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BIG DEAL

## Jane Holzer in Landlordland

By JOSH BARBANEL

JANE HOLZER has always been a woman of her age. In her youth, when she was known as Baby Jane Holzer, she was a model, actress and protégée of Andy Warhol. Today, she is an art collector and real estate developer with a penchant for buying and renovating luxury town houses.

Now she has passed through another New York rite of passage, suffering through a downtown landlord-tenant battle. In this case, Ms. Holzer was the landlord.

Last week, she abandoned a fight to evict a freelance hairstylist from a Lower East Side building she owns. The tenant was living on the ground-floor; Ms. Holzer wanted the space for herself.



The fight dates back to 2006, when Ms. Holzer sought to regain control of two rent-stabilized apartments that had been carved out of a former grocery at 161 Stanton Street, a 25-foot-wide apartment building on the newly fashionable Lower East Side.

After her time as a Warhol superstar, Ms. Holzer, the daughter and former wife of real estate investors, began buying property in New York and Florida. Eventually, her portfolio included a pair of tenement buildings on Stanton Street that, according to deed filings, cost her about \$40,000 in 1983.

Lara Raynier, a hairdresser, moved into a 700-square-foot ground-floor apartment about 19 years ago. Her place is in a rear extension illuminated mostly by skylights. Its saving grace is an adjacent 1,500-square-foot garden. She pays about \$1,100 a month in rent.

“When I moved in, nobody would come and visit me,” Ms. Raynier recalled. “It was heroin central. I would get home, walk in the door, and there would be a man with a brown paper bag and a gun, selling dope.”

While many building owners try to evict tenants so they can move their families in, Ms. Holzer said she needed the space for an expanded business office. She now splits her operations between Stanton Street and her sprawling 28-foot-wide town house on the Upper East Side.

**The other tenants bought a house in the suburbs and moved out. Ms. Raynier and her lawyer, Adam Leitman Bailey, fought on. The case went to trial before a state hearing officer, grinding through excruciating detail and obscure Perry Mason moments (Did Ms. Holzer ever actually use the downtown office? Did she plan to use the back space herself or lease it to a restaurant?).**

But last Wednesday, when Ms. Holzer was scheduled to return to the witness stand, her lawyer, Kara Rakowski, of Belkin Burden Wenig & Goldman, announced that she had decided to withdraw the case.

**Mr. Bailey** said that the withdrawal came about because of inconsistent testimony by Ms. Holzer and her staff, and promised to press on for compensation to cover his legal fees. Ms. Rakowski offered a simpler explanation. She said that with declining commercial rents, Ms. Holzer realized it was cheaper to rent office space elsewhere than fight to recover Ms. Raynier's apartment.