

Bryant Park

In 1987, the not-for-profit Bryant Park Restoration Corporation (BPRC) took over management of a neglected park in New York City that was becoming a threat to pedestrians and a liability to its neighbors. BPRC executed a successful campaign to raise \$9.5 million in capital costs for extensive renovations and \$7 million for the construction of food concessions from the city of New York, private donations, and a bank loan. A business improvement district (BID) assessment of about \$.14 per square foot on commercial property owners and park rentals and fees provide three-quarters of the annual operating expenses. Rent paid by two private restaurants in the park is being used to amortize the debt.

The plan for the park's renewal was based on urban design consultant William H. Whyte's research studies of the use (and nonuse) of urban public spaces. Bryant Park reopened in 1992 with new gardens, new lighting, restored statues, a lounging lawn, folding chairs, free public toilets (regularly cleaned and attended, with fresh flowers on the counters), new food kiosks, and its own maintenance and security staff (composed of out-of-work and homeless people), including a horticulturist and an events coordinator.



Bryant Park has become a popular gathering place and an attractive rental site for special events. Many parkside properties have been renovated. The rare aspect of Bryant Park's restoration is that a very well-researched design and management program was carried out to the letter, despite the involvement of at least a dozen public agencies and many private interests.

Official Statement of Award

"Almost every step in the revival of midtown Manhattan's derelict Bryant Park was groundbreaking. A wisely planned and managed investment in open space has turned a disaster into an asset, dramatically improved the neighborhood, and pushed up office rents and occupancy rates."



GRAND CENTRAL PARTNERSHIP

Project Data

Location: New York, New York

Owner: New York City Department of Parks

Developer: Bryant Park Restoration Corporation (BPRC)

Urban Design Consultant: William H. Whyte, Jr.

Architects: Hardy, Holzman, Pfeiffer & Associates (kiosks and restaurants) and Kupiec & Koutsomitis (restoration)

Landscape Architect: Olin Partnership

Garden Design: Lynden B. Miller

Size: 7 acres

Completed: 1992 (park) and 1995 (restaurants)

