

NEW YORK POST

May 25, 2012

Spring time for JPMorgan

By LOIS WEISS

JPMorgan Chase has scooped up a prominent eight-story SoHo building to ensure it can keep its own bank branch in the building.

The New York bank paid a lofty \$1,900 a square foot in the \$87 million sale. The building at 525 Broadway, at the southwest corner of Spring Street, was marketed by its longtime family owners through Alan S. Cohen at ABS Partners. Woody Heller of Studley represented the bank in the purchase.

"This beat the market," said Cohen of the \$87 million price for the building's 45,000 square feet of mostly office tenants.

"JPMorgan Chase was aggressive and fast, and paid the price."

The bank has 4,500 square feet on the ground floor and another 4,200 square feet in the lower level, where it maintains vault space.

While it is rare for a tenant to buy a building, Chase was nearing the end of its lease and would have faced a huge rent bump or a new owner that preferred a fashion retailer. Current retail asking rents in that area are \$551 for ground-floor spots.

"We looked at numerous different strategies accretive to the purchase and are examining it now," said Heller.

Those options could include the bank keeping its space and selling the upper floors, where tenants include the architect Gene Kaufman.

Chase or its predecessors have had a branch there since 1919 when the Corn Exchange Bank, which later merged with Chemical, bought the building.