



REAL ESTATE COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

New hotels are flocking to hipster haven Williamsburg

By Emily Nonko

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The William Vale.

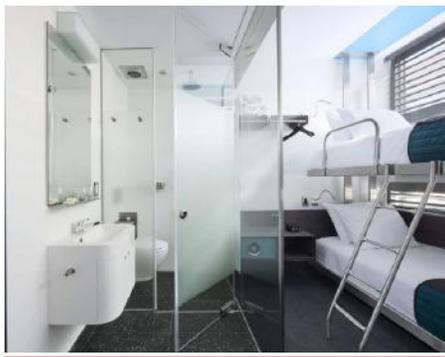
Handout

Williamsburg is one neighborhood that's got it all, from bars and restaurants to retail and movie theaters. Now it even has hotels.

In fact, the emergence of the neighborhood as a hotel hot spot in the last several years has surprised those who remember the gritty artist haven of the '90s. But a unique zoning opportunity and the rising cultural cache of the area has led to four hotels now open, and several more in the pipeline.

Various factors contributed to the hotel boom, says Adelaide Polsinelli, a senior managing director with Eastern Consolidated. "The hospitality industry followed the fast-paced gentrification of Williamsburg," she says.

There's also the "quirky zoning code," as Polsinelli calls it, which emerged from a large-scale 2005 rezoning of the area. As the waterfront was rezoned for residential use, the area around North 11th and North 12th streets remained zoned for commercial and industrial uses — and that zoning allows for hotel development. Williamsburg also offers larger parcels to develop



than Manhattan, giving developers enough space to build destination-worthy hotels “with spacious lobbies, hang-out areas, bars, restaurants and amenities,” Polsinelli says.

McCarren Hotel & Pool (from \$225/night), a hotel/condo hybrid near McCarren Park, was the first to open with 64 rooms in 2011. But it’s the **Wythe** (from \$325/night), which opened at 80 Wythe Ave. in 2012, that’s considered the industry game changer. A \$32 million renovation transformed a warehouse into a 70-room hotel with a restaurant run by restaurateur Andrew Tarlow, rooftop bar and movie theater. Hipsters flocked to visit.

The Wythe’s success was followed by **The William Vale** (from \$359/night), a 183-room hotel that opened last year at 111 N. 12th St., as well as the 150-room **Williamsburg Hotel** (from \$250/night) which opened recently at 96 Wythe Ave. and will unveil its bars and eateries this year.

The Pod.

Pod Brooklyn

No one seems too worried about the competition — at least not yet. “We’ve had to change with the times,” says Ronny Baroody, McCarren Hotel & Pool’s director of events, noting that neighborhood residents have gotten older and wealthier.

“But we’ve managed to keep that cool, young, hip client.” The hotel has also partnered with local vendors like Victory Garden, which serves goat’s milk gelato poolside.

Williamsburg Hotel, too, benefits from the area’s artisanal offerings, with toiletries made by Brooklyn-based Apotheke and a breakfast pop up run by Brooklyn Bread Lab. “We consider ourselves a neighborhood hotel,” says owner Toby Moskovits. With experience as a residential and commercial developer in the area, she took the leap to hotels after tenants started inquiring about short-term rentals.

Hotelier Richard Born took notice of Williamsburg after he noticed guests at his Manhattan hotels were visiting the neighborhood during their stay. This spring, he will open a **Pod Hotel** at 626 Driggs Ave., consisting of 249 modular rooms, each about 100 square feet. “What we’re building is not competitive with the other hotels,” Born says. Rooms will range around \$150/night to appeal to the “middle-market tourist” that’s likely priced out of the Wythe.



The Williamsburg Hotel.

Steelblue courtesy of The Williamsburg Hotel



The Hoxton Hotel.

The Hoxton

Finally, hip, international hotel chain **The Hoxton** (from \$149/night) will open an outpost at 97 Wythe Ave. later this year, with 175 rooms, three eateries and a rooftop bar.

“There’s no real science behind the cities we choose . . . apart from picking the cities we enjoy hanging out in,” says a Hoxton rep.

“New York has been on our radar for a long time, and Williamsburg is a vibrant neighborhood that embodies all that we love.”

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