



REINVENTING GRAND ARMY PLAZA

A PROJECT OF THE
DESIGN TRUST
FOR PUBLIC SPACE
WITH THE
GRAND ARMY PLAZA
COALITION

REINVENTING GRAND ARMY PLAZA

In the fall of 2008, the Design Trust for Public Space and the Grand Army Plaza Coalition mounted *Reinventing Grand Army Plaza*, a large-scale exhibition in the center of Grand Army Plaza that showed 30 visionary plans for the reinvention of this magnificent civic space. This unprecedented public exhibit illustrated how the Plaza could be redesigned to make it more usable, more amenable to public events, and safer for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike. This publication not only showcases the top 30 design schemes, but also provides a historical, physical and cultural context for the Plaza and recommends steps the community can take to achieve the goal of a new master plan and a comprehensive renovation.

November 2009

<http://designtrust.org>

10 PROJECTS

DESIGN TRUST FOR PUBLIC SPACE

IMPROVING PUBLIC SPACE FOR ALL NEW YORKERS



1 TRANSFORMING BROOKLYN'S HEART

REINVENTING GRAND ARMY PLAZA (2007)

Grand Army Plaza should be one of the world's great urban spaces. Designed in 1867, this magnificent 11-acre plaza was to be the grand entrance for Prospect Park, but with the advent of the automobile the Plaza became a vast conduit for vehicular traffic. Despite its identity as the historic and geographic heart of Brooklyn, hazardous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists today impede access to neighborhoods, cultural institutions, and the Plaza's center.

To catalyze Grand Army Plaza's rebirth, the Design Trust held an open, international ideas competition in Spring 2008 to attract visionary designs for transforming the Plaza. The Ideas Competition lays the groundwork for the project's next phase by demonstrating that the Plaza could be more beautiful, support a range of public events, and provide safer and easier access for pedestrians, motorists, and cyclists alike.

The competition resulted in over 200 proposals submitted from around the world. From September 12 to October 13, 2008, a free public exhibition, designed by acclaimed design firm Pentagram, will showcase the competition winners and other top visions.

PROJECT GOAL: To engage designers, area cultural institutions, residents, local business owners and the relevant New York City agencies in an open dialogue about the Plaza's redesign, with the ultimate goal of creating a new master plan that all of these stakeholders can support.

PUBLIC PARTNER: Grand Army Plaza Coalition (GAPCo)

EDUCATION PARTNER: The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)

MAJOR SUPPORT: The Double R Foundation; SDS Procida; Richter+Ratner; Independence Community Foundation; The A. Woodner Fund; Vespa, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency; Blue Sky Bakery

IN-KIND SUPPORT: Pentagram; Streb Lab for Action Mechanics (S.L.A.M.); Whatcould Web Design & Development



LEFT TO RIGHT: Historical photograph of Grand Army Plaza from 1894; aerial view of Grand Army Plaza; the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch. Image credits (left to right): Claudia Brandenburg/Language Arts; Ovieh, via Flickr

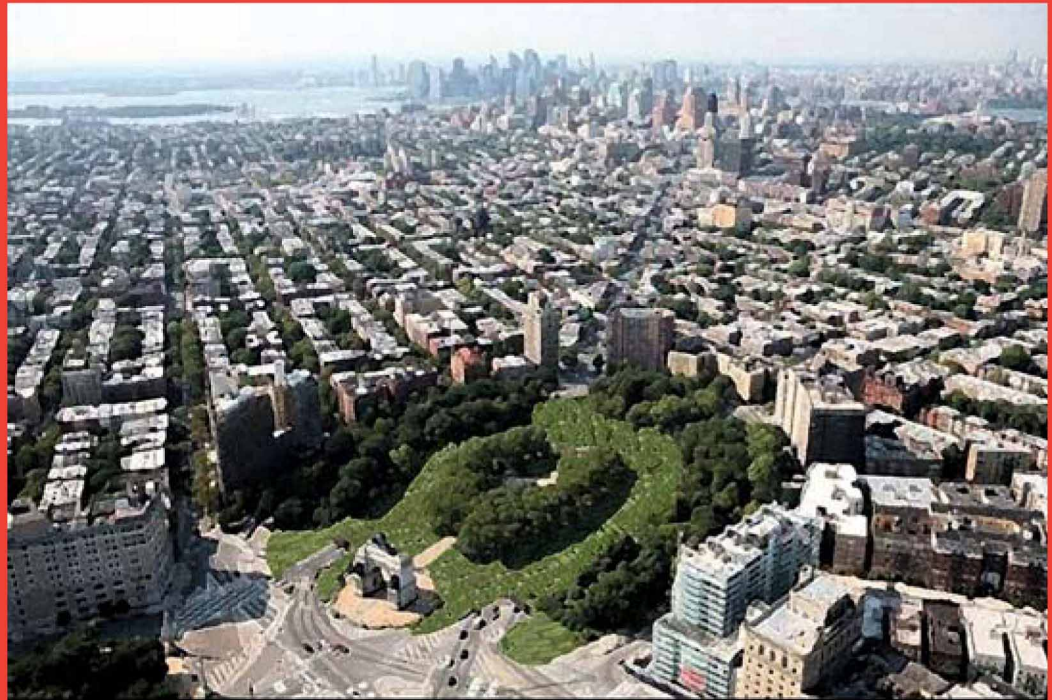
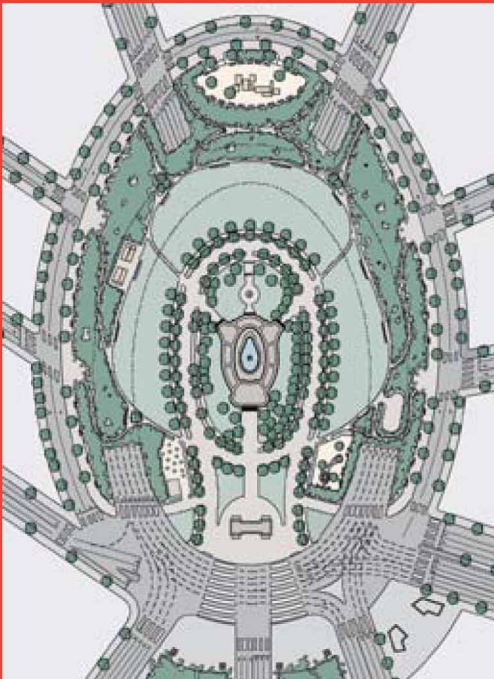
Green Army Plaza

MICHAEL ARAD
HANDEL ARCHITECTS
NEW YORK, NY, USA

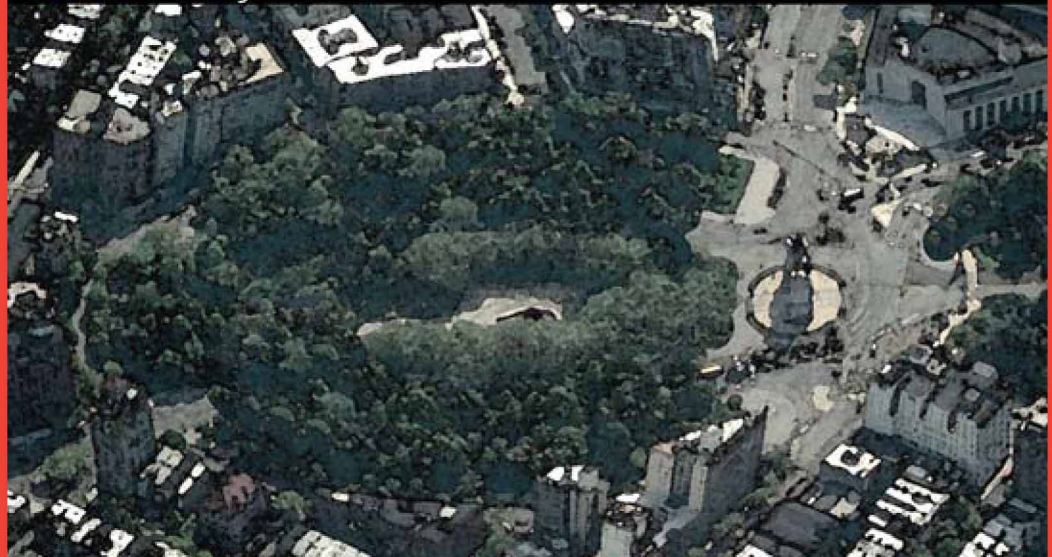
Existing traffic lanes are covered with a green embankment—similar to the berms but larger and reinforced—that conceals vehicular tunnels. This new green public space becomes a formal curved promenade.

Features

- berms expanded to conceal vehicular tunnels
- open lawn areas provide space for a variety of activities
- formal, curved promenade
- pedestrian pathways radiate out from Plaza center



Green Army Plaza - aerial views



HIGHwalk

CATERINA ROIATTI, ROBERT
TRABOSCIA, ANGELA AMOIA, JASON
ATKINS, DENNIS MENDOZA, CHUN
FANG HUANG, KELLEN GIUDA,
SEBASTIAN DEL CASTILLO

TRA STUDIO
NEW YORK, NY, USA

Existing traffic lanes are depressed below grade and berms are extended to conceal vehicular tunnels. At the apex of this new green space is the “HIGHwalk,” a completely handicap-accessible scenic promenade for pedestrians and bicyclists, providing views of the Plaza and the city beyond.

Features

- berms expanded to conceal vehicular tunnels
- closes the gap between the Plaza and Prospect Park, using this space as a permanent home for the greenmarket
- scenic promenade for bicycles and pedestrians
- transportation hub at north end of Plaza

