



LeFrak Center at Lakeside Prospect Park

Architect: Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects
Owner: Department of Parks and Recreation and Prospect Park Alliance
Location: New York City



Jury Comments

The natural flow of this site was fully re-created by the transformation of an asphalt parking lot into a beautiful and thoughtful design.

The stonework grounds this facility as a landmark within the park, while the openness of the design itself allows for complete amalgamation with the views and the experience of nature.

Every design decision was made so as to ease use for patrons and also minimize the impact on the park. This is a beautiful, natural spot for visitors to enjoy a sensory experience.

LeFrak Center at Lakeside Prospect Park | Notes of Interest

This project restored 26 acres of Brooklyn's Prospect Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in the 19th century, and added a new 75,000-square foot, year-round skating and recreational facility. In the winter, the facility's two rinks are open for ice skating, and in the summer one rink converts to roller skating and the other to a large water-play fountain.

The park restoration added an additional eight acres to one of the most densely used areas of Prospect Park. Music Island and the Esplanade have been restored to the original Olmsted-Vaux design, the lakeshore and pedestrian pathways have been improved, and picnic areas and open lawns have been expanded.

Clad in rough-hewn gray granite, the new LeFrak Center appears to be large stone retaining walls set in the landscape. Much of the structure is tucked into the land. The L-shaped plan consists of the east and north block, both one-story structures with roof terraces connected by a bridge. The building blocks house offices, skate rental and change areas, public restrooms, a café, party rooms, and the mechanical spaces. The upper-level terraces connect with the park pathways, so visitors find themselves at this elevated position without realizing there is a building beneath. This level provides a great place to watch the skaters and enjoy views of the lake beyond.

Framed by the building blocks, a regulation-size hockey rink sits beneath a monumental canopy, which is supported by irregularly placed columns. This canopy protects the ice from the sun and is used to light the rink when it is dark. The underside of the canopy is midnight blue and carved with silver markings inspired by figure skating footwork patterns. This rink converts to roller skating in the warmer months. An elliptical rink open to the sky is used for recreational skating and converts to a shallow fountain in the summer. Water jets around the edge direct water into the center.

Additional Credit

Acoustical & Audio-Visual: Acoustic Distinctions
Code: William Vitacco Associates
Commissioning: EME Group
Construction Manager: Sciam Construction
Engineer – Civil: Stantec
Engineer – MEP: ICOR Associates
Engineer – Structural: Robert Silman Associates
Geotechnical: Richard Kessler
Graphics: Poulin + Morris
Green Roof: Roofmeadow
Kitchen: Ricca Newmark
Landscape: Prospect Park Alliance Department of Design and Construction
LEED Consultant: 7Group
Lighting: Renfro Design Group
Operator: Upsilon Ventures
Rink Refrigeration: Van Boerum & Frank Associates
Security: Ducibella Venter & Santore

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Specifications: Construction Specifications
Water feature: Fluidity
Waterproofing: James Gainfort Consulting

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