

Real Estate Guide

NYP Home

KEIL
A-ROD TAKES A WHACK
AT 15 CENTRAL PARK WEST

New York Post, Thursday, August 14, 2008 nypost.com



By
LISA KEYS

YOU might say that Stephanie Anderson, 43, did the unthinkable: When her daughter Elle was almost 2, Anderson and husband Matt Aronowitz (pictured) moved away from Park Slope, Brooklyn — arguably the most strollerized nabe in the city. No, they didn't flee to the leafy lawns of Montclair, NJ. Instead, the family landed in Williamsburg, a Brooklyn neighborhood known more for rock clubs than rocking chairs.

See **WILLIAMSBURG** Page 48

WILL POWER

Hipster haven makes room for baby, too

Christian Johnston

SUBURBAN PALL FORECLOSURES HIT UPSCALE AREAS

FAMILY AFFAIR



Thomas Hatcher



Zachary Johnson

HIP SQUARE: Stephanie Anderson, husband Matt Aronowitz and daughter Elle left Park Slope.

Williamsburg has grown up

But Anderson says they couldn't be happier.

"Park Slope is a lot like the Upper West Side; a lot of passable things, but nothing really good," she says. "In my opinion, Williamsburg has really, really good restaurants, shops and salons — plus all the art galleries."

She also found a like-minded, family-oriented community at Roebling Square, a 36-unit condo development where her family has lived since 2006.

"When we moved to Williamsburg, within the first weekend, we made friends with two families," Anderson says. "We all hang out together; we're in and out of each other's houses all the time. There are sometimes eight, 10 children playing in front of our building."

Williamsburg might have an international reputation as the place to be for the achingly hip among the post-college set. But even as the swells of cool kids along Bedford Avenue — sporting clothes they wore diapers — continues to grow, more established types like Anderson are invading the 'Burg. Increasingly, today's Williamsburgers are families, established professionals and even the occasional empty-nester.

As new luxury condos roll out along the waterfront and flank McCarren Park, upscale businesses are opening, too, to attract an ever more well-heeled clientele (and their families). Williamsburg boasts buzzworthy eateries such as Dressler, which has a Michelin star, along with a growing number of tot-friendly cafes and stylish kiddie boutiques — plus, TriBeCa Pediatrics opened an office in the area last year.

In other words, Williamsburg has grown up.

"The trust-fund kid, the young single person, we're still getting them, but we're



LIVING IN THE EDGE: The first 575-unit phase is scheduled to open next summer.

getting the older buyers and the families, as well," says Joshua Deamer, director of product development at local brokerage Aptsandlofts.com.

While the initial developments in Williamsburg targeted first-time buyers with smaller units and lower prices, "we're seeing a lot more larger, family-sized apartments — the two- and three-bedrooms," says Michael Moran, executive vice president at Prudential Douglas Elliman. "As some of the more luxurious buildings have opened, we've definitely seen a whole different buyer come in."

"It's easier for me to sell a large two- or three-bedroom over \$1 million than a \$50,000 one-bedroom," says Christine Blackburn, a senior vice president at Prudential Douglas Elliman.

"The \$1.5 million market — there's a big difference between what you get here and what you get in the city," she adds. Williamsburg condos at that price offer three bedrooms, terraces, skyline views and full-service amenities, she says. "The neighborhood has drawn people, but the product has drawn more people here, too."

No need to tell that to 58-year-old Peggy Deamer. A one-time TriBeCa pioneer — she bought a loft there in the 1970s — Deamer



Caitlin Conahan

BABY MAKES THREE: Stephanie Watson-Campbell, pictured with husband Fergus and son Liam, runs the Stork Store.

came to Williamsburg in search of more space and fewer crowds.

Attracted to the waterfront and the idea of a garden, Deamer initially thought she wanted a house in Greenpoint. But a missed opportunity there got her thinking: Was she really ready for the work of a house? Deciding that a fabulous view could potentially replace a back yard, Deamer turned her sights to neighboring Williamsburg.

"There was an attraction to an emerging culture in Williamsburg that was kind of cool," says Deamer. "There still was grit in Williamsburg; it was transitional enough to satisfy my sense of adventure."

Deamer's partner, Amy, also 58, saw an ad for 80 Metropolitan — a new 114-unit loft condo (plus nine townhouses) that will have a swimming pool, "Zen garden" and 24-hour concierge — with units starting at \$395,000. For \$1.25 million, the couple purchased a two-bedroom, two-bath duplex with a terrace, plus a parking space.

They signed a contract in March. Their building is slated for completion early next year, but the couple has already moved to Williamsburg. Since May, they have been renting at nearby Schaefer Landing, the area's first luxury waterfront development.

"I totally adore [the neighborhood]," says Deamer, who's about to become an empty-nester, with her 19-year-old son already off to college and her 18-year-old daughter headed there this fall.

"I feel when I walk out the door, I'm almost in the country," she adds. "I'm not immediately surrounded by mink stores and Wall Street types. When I go to Marlow & Sons for breakfast, I do it with a sense of peace and calm that I didn't have in Manhattan."



Deamer's daughter, Frances Deamer-Phillips — living with her mom until she goes to Connecticut College — thinks Williamsburg is pretty cool, too. On the weekends, she spends a lot of time on Bedford Avenue with her friends. Most of them, she says, had to be cajoled into coming to Brooklyn, although now they've realized "how much fun it is."

"I definitely notice when I go out to dinner with my mom, we're like the only ones who are mother-daughter," she says. "Everyone else is, like, 20."

That might be true — but increasingly there are 2-year-olds in the mix. Some young families are moving to the nabe as its reputation grows. Others are the local hipsters turned breeders, like Stephanie Watson-Campbell, who opened the Stork Store, a baby boutique and education space, earlier this summer on Manhattan Avenue, adjacent to McCarren Park.

A doula and a new mom herself (son Liam is 9 months old), Watson-Campbell, 30, saw a niche that needed filling.

"A lot of people are choosing Williamsburg/Greenpoint to grow their families,



EMPTY NESTER: Peggy Deamer (top) will be moving into 80 Metropolitan while her kids Cameron and Frances are away for college.

and there were limited resources in the area," she says. "Instead of taking a trip to Manhattan or to Park Slope or Cobble Hill to take a music class, why not take one here? We're positioned in a great place, to be able to provide resources to the community, with all the buildings going up around us."

Indeed, while many of these rising towers are going after the stroller set, the Edge, a 1,080-unit, two-tower condo rising on the waterfront, might be the most brazen about it. Within the sales center, there's a special area for the kids, adorned with pint-size furniture, toys, even an Edge coloring book.

"My daughters love it there — they call it the fun office," says Highlyann Krasnow, executive vice president of the Developers Group, which is marketing the building. "It's been really helpful because we're seeing so many families."

Krasnow, who has a 1-year-old and a 3-year-old, should get to know some of these families well because

she's bought her own two-bedroom apartment in the building.

The Edge, which is striving for eco-friendly LEED certification, will feature 40,000 square feet of amenities, including a spa (with a Turkish steam bath and "heat pit"), two screening rooms and, of course, a playroom.

The developer plans to have the first 575-unit phase of the building ready next summer. Sales started in April, with studios from \$440,000, one-bedrooms from \$510,000, two-bedrooms from \$715,000 and three-bedrooms starting at \$1.1 million.

It's a far cry from the early stages of Williamsburg development. Waaaaaaaay back in 2004, when Schaefer Landing was rising, "We didn't think families would want to move here because it was really isolated," says Helene Luchnick, Williamsburg's pioneering power broker, who handled the condo's sales.

"At first it was a less-expensive alternative," Luchnick says of the nabe. "Now people are moving here because it's the right place to be."