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AWARDS *for*
EXCELLENCE *in*
DEVELOPMENT

Abolitionist Place - Brooklyn, NY

Developers: New York City Economic Development Corporation

Architect: Hargreaves Jones

Opened in 2024, Abolitionist Place honors Brooklyn's abolitionist history and fulfills a key commitment of the 2004 Downtown Brooklyn Redevelopment Plan by adding more than 1 acre of much-needed green space and recreational amenities to the rapidly growing Downtown neighborhood, further enhancing its status as a commercial, residential, and cultural hub. The open space is flowing and organic, welcoming, and inclusive – creating a space that is open at the edges – atypical for New York City open space. Gently mounded gardens create places of respite and horticultural interest, while an open lawn, play area, and interactive water feature provide entertainment for children of all ages. A crushed stone plaza has movable tables and chairs for lunchtime users, and the dog play area provides much needed space for dogs to run and interact. Within the space a central sculpture will be installed: "True North - Every Negro is a Star" and "Conductors" by Kenseth Armstead - commemorating the Abolitionist Movement with a focus on the Underground Railroad. Built on a former brownfield site, the project required excavation and capping of contaminated soil with clean soil or paving. Permeable paver paths, the crushed granite seating area, lawns, and large planting beds allow rainwater to filter naturally into the ground, helping to manage stormwater runoff and recharge the water table. Abolitionist Place is a welcoming oasis amongst the bustling neighborhood surrounding it and a case study for how design can foster diversity and inclusion by creating a sense of belonging for all.