WE SAVED THE SPUR
A TURNING POINT

It took over a decade of grassroots organization, community sweat, meetings with government officials, design, and construction to open this last remaining section of the original High Line. This moment is made possible by the public that worked so hard for the Spur’s preservation.

Built in the 1930s, the Spur extension connected with the United States Postal Service Morgan Processing and Distribution Center, an avenue-long behemoth of a building that still stands on 30th Street between 9th and 10th avenues. This direct connection allowed freight trains to carry mail and packages to and from the upper-floor loading docks of the building.

By the early 1980s, no more trains ran along the line and the tracks fell into disuse.

The structure remained threatened by demolition until 1999, when Joshua David and Robert Hammond began lobbying to preserve and transform the High Line under their newly formed advocacy group Friends of the High Line.

In 2005, the City declared that the first two sections of the structure would be saved. However, the fate of the High Line at the Rail Yards and the Spur remained undetermined.

In 2008, Friends of the High Line organized hundreds of people wearing red “Save the Spur” t-shirts to rally in favor of preserving the Spur.

In 2012, thanks to the vision and commitment of a dedicated community of leaders, the City acquired the Rail Yards section of the High Line and announced that this section of the structure would officially be saved.

In 2014, the first phase of the Rail Yards opens.

In 2019, the opening of the Spur, the section once most in danger of deconstruction.
GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT

James Corner Field Operations (Project Lead), Diller Scofidio + Renfro, and Planting Designer Piet Oudolf—the same design team behind the first three sections of the park—listened to what visitors wanted when choosing the features for the Spur. That means: more space for public programming, more restrooms, more access points, more food, more art, and more plants.

The flow of the space was designed to create moments of interactions—both between people and with the surroundings.
WILD-INSPIRED GARDENS

With a Northeastern woodland palette as inspiration, the Spur plantings comprise 8,500 perennials, 69 trees and shrubs, three new species for the park, and the largest planting beds on the High Line.

Grasses, perennials, and a mix of popular clematis and wisteria vines hang from gardens along the Coach Passage. Flowering beds in the piazza include a mix of grasses and perennials punctuated by the theatrical changing colors of dwarf fothergilla shrubs.

The giant tilted planters in the threshold contain stalwarts like hackberry, sweetgum, and black tupelo, alongside exuberant hart’s tongue fern, yellow lady’s slipper, and strawberry bush.

"THE SPUR PLANTINGS WILL SHOW PEOPLE PLANTS FROM THE AMERICAN WOODLAND, RAISING AWARENESS OF THE VALUE AND GRACE OF NATIVE FLORA."
— Piet Oudolf, Planting Designer

Plants on the Spur

- **strawberry bush**  
  *Euonymous americanus*
  With its showy fruit, the strawberry bush splits open when ripe to reveal bright red seeds, bringing pops of color to the Spur in spring.

- **creeping raspberry**  
  *Rubus calycinoides*
  This creeping groundcover has soft, quilted, nearly-evergreen leaves that turn deep red in autumn after white flowers and fruit in the spring.

- **hart’s tongue fern**  
  *Asplenium scolopendrium*
  A rare, protected North American variety of hart’s tongue fern unfolds its strappy fronds—believed to resemble the medieval hunting deer’s tongue.

- **yellow lady’s slipper**  
  *Cypripedium parviflorum*
  Yellow lady’s slipper, a species of Northeast American bog orchid, attracts native and wild bees, contributing to the complex ecosystem of the park.

- **sweetgum**  
  *Liquidambar styraciflua*
  The sweetgum’s glossy green star-shaped leaves turn a brilliant blaze of color in fall. Suitably, its wood is used for the interior of railroad cars and railroad ties.

Ken-ichi Ueda, University of Maryland Arboretum and Botanical Garden; Philip Goddard, Per Verdonk; JLP / Wikimedia Commons
STANDING TALL

The Plinth is the first space on the High Line solely dedicated to a rotating series of new, monumental, contemporary art commissions. Simone Leigh’s *Brick House*, a tribute to Black female beauty, is the inaugural artwork for the Plinth.

*Brick House* is a 16-foot-tall bronze bust of a Black woman that stares resolutely facing down 10th Avenue. The work’s title refers to the term for a strong Black woman who stands with the strength, endurance, and integrity of a house made of bricks.

*Brick House* is the first monumental work in *Anatomy of Architecture*, Leigh’s continuing series of sculptures that combine architectural forms like Batammaliba architecture from Benin and Togo, the *teleuk* of the Mousgoum people of Cameroon and Chad, and the restaurant Mammy’s Cupboard in Natchez, Mississippi.

Leigh’s magnificent Black female figure challenges visitors to think more carefully about the architecture around them, and how it reflects customs, values, priorities, and society as a whole.

“I THOUGHT: ‘WHAT BETTER PLACE TO PUT A BLACK FEMALE FIGURE?’ NOT IN DEFiance OF THE SPACE, EXACTLY, BUT TO HAVE A DIFFERENT IDEA OF BEAUTY THERE.”

— Simone Leigh, pictured right with her work in progress, as quoted in the *New York Times*
“THE SPUR IS AN IMPORTANT REMINDER OF NEW YORK CITY’S INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE. WHILE THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE, THIS SHOWS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS RALLY TOGETHER.”

— Robert Hammond, Co-Founder
The High Line thanks its staff and volunteers for their continued work, and is grateful to a dedicated group of private and civic partners and the leadership of the City of New York and NYC Parks for their ongoing commitment.

The High Line was donated to the City of New York by CSX Transportation, Inc.

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**HISTORICizont**
Twenty years ago we reimagined a rail structure as a new public space. Ten years ago we welcomed our first visitors and became a landmark of the city and a model for infrastructure reuse across the globe. This year we open the Spur. What’s Next?

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