly planned for a small-scale renovation. But as the project grew, so did their ideas—in the shape of a new house rising up from the original building. The century-old structure required a gut renovation, leaving only some of the interior structure intact. "Basically," says Rose, "all we had left was the façade and a gaping hole where the lawn would go." Weinstein loved the façade, and Rose wanted to preserve it, he explains, "as an urbanistic gesture. Too much of the original character of the streetscape was being consumed by art galleries. But we began to think the façade might be a foil—you would pass through it and enter a new kind of space."

Opposite: The architects gutted the old structure and wrapped the new multilevel residence—which sits above the ground-floor retail space and second-story rental unit—around a central garden. All views are ultra-urban yet surprisingly serene, with plenty of green to go around.



Atop the Comme des Garçons store that, with a second-floor apartment, occupies the first two stories, Rose and his team constructed a sculptural, transparent two-story residence, positioning the spaces to take advantage of the copious natural light, views of the neighboring rooftops, and the unusual central lawn, which sits on what was once the building's third floor. The house's openness is such that, says Rose, "you can stand in the guest bedroom in front and look through the glass exterior wall, across the lawn through another glass wall, all the way back through to the living room and stairs up to the next floor." The architect enhanced this porosity by holding back the second-floor hallway and master bedroom from the glass exterior wall, so that you can see the upstairs space from below, and adding an exterior catwalk that connects all the upstairs spaces, including the two terrace gardens.

How did Rose pull off the lawn? "It's not that hard," he admits. "A lot of our sustainable projects have turf roofs—it's basically the same technology. There's a waterproofing system, and on top of that a gravel bed that drains into the roof system and then into the storm water system." The architect laughs. "It's even easy to maintain—they have a little electric lawn mower." ■



The Heavenly Bodyworks sign and brick façade are all that remain of the 1903 building. Comme des Garçons now occupies the ground-floor retail space.



Left: The fully developed rendering is a far cry from the original "loft above retail" plan.

Above: In the kitchen the Weinstains live well with chairs by Ligne Roset and dining table by Desalto. The floor is stained concrete. p. 122

Project: Weinstein Residence  
Architect: Charles Rose Architects  
Location: New York, New York