



Sustainable Landscapes Through the Eyes of a Friend of the High Line **Walking the High Line**

Text and images by Jonathan Fleming

1. Walking along the High Line is also a tour of the surrounding architecture that includes Neil Denari's condominium HL23 on the 23rd Street.

2. The High Line runs from Gansevoort Street in the Meatpacking District to West 34th Street.

A large public lawn serves as an enticing area for locals to spend some leisure time in the sun.



One beautiful September morning, I paid my first visit to New York City's High Line, a beautifully designed elevated park that runs through the west side of Manhattan. Arriving at the park's Ganesvoort street entrance, I was greeted by dramatic morning light sweeping across the city. Vendors were still setting up during sunrise, from local art merchants to the coffee stands serving up Blue Bottle espresso and pour-over drip coffee. Local residents and even a few tourists began trickling into the park as the sun continued rising. It was incredibly peaceful and serene.


The High Line was once an elevated rail system, supporting freight trains that ran cargo between warehouses and processing facilities in Manhattan's Meatpacking district. It's been several decades since the railway has been used for that purpose, but, to preserve the structure as part of New York's rich history, it was recently overhauled for reuse as a public park.

The park is an absolute marvel, both in its engineering and its design. The landscaping was inspired by the wild, self-seeded plant life that once grew when the High Line was a rail system. Parts of the original tracks have been reintegrated into the landscape, giving the park a sort of post-apocalyptic look and feel, as if nature had claimed this part of the city as her own, though there is obviously a lot of control to the "chaos".

Long, concrete "planks" form most of the High Line's smooth walkways. With an enormous variety of plant life along the main path, it was difficult to take even a few steps without stopping to discover new details. There was so much to photograph up there, and I truly loved the "wild nature meets man-made structure" theme that permeates the park, creating fascinating visual contrasts.

The surrounding neighbourhood adds another visually contrasting element to the High Line experience. An eclectic mix of decades-old factories and housing, together with ultra-modern high-rise buildings that run along the High Line's path, greets every visitor to the elevated park.

A large public lawn serves as an enticing area for locals to spend some leisure time in the sun. While this area of the park is typically bustling, the lawn was off limits for maintenance on the morning of my visit. I instead spent much of my time on the viewing platforms that extended from the park's main path, which allowed me to literally step off the High Line to get a better view of the park, soak in sweeping views of the city's skyline and buzzing streets, or people-watch while kicking back on one of the many benches placed along the walkway.

Taking a leisurely stroll along this internationally famous public park, unrivalled in its beauty and variety of wild nature, is a must if one ever finds himself in New York City. 

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3. Walking along Manhattan rooftops.



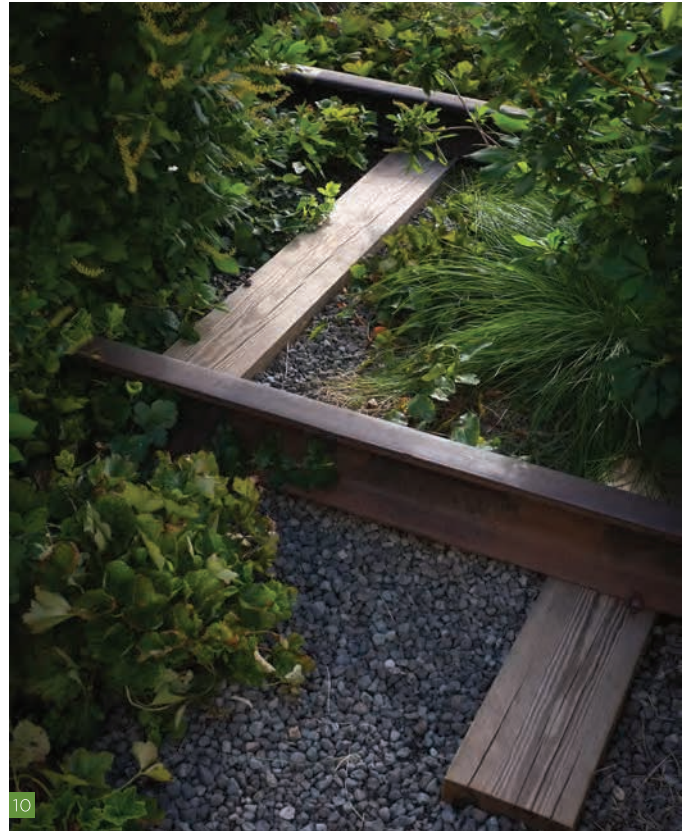
4. The High Line's Gansevoort Street entrance.

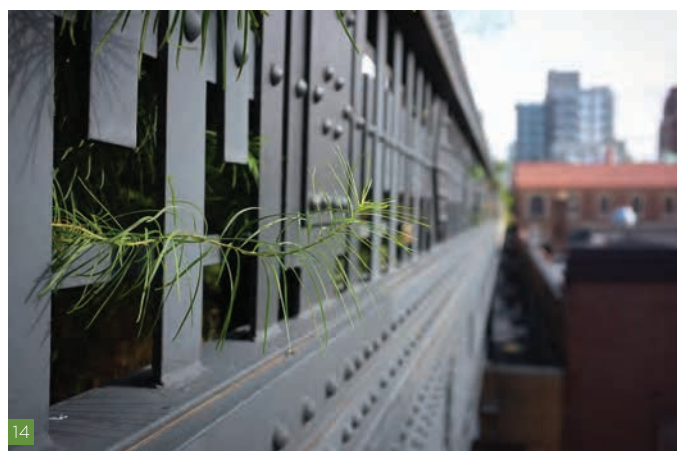
5. The High Line's main path has no steep slopes or stairs, and is easily accessible to all.

6. A local takes a break on the High Line's "Radial Bench".

7. Young trees provide shade for a seating area along the High Line.







8. Concrete "planks" make up much of the main pathway.

9. Flowers bloom along the footpath at the "Wild Flower Field" section of the park.

10. A nod to the High Line's past, train tracks line the park, covered by greenery.

11. The "23rd Street Lawn".

12. The High Line is a path of greenery among man-made structures, both historic and modern.

13, 15. Greenery reaches through the High Line's steel perimeter.

14, 16. Once a freight rail line, the repurposed train tracks that line the park are now covered by lush greenery.