

April 17, 2008

# The first nabe is back

## More settle down where city was born

By **Kristen V. Brown**  
Special to amNewYork

Once the 17th-century Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, the Financial District is not only America's financial capital, but the very beginnings of New York City.

For years the Financial District was a ghost town at night — described perhaps most appropriately by Jane Jacobs in her 1961 book, "The Death and Life of Great American Cities": "To see what is wrong, it is only necessary to observe the deathlike stillness that settles on the district after 5:30 and all day Saturday and Sunday."

That image of downtown, however, has rapidly disintegrated as residents flock to Manhattan's southernmost neighborhood and quirky shops take up residence in once-shuttered storefronts.

The proof is in the numbers: Before 2001, 26,900 people lived in lower Manhattan. According to a residential survey conducted in the summer of 2007, 44,700 people were residents of Lower Manhattan.

Since last year, three rental buildings and various condominiums have also started leasing and selling apartments so the number is probably higher now. The anticipated population is 51,930 by 2009.

"When I first started out as an agent 3½ years ago I couldn't put 'Financial District' on listings — I had to put 'downtown,'" said Sang Oh, director of sales and marketing for Platinum Properties on Wall Street, "but now people want to live here."

Oh relocated to the Financial District a year ago. "Seeing the neighborhood progress made me want to move downtown," said Oh. "And now I just get up and walk across the street to work. I spend all day down here."

Hilary Burman saw the same potential in the neighborhood when scouting for a spot to open her flower shop, L'Atelier Des Fleurs, on Pearl Street. "It's becoming trendier and more resi-



One of downtown's many breathtaking views is of Trinity Church capping Wall Street. (Photos: Katya Proinin)



The Fed, right, sits amid the towers of lower Manhattan.

### Real estate

The Financial District is known for its luxury apartments. With rooftop terraces, more space and brand new buildings, downtown boasts some of the most sumptuous living spaces in Manhattan.

While downtown used to be a place to snag a great deal, that's changing fast. "Before you could get 20 percent more space downtown for 20 percent less," said Sang Oh of Platinum Properties, "but now that's not the case. The prices are becoming Chelsea prices."

#### To Rent

- Studio apartment (90 Washington St.): **\$2,150**
- One-bedroom, convertible to two (2 Gold St.): **\$3,282**
- Two-bedroom apartment (2 Gold St.): **\$3,674**

#### To Buy

- Studio (60 Ann St. Apt. 302): **\$515,000**
- One-bedroom condo (5 William St., the William Beaver House): **\$960,000**
- Two-bedroom condo (88 Greenwich St., Greenwich Residences): **\$1,230,000**
- Three-bedroom condo (75 Wall St.): **\$2 million**

**amNY.com**  
**/cityliving**

- Check out neighborhoods.
- Find new nightlife hot spots.



Skyscrapers are the area's definitive architectural feature.



Buildings with Gothic touches are common downtown.



## To do

The Financial District offers up a wealth of activities — from just taking in the view to checking out the neighborhood's museums.

### National Museum of the American Indian

Home to the largest collection of Native American art and artifacts in the world, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian houses gems collected by New Yorker George Gustav Heye. Check out the current exhibition, "Identity by Design: Tradition, Change, and Celebration in Native Women's Dresses."

**1 Bowling Green**  
212-514-3700

### Battery Park

Originally the site of the harbor defense artillery for the Dutch, and then the British, Battery Park is today one of Manhattan's greenest spaces. With sweeping views of the harbor, it's the perfect place for a jog along the waterfront or a game of flag football. The park is also full of interesting monuments, including The Sphere, by Fritz Koenig, a World Trade Center plaza sculpture that was damaged in the attack.

**Hudson River at Manhattan's southwest tip**

### South Street Seaport

Dating back to the 1600s, the seaport was first closed to traf-



The National Museum of the American Indian has the world's largest collection of Native American art.

fic and repaved with Cobblestone in the 1960s, making it one Manhattan's rare pedestrian enclaves. When the weather is kind, it's the perfect place to lounge by the waterfront, or stroll along the shops and restaurants that line the

historic block.

### Fulton Street at Water Street

### Stone Street

First developed by the Dutch in the 1600s, narrow, cobblestoned Stone Street is considered by many to be the city's

first paved street. Today, the street is still charming, with neat rows of low-rise brick buildings housing quaint shops and restaurants lining either side.

**Stone Street between Pearl and Williams streets**

### Skyscraper Museum

A museum dedicated to the study of high-rise buildings in a city with the world's most famous skyline.

**39 Battery Place**  
212-968-1961



Memorials can be found all around the Financial District.

## The buzz

A population boom means more people, and more people means more kids. While the Financial District plays host to a number of specialized schools, the recent population increase has put a decided strain on the school system. "The schools are really getting overcrowded," said Sang Oh of Platinum Properties.

That said, developer Bruce Ratner is adding a 600-seat plus pre-K to 8th grade school to his Beekman Street building. However, Paul Hovitz of Community Board 1 told Downtown Express, that P.S. 234 is "busting at the seams."



## To eat

The new downtown boasts a host of exciting new eateries — with late-night and weekend hours, too.

### Adrienne's Pizza Bar

This chic, cozy pizzeria perfects the thin-crust, square — aka "grandma" style — pizza, while somehow making going out for pizza seem elegant. Grab a quick slice during the workday, or enjoy a leisurely meal once they dim the lights for the evening crowd. Fresh mozzarella, parmigiano-reggiano and ricotta, oh my.

**54 Stone St.**  
**212-248-3838**

### Smorgas Chef

The branch of this pan-Scandinavian culinary chain offers menu items such as authentic pickled-herring samplers and Swedish meatballs in a fun, casual cafe atmosphere. Get there early — between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., to be exact — and score a deal on their tasting menu. Another plus: The outdoor seating area is perfect for pretending you're actually sitting on a street-side cafe in Oslo.

**53 Stone St.**  
**212-422-3500**

### Charly's

An absolute must for Financial District residents, Charly's is the local answer to midnight cravings for greasy junk food. Open 24/7, the wondrous cooks behind the counter whip up literally everything — from burgers and fries to burritos. Join the 3 a.m. crowd at the crowded counter space, or skip the walk all together and capitalize on the 24-hour delivery service.

**110 Trinity Place No. 3**  
**212-566-0006**

### Battery Gardens

The fare at Battery Gardens is but a secondary attraction; the view is the main reason to visit this stylish American eatery tucked away in the southern corner of Battery Park. The view is killer from nearly any table — indoors or out — offering up photo-worthy looks of New York Harbor, Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty.

**17 State St.**  
**212-809-5508**

### The Ketch

This nautical-themed seafood spot serves up fresh catches from the sea with an innovative twist. Particularly standout dishes include the seafood mar-



Bargain hunters are drawn to Century 21, which has a staggering array of goods.



Charly's is a popular all-night greasy spoon.

tini (shrimp, lobster and crab tossed in tequila, lime and Tabasco) and the portobello crab melt. The decor is worth a nod, too, with breezy white sails adorning the ceiling and a bounty of wooden ships.

**181 Pearl St.**  
**212-422-1965**

## To shop

The downtown shopping scene is best known for its bargains, but a recent crop of high-end retailers on Wall Street promises to turn downtown bargain hunting into Manhattan's next big luxury goods destination.

### Century 21

A bargain hunter's paradise, Century 21 is often hailed as New York's best-kept secret.



Smorgas Chef offers Scandinavian delights.

With 15 departments, four floors and up to 70 percent off everything from designer jeans to handbags and sheets, Century 21 alone easily warrants a trip downtown.

**22 Cortlandt St.**  
**212-227-9092**

### Bowne & Co., Stationers

The staff of this printing shop at the South Street Seaport Museum uses presses dating to the 19th century to create quaint, customized stationery.

**211 Water St.**  
**212-748-8651**

### Hermes of Paris

The first of a flurry of high-end stores to arrive on Wall Street — Tiffany & Co followed, and Canali is on the way — Hermes'

downtown shop was a pioneer in revamping the image of post 9/11 downtown. Visit the legendary French luxury goods house and score one of its famed leather bags or silk scarves.

**15 Broad St.**  
**212-785-3030**

### South Street Seaport mall

A taste of the suburbs without leaving Manhattan, the shops at Pier 17 invoke that "Anytown, USA" vibe. Complete with classic shopping mall staples like Gap, Claire's Accessories and Pizzeria Uno, the mall is a one-stop-shop for just about anything.

**Fulton and South streets, Pier 17.**



## To party

Thought there was no reason to stay downtown after the Stock Exchange closes? Think again — downtown areas like the historic Stone Street play host to a thriving nightlife scene.

### Pound and Pence

This sophisticated bar in the style of classic English pub easily invokes memories of the mother country with its high-backed leather lounge chairs, glistening wooden bar and gaudy floral carpeting. The atmosphere, however, manages to avoid feeling stuffy in spite of itself, with fun promotions like free pool on Mondays.

**55 Liberty St.**  
**212-716-1140**



Pound and Pence will make Britons pine for the mother country.

### Beekman Pub

Just east of City Hall, the location of Beekman Pub has been a downtown hot spot for eating and drinking since the mid-1950s. Capitalize on specials like \$4 Irish coffees on Wednesdays and \$3 domestic beers on Mondays.

**15 Beekman St. No. 17**  
**212-732-7333**

### Ulysses' Bar

Just one small piece of Peter Poulakakos' sprawling Financial District kingdom (including other hot spots like Bayard's, Financier Patisserie and Harry's Steak and Café), Ulysses' Bar is



Brouwers of Stone Street is part of the thriving nightlife scene on the cobblestoned street.

exactly what you'd expect of a typical Irish pub gone Wall Street. With Guinness on tap and live music on Saturday nights, the pub is as equally lively on the weekends as it is

during post-market hours.

**58 Stone St.**  
**212-482-0400**

**Brouwers of Stone Street**  
Named for Stone Street's origi-

nal appellation — Dutch for "Brewer's Street" — Brouwers of Stone Street is nostalgic for another New York. Housed in an early 20th-century clubhouse, Brouwers serves up cold beer as

well as American fare that rises above the beer-stained atmosphere.

**45 Stone St.**  
**212-785-5400**