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Bond Street has been transformed into a magnet for innovative architecture. The sidewalk in front of No. 25 features a carving by Ken Hiratsuka.

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Photographed by Byron Smith for the NY Times.

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REAL ESTATE | LIVING IN NOHO

## NoHo's Cinderella Moment

By AILEEN JACOBSON JUNE 3, 2015

For many years, NoHo was the “forgotten stepsister to SoHo, although they both have similar cast-iron architecture, zoning, loft tenants and a great backdrop of artists and bohemian culture,” said Jeanne Wilcke, a leader of the NoHo Neighborhood Association and a 24-year resident.

These days, however, NoHo — which stands for north of Houston Street — is having a Cinderella moment. More and more new buildings are popping up, some of them sleek high-rises, while 19th-century industrial buildings are being transformed into glossy luxury residences. Old and new architecture, artists and Wall Street executives, graffiti-splattered doorways and chic boutiques exist side by side in this rapidly changing neighborhood, where civic groups are trying to keep the historic and bohemian flavors as intact as possible.

Brent Buell, a producer and director of films and theater and a novelist, rented one of the lofts reserved for artists in 1977. (A zoning law requires city certification for artists before they can move into certain lofts.) “Our friends were afraid to visit,” said Mr. Buell, whose wife, Janice Cline, teaches at the City University of New York. During the crack epidemic of the 1980s, he said, “you had to find a mounted policeman to part the crowds so you could get home. And next thing you know, you see people arriving in Rolls-Royces and Escalades.” The shift started in the late ’90s, he said, but has not erased the “neighborhood feeling” he values.

Though many longtime residents welcome a rise in property values, said Zella Jones, president of NoHo-Bowery Stakeholders, another civic group, the change “has frozen out young innovative artists, tomorrow’s artists, who would never be able to afford to live here.” Her group, like Ms. Wilcke’s, focuses on ensuring that new buildings blend in with older ones, that their construction does not cause damage and that bars don’t proliferate.

Some younger residents prefer a more controlled bar scene, too. Christian Bindel, a 27-year-old agent with Keller Williams New York City who moved into NoHo a few months ago from the East Village, said he notices “more young professionals at the bars. The East Village is more the college kids.” Mr. Bindel, who rents a one-bedroom, seventh-floor walk-up for \$2,750 a month, relishes the restaurants, bars, gyms and other spots that cater to both older and younger people’s tastes.

The neighborhood’s many amenities also appealed to Andrew DiGeronimo, a 31-year-old investment manager, when he bought a one-bedroom apartment for less than \$1 million five years ago. He and his wife,

Inna, a lawyer and artist, like to “walk around and enjoy the sights and sounds,” he said. That includes admiring the architecture, he said, from “old loft buildings that haven’t been touched in years” to the recent renovation of the Schumacher, a new condo in a former printing factory on Bleecker Street.

Convenience is another attraction. “Everything is right here and you can walk anywhere else, City Hall or Union Square or Washington Square Park, and all the train lines,” said Terri Cude, a resident who is first vice chairwoman of Community Board 2 Manhattan and its liaison to the NoHo Business Improvement District. “It’s kind of a nexus.”

### **What You’ll Find**

Definitions vary, but according to many residents and real estate agents, NoHo stretches from Houston Street to East Eighth Street and from Mercer Street to the Bowery, which becomes Cooper Square north of East Fourth Street. It is surrounded by the East Village, SoHo, NoLiTa and Greenwich Village. Broadway is its main commercial thoroughfare.

A showplace for new architecture is Bond Street, a two-block stretch between Broadway and the Bowery. Forty Bond Street, a luxury condo built by Ian Schrager in 2007 and designed by Herzog & de Meuron, is credited by many observers with beginning the transformation of Bond Street (and the rest of NoHo) into a magnet for innovative architecture. However, a tool and die factory and a salvage business also have Bond Street addresses. So does a loft building at 24 Bond Street, where Bruce Williams, an artist and a resident for 20 years with his wife, Megumi, started an outdoor sculpture of golden dancing figures on the facade in 1998. “I needed a trellis for some plants I was growing,” he said. Mr. Williams estimates that some 20 to 30 figures, made of papier-mâché, gold paint and varnish, now climb from the second to the fifth floor, where Robert Mapplethorpe worked in the 1980s.

### **What You’ll Pay**

Prices in NoHo increased substantially from 2010 to 2014, said Karen Prager, an associate broker with Town Residential, based on numbers provided by UrbanDigs, a real estate data firm that has partnered with Town. Studios increased 29 percent, she said, from a median price of \$505,000 in 2010, based on 15 sales, to \$650,000 in 2014, when 13 apartments closed. One-bedrooms increased by the same percentage, from \$795,000, with 33 sales, to \$1.024 million with 36 apartments.

The increase was larger for bigger apartments, which Ms. Prager attributed to those apartments’ often being in new buildings. Two-bedrooms jumped 59 percent, from \$1.46 million based on 13 sales in 2010 to \$2.32 million with 25 sales in 2014. Prices for three-bedrooms and above rose 140 percent, from \$1.85 million, based on six sales, to \$4.43 million with 16 sales in 2014. Single-family townhouses that are not sections of new condo buildings are rarely available. According to UrbanDigs, the most recent went for \$7.75 million in 2007.

Of 32 apartments listed for sale on StreetEasy.com, the most expensive was a four-bedroom five-and-a-half bathroom penthouse offered for \$25 million and the least expensive a one-bedroom one-bath at \$995,000. Rentals ranged from \$29,500 for a townhouse unit in a condo building to a \$2,195 studio.

## What to Do

NoHo's theaters include the **Public Theater** complex; the **Astor Place Theater**, where the Blue Man Group has been playing since 1991; the more avant-garde **Gene Frankel Theater**; and the **Lynn Redgrave Theater**, home to the **Culture Project**, a "socially conscious" theater group, and to **Subculture**, a music venue.

A newcomer on the scene is the **Sheen Center for Thought and Culture** at 18 Bleecker Street, named for former Archbishop **Fulton J. Sheen**. The archdiocese of New York, which owns the building, considered destroying it at one point, said William Spencer Reilly, the center's executive director. "Then they discovered a gem of an old theater inside." The center is renting out space and will open its own varied programming in September, he said.

## The Schools

Two public elementary schools and one middle school serve students from the neighborhood. **Public School 3 Charrette School** on Hudson Street has about 810 students in prekindergarten through Grade 5, of whom 59 percent met state standards last year in English, compared with 30 percent citywide, and 71 percent met state standards in math, compared with 39 percent. At **P. S. 41 Greenwich Village**, on West 11th Street, with about 760 students in the same grades, 73 percent met the standards in English and 81 percent in math.

At **Simon Baruch Middle School 104**, on East 21st Street, about 1,080 students are in Grades 6 to 8. Fifty percent met state standards in English, compared with 27 percent citywide, and 61 percent in math, compared with 29 percent.

## The Commute

The 6 subway train stops at Astor Place and at Bleecker Street, where it connects to the Broadway-Lafayette stop for the B, D, F and M trains. The N and R stop at the Eighth Street-N.Y.U. station.

## The History

Starting in the 1820s, the neighborhood attracted many of New York's wealthiest families, according to the website for the **Merchant's House Museum** at 29 East Fourth Street. The museum is in a home where the Tredwell family lived from 1835 to 1933, well past the time when the area began to change to factories and other commercial enterprises.

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