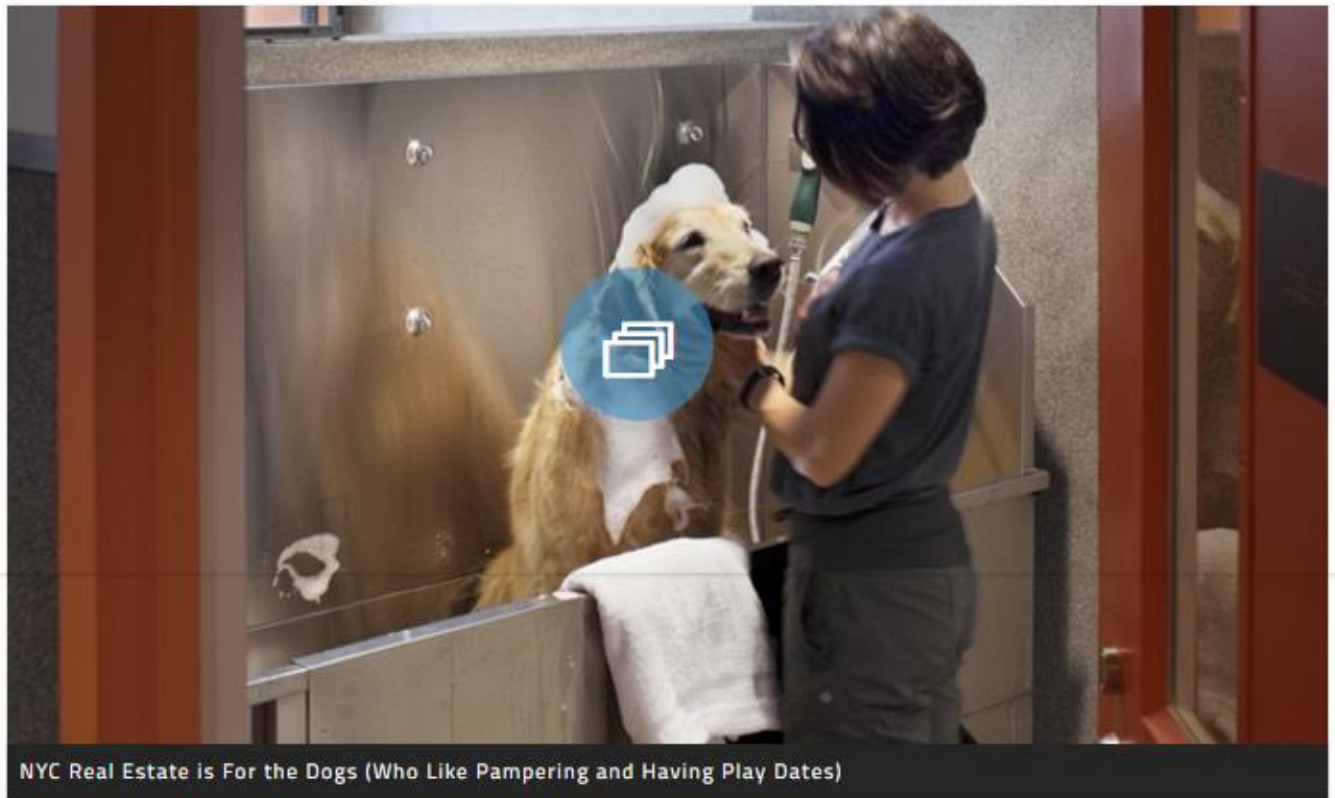


Dogs Get Final Say in Growing Number of Real Estate Decisions



By Amy Zimmer | January 19, 2016 7:06pm

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NYC Real Estate is For the Dogs (Who Like Pampering and Having Play Dates)

MANHATTAN — When Jane Nixon was vying for a one-bedroom apartment on the Upper East Side, she knew there could be fierce competition. So she brought her secret weapon and constant companion: Ollie, a “9-pound fluff” of Shih-Tzu and toy poodle mix.

“Ollie is so social and jolly. He’s got good energy. He makes me look like a better person,” said Nixon, who ended up getting the unit, which she selected because it’s near a park where she could become part of a dog-owning community.

With an increasing number of people like Nixon who bring their dogs everywhere, [whether on the subways](#) or to [concerts specially created for them](#), it’s become more common to involve pets in real estate decisions in the last couple of years.

In the past five years, NYC real estate has increasingly catered to dog owners, as rental listings advertised as pet-friendly jumped from an average of 1 percent of all listings in 2011 to about 8 percent of listings in 2015, according to data compiled by [StreetEasy](#) for [DNAinfo](#).

The same is true in pet-friendly apartment sales, which spiked from a mere 0.2 percent of listings, on average, in 2011, to between 4 and 5 percent by early 2016.

Jessica Cohen, a Douglas Elliman broker who owns a Yorkshire terrier, said she encourages clients who are pet owners to bring their companions along to apartment showings.

“When you bring a dog to a building you get a vibe about how tense or relaxed you’ll feel when living there,” Cohen said, adding that the way a prospective resident interacts with their pet helps the listing agents measure their neighborliness.

“Some people will put their dog down without being mindful of the other brokers and some are overly cautious,” Cohen said. “It’s not so much the dog, it’s the way people do or don’t discipline their animal.”

Nadine Hartstein, an agent with [BOND New York](#), said a recent buyer brought her little dog to an estate sale she listed on West 85th Street on the Upper West Side — “to see whether her pet approved of the place, but more importantly to sniff out any unpleasant spirits.”

The woman put an offer on the \$315,000 studio, even though she could tell the dog wasn't crazy about the space, Hartstein said. The deal eventually fell through.

“She loved it, but the dog barked, indicating it was not the right place for them,” Hartstein said.

The real estate pet craze has also swept up developers and management companies — who seek to tap into the growing pet-loving demographic by offering amenities like pet spas, on-site veterinary services or even hosting play dates for doggies.

At the [Charleston](#), an 8-year-old 191-unit condo at 225 E. 34th St. in Murray Hill, there's a fenced-in dog run on the roof, and the building has a Facebook-like platform where owners can post profiles for their pets to help set up play dates, said [Boris Sharapan](#), a Douglas Elliman broker who has listings in the building.

Tenants in [Related Companies'](#) high-end rentals MiMA on the Far West Side and Abington House on the High Line at West 30th Street, and the company's affordable housing complex at [Hunters Point South](#) in Long Island City, can pay to join "Dog City" for its in-house doggie daycare and pet spa with pet pedicures and ear cleanings.

There's also on-site veterinary care with conventional and alternative therapies and "Pee & Play Sessions" that offer basic assistance with obedience training.

Several new luxury Brooklyn developments are also promoting their pet amenities.

The [Brooklyn Trust Company Building](#), a landmarked Brooklyn Heights bank recently converted into 12 "expansive residences," is turning the bank's former vault into a roughly 24-square-foot "spa" to bathe pets.

At [51 Jay St.](#), a warehouse being converted into 74 condos in DUMBO, the 50-square-foot pet washing and grooming station has been a big selling point, according to Halstead's Debbie Zolan. "Developers think, 'How can we accommodate the lifestyle of our residents?'" Zolan said.

"At the end of the day, you don't want your dirty dog walking through the hallway and elevator."

However, many constraints still remain on pet owners in some buildings.

Many residences have caps on large dogs, using weight restrictions (often 15 pounds or under) or breed restrictions (such as bans on pit bulls or Rottweilers, for instance) to keep out certain dogs that they think might be problematic.

It's also not uncommon for pet-friendly buildings to require dog owners to carry their companions at all times in common areas — instead of letting them walk on a leash — and only allow them to use service elevators, not public elevators, Elliman's Cohen said.

But many of these buildings had previously banned pets before settling on this "middle ground" approach, she noted, as is the case in Upper West Side condo where she lives.

"It's a compromise for the building, and I think dog people have also met in the middle," Cohen said. "We have more options now."