

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## The Happening Boerum Hill

A little-noticed Brooklyn neighborhood is getting a second look for its new homes and quaint shops

By LANA BORTOLOTT / Jan. 12, 2016



Boerum Hill's restaurant and bar 61 Local was a former carriage house.

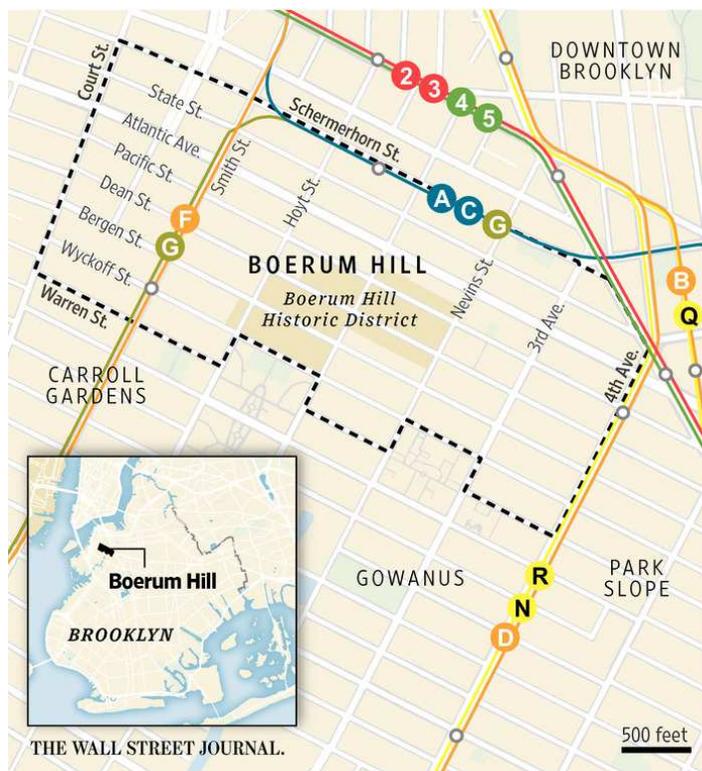
*PHOTO: STEVE REMICH FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

Long in the shadow of Carroll Gardens and Cobble Hill, Brooklyn's Boerum Hill neighborhood is getting noticed these days for its new homes and re-energized commercial strips.

But, residents say Boerum Hill, only about seven blocks long and eight blocks wide, isn't barreling toward gentrification.

"That presumes nobody was there when you got there," said resident Peter McGuire, who owns the brokerage firm Smith Hanten Properties. "The neighborhood was great before..."

Though surrounded by the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Barclays Center and Brooklyn Bridge Park, Boerum Hill hid in plain sight until a few boldface names—notably Michelle Williams and the late Heath Ledger, and Ethan Hawke—moved in. A short time later, an upscale grocer and Michelin-starred restaurant opened on Schermerhorn Street, the dividing line between Boerum Hill and Downtown Brooklyn.



"We've had our share of celebrity residents and that has, in some sense, put us on the map," said Howard Kolins, president of the Boerum Hill Association and a resident since 1985. "You'd say Boerum Hill and no one knew where that was. That has certainly changed."

At the heart of Boerum Hill are neat tracts of 19th-century row houses, ranging in style from Greek Revival to Italianate to Queen Anne. But it also is home to state offices, the Kings County Criminal Court and the Brooklyn House of Detention.

"The whole street used to be institutions—where I would go to get my license renewed—all state offices and parking lots...it was a downtown street," said Jay Molishever, a Carroll Gardens resident since 1999 who is an agent for the real-estate firm Citi Habitats. "If you talk to some of

the real old-timers, they talk about Boerum Hill as being pretty gritty, and the grittiness is certainly gone.”

State Street drew attention for the 2013 conversion of a blighted block to 23 new townhouses. The block is now flanked by State + Bond, a development of five townhouses expected to be ready by summer, and the Boerum, a 20-story hotel/condominium tower. The 128 units, ranging from one to five bedrooms, are slated for occupancy later this year.

Sales of the Boerum’s condos began in early 2015 and “went a little bit faster than expected,” said Mick Walsdorf, managing partner of Flank, the firm developing the tower with the Carlyle Group. Four units are still on the market.



Boutiques on Brooklyn’s Court Street

*PHOTO: STEVE REMICH FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

On the other side of the neighborhood, 465 Pacific, which launched sales last fall, will add 30 one- to five-bedroom condominiums to the market, 28 of which are under contract.

Much of the commercial energy is emanating from Atlantic Avenue and Smith and Court streets. Smith Street became a restaurant row in the 1990s with more shops moving in over the years, said Mr. McGuire, who recalls when the street was pocked with closed storefronts.

Now, with the new residential buildings, "...Smith Street is going from version 3.0 to version 4.0, which is good," he said.

Atlantic Avenue, once a bustling antiques district, is now lined with shops specializing in home décor, children's clothes and toys, specialty clothing boutiques and salons for people and pets alike.

"You have a lot of very eclectic boutiques and a mix of small, medium and large in the neighborhood," said Tammy Ben-Eliezer-Baxter, executive director of the Atlantic Avenue Local Development Corp. Even with larger businesses coming in, Ms. Ben-Eliezer-Baxter said, "It still has that mom-and-pop feel...it depends on which block you're going to."



A sampling of the artisanal foods at Brooklyn Fare, a supermarket with a gourmet focus.  
*PHOTO: STEVE REMICH FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

Mary Jo Pile is a co-owner of Collier West, a home décor shop that opened on Atlantic Avenue four years ago, a time, she said, when the street was turning over because of high rents.

Lately, Ms. Pile said, “We’ve seen a lot of really great things happening and a lot of great stores, boutiques and salons come into the neighborhood, which has really helped.

“We’ve seen dramatic increases in not only traffic but a really nice energy come to this street,” she said. “There’s enough here now for people to make this a destination.”

**Transportation:** Boerum Hill is served by subway stations at Hoyt-Schermerhorn (A, C, G), Nevins Street (2, 3, 4, 5), Bergen Street (F, G) and Atlantic Avenue-Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5, D, N, R). The Long Island Rail Road’s Atlantic Terminal serves Far Rockaway and Hempstead.

**Shopping:** On Atlantic Avenue, mainstays include Horseman Antiques, City Foundry and Sahadi’s, a Middle-Eastern grocery store. On Smith Street, the 55-year-old Paisano’s Butcher Shop specializes in artisanal meats and poultry as well as Italian groceries. Established in 1981, BookCourt, on Court Street, hosts readings of local authors.

**Schools:** P.S. 38 the Pacific School and P.S. 261 Philip Livingston School offer prekindergarten through fifth grade. High schools nearby include Brooklyn Frontiers High School and H.S. 519 Cobble Hill School of American Studies. Tuition-based schools for pre-K through eighth grade include A. Fantis Parochial School and Brooklyn Heights Montessori School on Court Street. In Brooklyn Heights, private options include the Packer Collegiate Institute and St. Ann’s School, both preschool through 12th grade. Brooklyn Friends in downtown Brooklyn is preschool through 12th grade.

## IF YOU'RE BROWSING FOR A HOME...



BROWN HARRIS STEVENS

### \$2 million

328 Bergen St. #5A  
This is a three-bedroom, two-bathroom duplex condominium in a postwar elevator building, with private rooftop deck and basement storage

**Year Built:** 2004  
**Square Footage:** 1,730  
**Property Plus:** The kitchen has been newly renovated with top-line finishes. The apartment receives plenty of light throughout.  
**Property Minus:** The third bedroom doesn't have a closet.  
**Listing Date:** Jan. 5  
**Listing Agent:** Lee Solomon of Brown Harris Stevens  
**Open House:** Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.



ANDREW KIRACOFE

### \$4 million

227 Bergen St.  
This is a two-family brownstone townhouse that has an upper-level triplex and a garden apartment. It could be converted into a single-family home.

**Year Built:** 1868  
**Square Footage:** 3,200  
**Lot Size:** 2,000 square feet; backyard is 800 square feet  
**Property Plus:** The parlor floor level has an outside deck. There is a renovated recreation room in the basement.  
**Property Minus:** If kept as two units, the backyard is shared.  
**Listing Date:** Nov. 24, 2015  
**Listing Agent:** James Kerby of Douglas Elliman  
**Open House:** Sunday, by appointment, from 5 to 6:30 p.m.



HALSTEAD PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT MARKETING

### \$4.9 million

75 Bond Street TH75  
This is a four-bedroom, three-bathroom maisonette condominium in a new building with a roof deck, a rear garden and dedicated parking space.

**Year Built:** Under construction  
**Square Footage:** 4,151  
**Property Plus:** This triplex unit has floor-to-ceiling windows throughout, two gas fireplaces and a flexible ground-floor space with a bathroom and an entrance.  
**Property Minus:** The project is under construction with an expected move-in date of summer 2016.  
**Listing Date:** Sept. 8, 2015  
**Listing Agent:** Tamara Abir of the Aguayo Team at Halstead Property  
**Open House:** Not applicable