A Village-Like Vibe With Towering Prices

By JULIE LASKY

Ann Ratkoff came full circle in 2018, when she and her husband, Giacomo Maselli, moved into their home on Amity Street, in the architecturally pretty Brooklyn neighborhood of Cobble Hill. A few years earlier, they lived in a small studio apartment above a restaurant in Manhattan.

The empty nesters, who previously lived in Europe and on Long Island, had been considering moving to the area for years. They were drawn to the neighborhood's history and charm, and the fact that it was still relatively affordable compared to other parts of the city. They eventually found a charming Victorian row house with a back garden, and moved in.

The couple's new home is a short walk from the cobblestone streets of the neighborhood's historic district, which is home to some of the city's oldest buildings. They enjoy the convenience of being able to walk to the nearby shops and restaurants, as well as the neighborhood's many parks and playgrounds.

But the couple's love of Cobble Hill is not just limited to the physical space. They have also become part of the community, attending events and joining local groups. They have even been known to throw a small party or two in their front yard.

Despite the high cost of living in the city, the couple believes that the benefits of living in Cobble Hill outweigh the drawbacks. They say that the neighborhood's small size and close-knit community make it feel like a true village, despite its location in the heart of the city.
houses, may be feeling. Building regulations limit sublets to two years, the couple will soon have to buy the apartment or move somewhere else, and housing prices have kicked the stratosphere. (The median value in Cobble Hill is $1.4 million.) Ms. Mathias said she did not know what their unit would cost. Their surroundings are also changing. Since their arrival, a 210-story building has risen at the corner of Amity and Henry Streets, obliterating their sliver view of Lower Manhattan.

The new tower at 317 Henry Street is one of seven housing sites in the River Park complex on the campus of the former Long Island College Hospital. After years of controversy and mishaps, the building yielded lower building heights but killed hopes for affordable housing, the mixed-use development promised by the Fortis Property Group.

Ultimately, a high-end condominium tower planned for 91 Pacific Street will top out at 475 feet. "How we will bring these large buildings and people into the neighborhood is something we have to think about," said Amy Breeden, the president of the Cobble Hill Association, a community group. "Regardless of this, we have to live in what we have here and love it."

The newowners will include Ajay Ayapana, a lawyer, and his wife, Serina Ayapana, an architect. The couple, who have a 2-year-old daughter, bought a three-bedroom condo on the 21st floor of 317 Henry Street, also known as 91 River Park. They'll move from Brooklyn Heights when the 25-story building is finished this summer.

The Ayapanas were drawn to Cobble Hill for its charm and proximity to the Brooklyn Cultural District, but wanted a modern interior and amenities. They would have considered buying and updating a unit in an old house, but such properties do not show up often.

What You'll Find

Cobble Hill is bordered on the north by Brooklyn Heights, on the east by Boerum Hill, on the south by Carroll Gardens and on the west by the Columbia Street Waterfront District. Cobble Hill Park, a grooved, green belt block in the middle, is the community's heart.

Court Street, which forms the eastern boundary, has businesses with different ages and characters. The Court Pastry Shop (No. 230) has peddled Italian sweets since 1948 and offers a range of pastries, chocolates, and traditional treats. La Bonne Maman opened the Diane T fashion boutique (No. 235) in 2002, when the neighborhood began attracting professionals who are hip to the city's cool market. The store offers a range of eco-friendly and sustainable products.

As the city's population density increases, the area's mix of old and new businesses is expanding to meet the needs of the growing community. The Evangelical Church of Christ, located on Court Street, is believed to be the oldest church in Brooklyn, having been founded in 1863.

The Vibe

As a thriving community, Cobble Hill offers a wide range of activities and events throughout the year. The annual Cobble Hill Street Fair, held on the first Saturday of October, is a popular event that features live entertainment, food stands, and crafts vendors. The Cobble Hill Art Festival, held in late May or early June, showcases the work of local artists and provides an opportunity to purchase unique pieces of art.

The Schools

Public School 29 enrolls 848 students in prekindergarten through fifth grade. On 2010-11 state tests, 78 percent of students met standards in English, compared with 77 percent districtwide; 80 percent met standards in math, compared with 85 percent districtwide. Success Academy Charter Schools, Cobble Hill enrolls 442 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. On 2010-11 state tests, with results reported from only the third and fourth grades, 108 percent of students met standards in English, compared with 81 percent districtwide; 100 percent met standards in math, compared with 90 percent districtwide.

The History

A 1958 Landmarks Preservation Commission report detailed Cobble Hill's architecture of architectural styles: Greek Revival, Italianate, and early Romanesque Revival in the 1850s and 1860s, French Neo-Greek in the 1870s and early 1880s, and late Romanesque Revival and Queen Anne. The neighborhood is home to many historic buildings and landmarks, including the Cobble Hill Congregational Church, which was built in 1861 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.