BEST OF 2008 AWARDS

Myrtle-Wyckoff Station Rehabilitation

PROJECT OF THE YEAR: Mass Transit

Demolishing and rebuilding New York City subway platforms while they remain fully active requires careful planning and coordination.

The two-story Myrtle-Wyckoff Station Complex is a major transit hub in Ridgewood on the Brooklyn-Queens border. It serves as a link between the L and M lines of the New York City subway, as well as a stop for five city bus lines. The station's $51-million rehabilitation and expansion was completed earlier this year in May.

The project was part of the 30-site Subway-Sidewalk Interface Project cosponsored by the New York City Department of Planning and the New York City Department of Transportation.

Begun in January 2004, the rehabilitation project involved not only the upgrading of the structural elements of the station but making it Americans with Disabilities Act compliant as well as performing significant aesthetic improvements.

"We performed major steel repairs on the structural steel supporting the overhead railroad, upgraded safety features and made the stations ADA compliant by linking them with three elevators," says Jay I. Drier, president of general contractor Judlau Contracting.

All this took place while the station remained open as a vital transit hub in the New York City transit system.

"Our greatest challenge was demolishing an active station while maintaining full service for passengers," Drier says.

In addition to keeping the platforms accessible and providing full foot traffic pathways, builders also had to work around two elevators that had been installed just prior to construction. New elevators had to be threaded carefully to access the new platforms without disrupting train service.

The station's central control house was originally constructed in 1928 and is connected to the aboveground M subway line on Myrtle Avenue and the underground L subway line along Wyckoff Avenue. The redesigned station complex has a three-story structure to enclose both platforms and provide directs links between them. It also introduces a curving, glass-enclosed rotunda fronting the intersection between the streets.

"We significantly improved the aesthetics by incorporating mosaic tile bands and a circular glass rotunda roof," Drier says.

The complex's distinctive brick wraparound façade, designed to match the older residential buildings adjacent to it,

Key Players

Owner: Metropolitan Transit Authority - New York Transit

General Contractor: Judlau Contracting, New York, N.Y.

Architect: Dattner Architects, New York, N.Y.

Consulting Architect: Domenech Hicks & Krockmalnic, Boston, Mass.

Struct./Civil/Comm./Geotech. Engineers: PB Americas, New York, N.Y.

Mech./Elec./Plumb. Engineers: Maitra Associates, PC, Bridgewater, N.J.

Elevator Consultant: Van Deusen & Associates, Livingston, N.J.

Cost Consultant: VJ Associates, Hicksville, N.Y.

Lighting Designer: Ann Kale Associates, Santa Barbara, Calif.

is a Silver Award winner in the Brick Industry Association's 2008 Brick in Architecture Awards. The ceiling mosaic on the inside of the rotunda is a commissioned piece of artwork entitled "From Earth to Sky" by Cadence Giersbach and is part of the MTA's Arts for Transit program.

The Myrtle-Wyckoff Station Complex is also serving as a pilot project for the MTA's Design for the Environment program. As a result there are several sustainable design concepts integrated into its final plan, including daylighting and natural ventilation in the control house rotunda, lighting controls and energy-saving mechanical systems.

Working around subway crowds however complicated what was already a very involved project. "Our greatest challenge was demolishing an active station, while maintaining full service for passengers," says Judlau's Drier. In addition to keeping the platforms accessible and providing full foot traffic pathways, builders also had to work around two elevators which had been installed just prior to construction. New elevators had to be threaded carefully to access the new platforms without disrupting train service.

BEST OF 2008 AWARDS

Pelham Parkway Station Rehabilitation

AWARD OF MERIT: Mass Transit

When the restoration of the Pelham Parkway Station began in 2000, the transit station was one of the many that the MTA was improving around the New York metropolitan area.

But in 2005 the Pelham Parkway Station was added to the National Register of Historic Places, and the $18-million rehabilitation of the steel-and-concrete station, originally built in 1917, took on a new significance. Completed in January, the rebuilt station now has two elevators and fully rebuilt mezzanine levels and metal stairways in the original style.

The station is located in the Bronx at Pelham Parkway and White Plains Road and is a major stop on the No. 2 line of the New York City subway.

The station needed to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, yet that had to be accomplished while staying true to the historic structure's distinctive architecture. Two elevators were carefully laid into the existing design to provide access from the street level to the subway platform and the mezzanine levels.

Elements of the original design that were set to be preserved included the station's exterior concrete cladding and its interior decorative tile, as well as the restoration of the original wood paneling.

"Whatever is new should be complimentary with the 1917 design," says Joseph Coppola, principle-in-charge with Dattner Architects, which worked on the project in a joint venture with Parsons Brinckerhoff. "We worked closely with the state preservation office, and even though some elements are new we tried to match the existing structure."

Attempting to find a match for the station's distinctive textured-concrete cladding was a particular challenge, and in the end the architect settled on a coating system to unify the color of the old concrete with the new work.

The design, which emphasizes concrete, is not something seen often in modern construction, Coppola says. "The way the building is done in concrete, it is almost like a viaduct," he adds.

Key Players

Owner: Metropolitan Transit Authority New York City Transit

Architecture: Dattner Architects, New York, N.Y.

Structural/Civil Engineering: Parsons Brinckerhoff, New York, N.Y.

Historic Preservation Consultant: Cowley Architects LLP, New York, N.Y.

Mechanical Engineers: Chu & Gassman, Middlesex, N.J.

Lighting Designer: Domingo Gonzalez Design, New York, N.Y.

Cost Consultant: Accu-Cost Construction Consultants, New York, N.Y.

Elevator Consultant: Jenkins & Huntington, New York, N.Y.

Specifications: Robert Schwartz & Associates, New York, N.Y.

BEST OF 2008 AWARDS

Spector Group Long Island Offices

PROJECT OF THE YEAR: New Office

The transformation of an old warehouse into high-end office space sounds unlikely, but it appears downright improbable when it's done on a tight budget.

But the success that CLK Houlihan Parnes, the developer and owner, and Spector Group, the architect and tenant, had in creating the Spector Group Long Island Offices in Woodbury, N.Y., was enough to earn it Best of 2008 honors in the office category.

"It took ingenuity and creativity to convert the existing bones of the building that wasn't [suited] for this use," says Marc Spector, principal of the architectural firm that designed its new regional headquarters.

According to the judges, it worked.

"They did a really great job with this," one said. "Very interesting."

The $2 million project merged various themes – and provides a functional example – of efficiency, adaptive reuse, economy and sustainability, starting out with breathing creativity into a droll suburban office park setting and offering an extended useful life to an old industrial building.

Since the five-month project finished late last year, the developer has asked Spector Group to assess similar conversions for other buildings in the complex.

The architectural firm set a high bar with a goal of reshaping the 9,800-sq-ft space into a fitting showcase for its work as well as a practical office space. "The biggest challenge was the adaptive reuse of this old, dilapidated warehouse that had been vacant for five to six years in order to create Class A office space without spending fortunes of money," Spector says.

The plans called for creating a "laboratory of design" featuring modern mechanical systems, lighting and materials, while also following sustainable design principles. Spector says while the building is not LEED-certified, it incorporates extensive green design and construction features and efficiencies.

Other goals called for crafting an open-plan space where the design reinforces staff interaction, maximizes natural light and exterior views, and produces an aesthetically pleasing environment.

To meet the goals, the team had to start with the building's infrastructure. While structurally sound, it was ill-suited for insulation, heating, modern electrical systems, building code compliance and access to parking. Part of the solution entailed using exposed structural elements, aluminum ductwork and factory-style lighting runs enhanced by accent lighting.

The effort also kept but polished and painted the original floors and exposed ductwork in hopes of fostering appreciation of the structure in its raw form.

Key Players

Owner/Developer/Construction Manager: CLK Houlihan Parnes, White Plains, N.Y.

Architect: Spector Group, New York, N.Y.

MEP Engineer: Lizardos Engineering, Mineola, N.Y.

Plumbing: Jeffco Plumbing, Farmingdale, N.Y.

Electric: John's Electric Services, Woodbury, N.Y.

Painting: Landmark Painting & Decorating, Farmingdale, N.Y.

Subcontractor: Rosner Construction, Plainview, N.Y.

The design called for creating a panoramic open space that from the entryway offers a view of the reception area, staff and workstations, conferencing, resource area and private offices. Glass wall partitions also provide a combination of acoustic privacy and visible transparency. The transparency, vistas and rich natural light exposure also are facilitated by floor-to-ceiling windows, which have electronic shades.

The project has some points of flair, such as a pantry for the staff, which from the outside is hidden behind a simple white wall, but on the inside is a colorful space that also opens up to the outdoors. Another unique design feature in the space is a freestanding lemon yellow glass cube – constructed with individual panels framed by vertical aluminum supports – that serves as a "brainstorming" station.

BEST OF 2008 AWARDS

Public Farm One

PROJECT OF THE YEAR: Park/Landscape

While the origins of Queens County were as an agricultural community, it has been the better part of a century since farms dotted the landscape, and quite a few decades since the last family farms disappeared.

But the urban farm made a comeback over the summer on the grounds of the P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, and the unique installation garnered kudos from the Best of 2008 jury as well as – and top honors in the park and landscape category.

The Public Farm One project is a showcase for innovation, sustainability, community engagement, and appreciation of nature. The temporary installation grew out of a winning submission in the annual Young Architects program sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center.

"This one completely caught my eye," said one judge. It's a great concept with this funky aesthetic."

It was designed to serve as a multi-purpose exhibit within P.S. 1's courtyard that served as a gathering place for up to 5,000 people attending the museum and events such as like its summer music series. The project included – with shade, seating, and a living display for growing and harvesting vegetables and fruits. And it reinforced the concepts of sustainability through its use of recyclable materials in its construction, particularly the durable cardboard tubes that formed the heart of project.

Designed and prepared earlier this year, and built between May and June, the 3,375-sq-ft exhibit puts the cardboard tubes typically used as formwork for concrete columns to an imaginative use. In the project, the tubes – in a variety of lengths and sizes – are used as planters, columns, seating, a wading pool, and artistic elements, such as a 22-ft-tall tower structure that houses a solar power inverter or branches of a "tree."

A central part of the exhibit is a V-shaped, sloping structure that is 135 ft long and 25 ft wide and , which contains dozens of tubes with planters that contain locally grown fruits and vegetables.

The design called for a complex arrangement of the tubes and planters, which form groupings of tubes in "daisy"-shaped clusters. The exhibit has 40 daisy clusters, each with seven tubes, with the 3-ft tubes used as planters and longer ones serving as the support columns. Other basic materials in the structure include lumber braces and plywood discs inside the planters.

The effort required significant testing of both the materials and the design in order to ensure that the forms and shape of the project's elements could withstand use, weather, and constant watering of the plants. Working with paper was a central challenge because its use in structural contexts is rare.

The team had to design-test it using a three-dimensional model to assess potential stresses and deflections, as well as to gauge water absorption properties. The

Key Players

Owner: MoMA/P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center

Architect: WORK Architecture Co. New York, N.Y.

Structural Engineer: Leslie E. Robertson Associates, New York, N.Y.

Fabricator: Art Domantay, New York, N.Y.

team eventually chose to apply a dual layer of recyclable plastic waterproofing, as well as layers of lacquer and polyurethane coating on the tube surfaces.

Each of the tubes was locally fabricated, hand -cut, and sanded and lacquered by volunteers, while a computerized milling machine cut the plywood discs. The process of creating, field-testing, and weather-prepping the tubes took several months.

In the end, the project met not only its functional and conceptual goals, but also its aesthetic purpose. The team even met the design intent for all of the daisy units to be discernable at grade by cutting all of the tubes at an angle.

The project team was especially focused on reinforcing the concept of sustainability. The cardboard tubes were a major feature of that effort, says Daniel Sesil, partner at Leslie E. Robertson Associates, which served as structural engineer on the project, working with WORK Architecture Co., the architect, and Art Domantay, the fabricator and contractor.

"A highlight for us was the use of recyclable materials to create a wonderful experience," Sesil says. "The tubes we used are for concrete forming, and they're readily available."

BEST OF 2008 AWARDS

Riverside South Park Phase IV

AWARD OF MERIT: Park/Landscape

Riverside South Park Phase IV is the conclusion of renovations of a 21.5-acre public waterfront park from 72nd to 59th streets on the west side of Manhattan.

The last phase of the project started in May 2006 and connects large expanses of grass, open laws, terraces, groves, overlooks, walkways and bikeway. It provides new recreational opportunities for pedestrians. Additionally, it retains the historical significance of the property while linking to the recently restored Hudson River Park to the south.

"In New York City the opportunity to simply construct a park is unique," says project manager Monica Agostini of Bovis Lend Lease, which managed the project. "Furthermore, the construction of the park marked an important achievement for the City's West Side Park Redevelopment Plan in that it was the last piece of the puzzle to connect Hudson River Park and Riverside South Park."

Before work could begin there was an extensive amount cleanup. Abandoned vehicles, neglected brick and granite, overgrown weeds and left-over railroad tracks were on the site.

The fourth phase of the park included 1,500 sq ft of shoreline improvements complete with a bulkhead retailing wall, promenade, riprap, three overlook piers, cove habitats and overlook cafes. A pedestrian bridge, boat launch and all-weather artificial turf toddler area were built, and a diesel locomotive was restored.

Both the bridge and the diesel locomotive pay homage to the land's freight rail history. Buried beneath the park is the New York Central Railroad West Side Line. The land aboveground was most recently part of the Penn Central Freight Rail Yards.

The park's long curving pedestrian bridge is sandblasted with a series of 5- by 10-ft flags and engraved with facts pertaining to locomotive routes and pickups. The bridge connects coastal grasses and an active plaza.

The diesel locomotive, displayed adjacent to Miller Highway at 62nd Street, provides a close-up view of the engine from the perspective of the cab.

Extell Development of New York was the developer for the $10 million project.

It had to deal with the tide that interfered with construction of the boat and the placement of the retaining wall. Work had to be done in low tide.

Using daily tidal charts and forecast weather reports, crews scheduled several main components of the job before sunrise. Crews also faced site constraints because of the nearby river and new condominium developments.

The phase was completed in June. Bovis Lend and Lease had to work with several organizations such as the New York City Department of Sanitation, Hudson River Waterfront Associates, Riverside South Planning Corporation and New York City of Department of Parks and Recreation.

Key Players

Developer: Extell Development Co. - New York, N.Y .

Construction Manager: Bovis Lend Lease - New York, N.Y.

Landscape Architect: Thomas Balsey Associates - New York, N.Y.

Utilities / Structural / Marine Engineering: Philip Habib Associates - New York, N.Y.

Sitework /Marine: Integrated Structures,

Electric: Welsbach Electrical - College Point, N.Y.

Utilities: Banker Construction - New York, N.Y.

Site/Landscape: Kelco Construction - Commack, N.Y.

BEST OF 2008 AWARDS

North Shore Hebrew Academy

PROJECT OF THE YEAR: Pre K-12 Education

When Spector Group, a Long Island-based architecture/engineering firm, took on a $32 million contract for the North Shore Hebrew Academy, it was faced with the problem of fitting facilities for both a secular and traditional Judaic education under one roof.

The design for the 103,000-sq-ft required two libraries for secular and religious texts, and kitchen space for kosher and nonkosher cooking. The building's centerpiece, unusual in a K-12 setting, is a round 400-seat synagogue and prayer space with stained-glass windows, a skylight and ornamental masonry, plus a balcony extending over the center of the space. Other facilities include 38 classrooms, four science labs, art studio, music conservatory, cafeteria, gymnasium, soccer fields and tennis courts.

"We had to fit it all into one space, and allow each to shine equally," says firm principal Mark Spector. "It was a unique situation."

Despite being a K-12 school, the structure features a collegiate theme. Working with two construction managers and an owner's rep, the Spector team chose details like limestone, ornamental brick, high ceilings and warm materials for the interior like stone and wood. Vaulted roof lines reduce the overall profile of the building and conceal from view any rooftop mechanical equipment.

But the building architecture was only part of the challenge on the severely sloped 11-acre site. "It was more like a ski slope," Spector says. "The earthwork was immense."

Initial sitework was a complex process, including acquiring zoning variances from the Village of Lake Success that required the building be well screened and respectful of its surroundings. The team left in place as much of the existing foliage and topography as possible.

Extensive cut and fill was required to create playing fields and space for a large gym and auditorium. The team set back the main building to the center of the site to minimize ground-level height impact. The building has two levels above grade and two below, molded into the existing slope. The site engineering uses the bottom of the slope as a runoff catch basin.

"We had to have the fire department on the site for access, egress and travel on the ski slope," Spector adds.

Key Players

Owner: Lake Success Holdings, c/o Arbor National Commercial Mortgage, Uniondale, N.Y.

Architect: Spector Group, North Hills, N.Y.

Structural Engineer: Office of James Ruderman, New York

Mechanical Engineer: Arthur Metzler & Associates, Manhasset, NY

Civil Engineer/Landscape Architect: Cameron Engineering & Associates, Syosset, N.Y.

Construction Manager: NSHA Construction, Manhasset, N.Y.

Food Service Consultant: Antico Food Service Designers, Sea Cliff, NY

Technology Consultant: A+ Technology Solutions, Massapequa, N.Y.

BEST OF 2008 AWARDS

First Avenue District School

AWARD OF MERIT: Pre K-12 Education

The goal of Paulus, Sokolowski and Sartor Architecture of Warren, N.J., was "to create maximum transparency, accessibility and learning ability" through its architectural design of First Avenue District School in Newark.

The $40 million project was completed in September 2007, nearly two years after it broke ground in October 2005.

"Nicely done," one judge said.

The design also met LEED standards, says Bob Blakeman, a Paulus, Sokolowski, and Sartor architect and LEED accredited professional who teaches "green design" across the country.

First Avenue District School achieved LEED certification by using recycled materials and optimizing energy performance through geothermal heating and cooling systems. Using geothermal, in which heat is taken from the earth, reduced the chiller plant by 260 tons.

The school also uses low-flow water fixtures in the restrooms and high-performance lighting systems.

There are motion sensors on all lights so that when light comes through the windows, the lighting fixtures go out. Low-e glass is also used.

This 152,000-sq-ft, two-story school was designed to make it fit into the surrounding residential neighborhood and be accessible by foot. There is no bus service.

"All children walk, which was a plan from the start," Blakeman says.

First Avenue District School slopes 7 ft toward the south, allowing for parking under the school rather than next to it and leaving more open space for the children.

The school is built around a courtyard that is accessible only through the surrounding classrooms.

The school's 500-seat auditorium, 250-seat cafeteria and gymnasium are open to the public for community events.

Key Players

Owner: New Jersey Schools Development Authority, Newark, N.J.

Architecture: Paulus, Sokolowski and Sartor Architecture, PC, Warren, N.J.

Project Manager: PB+3D/I, Newark, N.J.

General Contractor: Hall Construction Co. Inc., Farmingdale, N.J.

Acoustical and Audio/Video Design: Ostergard Acoustical Associates, West Orange, N.J.

Kitchen/Cafeteria Design: Roman-Gatland, Lindenhurst, NY

Telecommunications/Security Design: Intertech Associates, Freehold, N.J.

Lighting Design: Lighting Design Collaborative, Philadelphia