

Center among Brooklyn's newest architectural standouts honored by Chamber of Commerce

The arena, home to the NBA's Nets, wins "Building Brooklyn" award for economic development. Other winners include Williamsburg's Wythe Hotel and the Botanic Garden's Visitor Center

BY [JASON SHEFTELL](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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BRUCE DAMONTE/PHOTO: BRUCE DAMONTE

Barclays Center wins "Building Brooklyn" award for economic development.

The Barclays Center — reviled by many during development, championed by many more, and filled by hundreds of thousands of screaming fans during its debut season — has won top honors for economic development in the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce's annual "Building Brooklyn" awards to be announced Tuesday, the Daily News has learned.

"There isn't a city in the world that wouldn't beg for Barclays Center," Chamber President Carlo Scisurra said. "It's in the hundreds of millions of dollars what that means to the borough annually."



Phase one of City Point, a new mixed-use complex on Fulton Mall. The first new building to go up on the site in 40 years.

The SHoP Architects-designed arena nourished the Brooklyn Nets to their first playoff season since 2007, and also hosted sold-out concerts by a diverse group that included the Rolling Stones, Justin Bieber, Barbra Streisand, Lady Gaga and Andrea Bocelli after its eight-concert inauguration by then-part-Nets-owner Jay-Z.

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The 13th annual awards ceremony will be held July 10 at Red Hook's Liberty Warehouse, where Jay-Z once threw Beyonce a secret surprise party.



CHASI ANNEXY

Pitkin Theatre in Brownsville after a \$55 million renovation.

Other winners include:

1 Williamsburg's Wythe Hotel for Adaptive Reuse.

1 Downtown Brooklyn's City Point for Retail.

1 Botanic Garden Visitor's Center for Energy Efficiency.

1 BAM Fisher for Arts and Culture.

1 Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 5, for Landscape and Open Space.

1 DUMBO's 205 Water St. for Residential- Multi-Family.

1 East New York's Pitkin Theater Center for Historic Preservation and Community Development.

"All of these projects have transformative impact on their immediate surroundings and some ripple out regionally," said Scisurra.

Importance isn't always about size. The Pitkin Theater project is a \$55 million renovation of an historic showhouse into a retail center and charter school. Now full of dollar stores, hair salons, and fast food joints, the corridor was one of the New York's most thriving shopping stretches in the 1940s and '50s.



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205 Water Street in DUMBO, from Toll Brothers, takes inspiration from neighborhood's industrial past.

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"The Pitkin Theater was the anchor of the neighborhood in the 1950s and we think it can be again," said developer Kenneth Olson, whose POKO Partners owns and rehabilitated the building on Pitkin Ave. near East New York Ave.

Phase one of City Point is the first building to go up on the Fulton Mall in 40 years. The 50,000-square-foot structure by Cook+Fox holds an Armani Exchange — and sits on the site of the much-reviled Albee Square Mall with its not-missed Toys R Us.



WYTHE HOTEL

The Wythe Hotel in Williamsburg.

Phase two contains 600,000 square feet of retail with 680 housing units, 120 of which will be for lower- and moderate-income New Yorkers.

“We’re talking about 1,000 permanent jobs when this is done in 2015,” said project spokesperson Tom Montvel-Cohen.

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The Subtractive House, a Park Slope brownstone turned into an eco-friendly modern living space, won 2013 "Building Brooklyn" honors in the single-family residential category.

Nothing is without controversy. Some Brooklynites feel the high-profile buildings got too much attention. But projects were highly scrutinized by an eight-person judging panel that included Brooklyn architects, real estate executives, city planners, a member of the borough president's office, and this reporter. Serious debate went into each award.

"The impact of architecture on society is either ignored, not known, or a very subconscious thing," said Brooklyn architect Walter Maffei, a jury member. "The discussions became heated when we got into how exactly these buildings affect their surroundings. Everyone has an opinion on that."

And the Barclays decision?

"All the judges agreed overwhelmingly that Barclays Center is a world-class building and economic engine," Maffei said. "The idea that the housing aspect was out of scale was ignored. No one wanted to touch it at this time because it's not built yet."

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