

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

Come see the Williamsburg ferry landings' new green spaces

Eye on Real Estate: Urban oases with lovely landscaping

August 14, 2019 Lore Croghan



Here's a view of the shoreline green space behind Spitzer Enterprises' glass towers. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

I'm thoroughly charmed by the new public green space at NYC Ferry's South Williamsburg stop — and the big, fat flowers are to blame.

They are bright red and big as dinner plates.

Two flower beds in the waterfront mini-park are planted with the Instagram-worthy hibiscus blossoms.

The recently opened green space belongs to former Gov. Eliot Spitzer's company, which has just constructed three gleaming glass-clad apartment buildings right beside the mini-park.



Welcome to the South Williamsburg Ferry Landing, where flower beds full of hibiscus will brighten your day. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

I'll tell you more about these towers at **420 Kent Ave.** in a minute. But first, a word of explanation.

Spaces that afford public access to North Brooklyn's formerly industrial waterfront are opening up in dribs and drabs.

In many instances, developers construct the new waterfront green spaces and pay to maintain them.

This was a requirement of the 2005 rezoning of **shoreline Greenpoint** and Williamsburg for high-rise residential development.

On the Williamsburg end of the waterfront, there are two new mini-parks — one at the neighborhood's South Ferry Landing, the other at the North Ferry Landing.

Posies and a pergola at 420 Kent Ave.

When you take the DUMBO-to-Greenpoint ferry, the first stop is in South Williamsburg.



This is a top-to-bottom look at Spitzer Enterprises' glass towers. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

Long before the ferry arrives at the dock, you'll get an eyeful of Spitzer Enterprises' **three new Kent Avenue rental-apartment towers.**

When you land at the South Williamsburg ferry stop, you turn left and there's the newly opened green space.

It features a 400-foot promenade along the East River. Walk with me to the end of it that's closest to the Williamsburg Bridge, because that's where you'll find the eye-catching hibiscus flowers I mentioned.

Other plantings include beautiful grasses, shrubs and trees. Small green lawns are placed here and there.

MKW + Associates is the **landscape architecture firm** that designed the lovely waterfront oasis.



This pergola behind 420 Kent Ave. is a great spot to sit and watch the river flow. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

There's also a pergola in this new public space. Tables and chairs are placed beneath it in case you want to bring a laptop and pretend to do some work while watching boats churn up and down the river.

ODA New York designed these towers

Architecture firm ODA New York designed Spitzer Enterprises' Kent Avenue towers.

They look like glass boxes stacked on top of one another. On sunny days, the glass reflects blue skies and white clouds.



Grasses wave in the breeze along the promenade behind 420 Kent Ave. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

Spitzer — aka the **Luv Guy** — **resigned as our state's governor** in March 2008 after he was identified as Client 9 in an investigation of a prostitution ring called Emperors Club VIP. The disgraced politician has since built a new career for himself at his family's real estate firm.

The Kent Avenue buildings, which are all 22 stories tall, have a total of 857 apartments, 20 percent of them affordable.

There's lots of seating along the Kent Avenue complex's promenade.

The day of my visit, I plunked myself down and watched ominous clouds roll over Manhattan. It was a great vantage point for watching dramatic weather.



From the promenade behind Spitzer Enterprises' glass towers, you can get an eyeful of weather drama across the river in Manhattan. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

A mix of market-rate and affordable apartments

Citi Habitats New Developments is handling the leasing for the market-rate apartments, which started in January for the first of the buildings, 416 Kent Ave.

When I checked the complex's website the other day, the asking rents for available apartments ranged from \$2,599 per month for a studio to \$5,830 per month for a two-bedroom unit.



At left, there's the second bed of hibiscus flowers behind 420 Kent Ave. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

The process of selecting tenants for the Kent Avenue buildings' affordable units started last year.

The City Department of Housing Preservation and Development **issued a call** in June 2018 for applications for 65 affordable apartments at 416 Kent Ave., targeting tenants with three different income levels.

For tenants with 40 percent of area median income (or AMI), there were \$565-per-month studios for individuals with annual incomes as low as \$21,247 and one-bedroom apartments priced at \$607 per month for two people with a combined annual income as low as \$22,766, an online flyer indicates.

The other income levels were 60 percent of AMI and 130 percent of AMI. The priciest apartments for tenants in the latter category were \$2,733-per-month, two-bedroom apartments for families of four with a combined annual income as high as \$135,590.



Here's a lovely snippet of lawn behind Spitzer Enterprises' new South Williamsburg towers. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

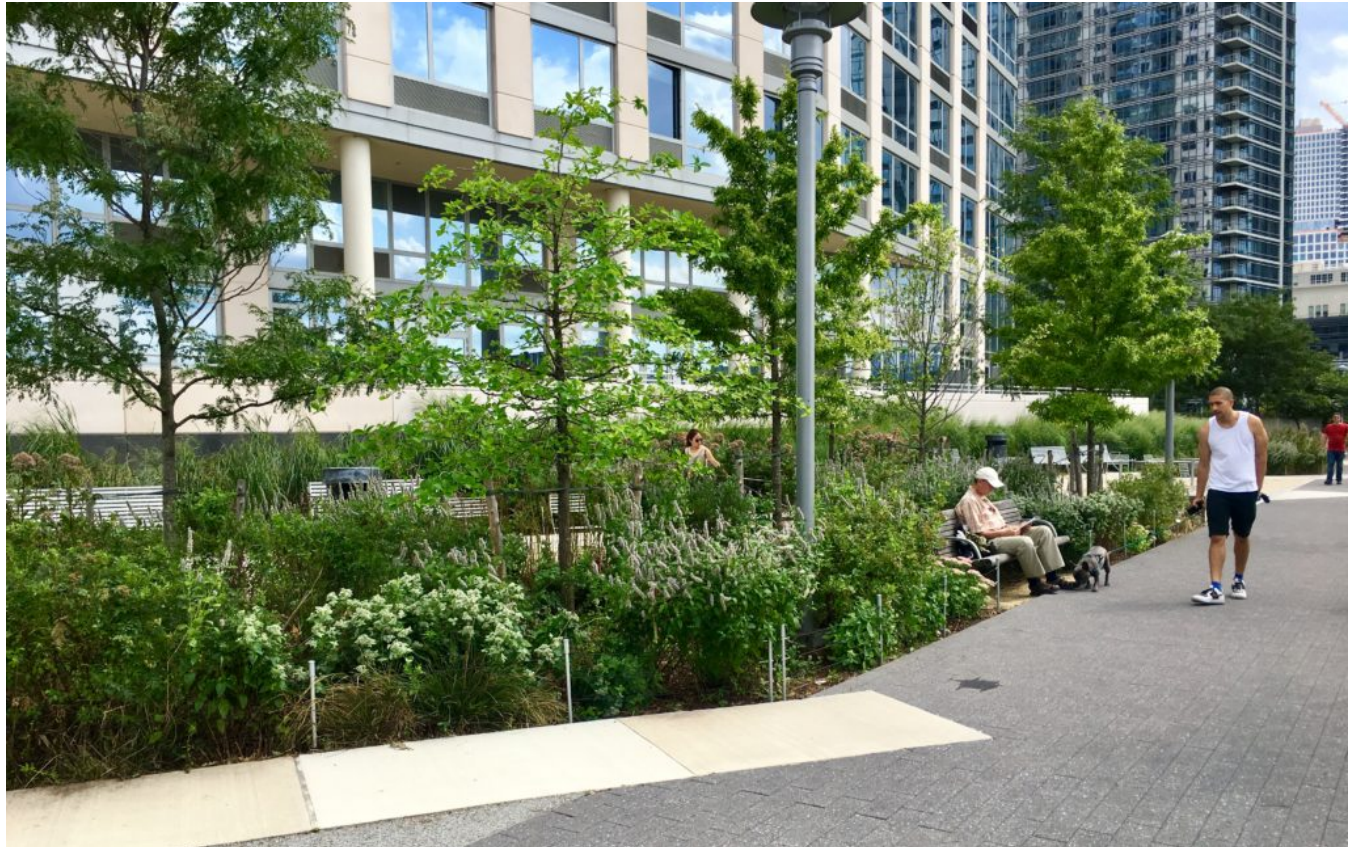
A **lottery** announced in March 2019 was for 121 affordable units at 420 Kent Ave., all of them for tenants with incomes at 60 percent of AMI.

The apartments ranged from \$867-per-month studios to \$1,123-per-month two-bedroom units. Qualifying annual incomes for the 121 apartments were between \$31,680 for an individual to a combined \$64,020 for a four-person family, online materials posted by the city indicate.

Tranquil new green space at North Williamsburg's ferry landing

As hard as it is to leave the hibiscus gardens, you really should see the new green space at NYC Ferry's North Williamsburg landing, too.

You can hop on a Greenpoint-bound ferry and get there in just a couple minutes. But it's more fun to walk up Kent Avenue and see all kinds of great buildings as you stroll. If you duck into the OddFellows scoop shop along the way, the olive oil ice cream is really good — in case you were wondering.



At the North Williamsburg Ferry Landing, you'll find newly opened green space behind apartment tower Level BK. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

Anyway. Turn onto North Sixth Street and you'll wind up at the ferry service's North Williamsburg location. There have been public spaces behind various buildings here for several years. But the green space behind the apartment tower furthest from the ferry dock is brand new.

The building's name is Level BK and its address is 2 North Sixth Place.

An unusual feature of the green space behind **Level BK** is a gently sloping jetty covered with artificial turf that's weirdly satisfying to walk on.

The artificial turf extends onto terra firma along the side of the Level BK building.



The jetty behind Level BK affords a view of the iconic Empire State Building. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

The views of the Manhattan skyline from the jetty and the green space's shoreline areas are iconic — with the Empire State Building as the star of the show.

An apartment priced at more than \$8,000 per month

The plantings in the new green space include trees, shrubs and bee-friendly flowers.

The place had a mellow, low-key vibe when I was there the other day. People walked small dogs. Folks sat and read or watched sea planes buzzing above the East River.



Boulders create a barrier between the lapping waters of the East River and the public space behind Level BK. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

Douglaston Development built Level BK, which is 40 stories tall and has 554 apartments, all of them market-rate.

Architecture firm Stephen B. Jacobs Group designed it.

The building's most outstanding feature is a swimming pool on the ninth floor with glass-paneled walls that can be removed when the weather's nice. I saw the pool and its jaw-dropping views when **I toured the property** in late 2017.

But back to the present. Several Level BK apartments have been leased this month, a **posting on Street Easy** indicates.



Visitors to the green space behind Level BK get an eyeful of ominous clouds over the Williamsburg Bridge. Eagle photo by Lore Croghan

Asking rents ranged from \$3,229 per month for a studio to \$8,483 per month for a three-bedroom, three-bathroom apartment, the posting shows.

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