

These 5 NYC Real Estate Projects Were Named Best Developments in State

By: Amy Zimmer, DNAinfo, April 4, 2017

When it comes to real estate development, what makes a good project?

For the Urban Land Institute New York, an offshoot of the D.C.-based nonprofit research group for real estate professionals, the best buildings are those that are innovative, sustainable and help make neighborhoods better by meeting the current and future needs of the surrounding community.

The organization announced this week the winners of its second annual awards for excellence in development. Five of the seven winners, culled from 50 submissions across the state, were New York City buildings.

Here's a snapshot of the winning city buildings:

► Hotel Development

The Beekman Hotel and Residences

Architect: GKV Architects

Designers: MBDS (Hotel Interior Design), Thomas Juul-Hansen (Residential Interior Design)

When this luxury Lower Manhattan hotel opened this summer, the space — with its beautiful 9-story atrium, pictured above — immediately **lit up people's Instagram feeds**. The rehabilitation and new construction project converted the vacant historic and landmark Temple Court building into a 287-room hotel under the Thompson Hotel brand, with rooms starting at \$500 a night. It's also home to a French eatery run by restaurateur Keith McNally, called Augustine, and the Tom Colicchio-run Fowler and Wells. Adjacent to the hotel is a new 51-story residential tower with 67 homes that also includes mechanicals for the hotel without compromising the historic architecture, allowing for the turn-of-the-century and modern architecture to live side-by-side.

► Excellence in Institutional Development

The Kathleen Grimm School for Leadership and Sustainability at Sandy Ground, Rossville

Owner/Developer: New York City School Construction Authority

Architect: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

The city's first "net zero" school, named after a late deputy chancellor, the Kathleen Grimm elementary school opened in 2015 with a bevy of green features to heat, cool and power the 68,000-square foot building, including a wind turbine, geothermal well and solar panels on the roof. It's designed to reduce energy by 50 percent of a typical school, the architects have said. The school gets its students moving with bicycles in the gym that students can pedal to create energy, with their wattage displayed on a screen. There's also a greenhouse on the roof for students to learn how to grow fruits and veggies.

► Excellence in Office Development

51 Astor Place, East Village

Owner/Developer: Edward J. Minskoff Equities Inc.

Architects: Fumihiko Maki and Associates, Adamson Associates International, Thomas Balsley Associates

This 12-story 400,000-square-foot eco-friendly glass tower has two green roofs, a public plaza and retail. When the design first came before locals, **many blasted it for looking too much like it belonged on Park Avenue than Astor Place**. But ULI commended the building for being a catalyst for making the area a new destination for creative, finance and high-tech business. It's home to IBM Watson, creator of the supercomputer best known for beating two "Jeopardy!" contestants, among others.

► Excellence in Housing Development

Navy Green, Wallabout

Developers: Dunn Development Corp., L+M Development Partners, Inc., IMPACCT Brooklyn

Architects: FXFOWLE Architects, Curtis+Ginsberg Architects, Architecture in Formation, Rader+Crews Landscape Architecture

Built on the site of a former federal prison across from the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the eco-friendly **Navy Green project** occupies almost a full city block with a mix of 433 affordable and market-rate apartments in four buildings and 23 single family townhouses organized around a 32,000-square-foot common courtyard with a playground and big grassy lawn. The apartment buildings include a 101-unit low-income rental building, a 98-unit supportive housing building and low-income rental, a 111-unit rental building targeting low- and moderate-income families and a 99-unit condo targeting moderate- and middle-income families as well as market rate residents. The massive project also includes retail, bringing new life to the manufacturing area, ULI said.

► Excellence in Civic Space

The Hills on Governors Island

Owner/Developer: Trust for Governors Island

Architect: West 8 Urban Design & Landscape Architecture

Made from recycled demolition debris from the former structures on the island, along with general fill and pumice, “**The Hills**” rise between 25 and 70 feet above sea level at the southern tip of the island. They offer a new visual experience of Lower Manhattan skyline, Statue of Liberty, Brooklyn waterfront, Jersey City and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. The area also includes new spots to picnic, bike and to whirl down several giant slides, including one that’s the longest in the city.

The park’s design keeps resilience in mind, ULI points out, as its topographical features lift portions of the island above the future 100-year flood zone.