

Renovations to the Grace Building flatter its distinctive form

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Late last year, Rosen Johnson Architects began a comprehensive renovation and re-design program for New York City's Grace Building. The distinctive property boasts many strong architectural elements, and its owners chose to renovate the plaza, the lobby and the elevators to add value to the building.

Located at 1114 Avenue of the America, the 1.4 million SF Grace Building was designed by Gordon Bunshaft, and early leader of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP, and was completed in 1972.

Throughout the seventies and eighties, the building was a diamond in the rough considering its proximity to a downtrodden Bryant Park and a forgotten Times Square.

TrizecHahn, a company known for its portfolio of trophy-quality office buildings across the country, purchased a majority stake in the Grace Building in the late nineties - at the very same time period that Bryant Park and Time Square were beginning to enjoy a resurgence.

Soon after its acquisition, and as the managing partner, TrizecHahn selected Rosen Johnson to identify areas of improvement for the 1.4 million

SF building. A first phase of upgrades such as re-lamping the lobby and polishing Travertine floors immediately restored a degree of sparkle to the building. The renovations currently being made grew out of this analysis, each element of which has been carefully mapped out to satisfy the Grace Building's owners and tenants, while also leveraging the building's unique tapered exterior.



Renovations to the building's plaza are nearly complete and include new planters, furniture and trash receptacles.

Worn travertine portions of the plaza floor have been repaired,

and sections once covered with a black concrete aggregate have been replaced with contemporary asphalt pavers.

The focus has now turned to the larger job of renovating the lobby and elevators. The Grace Building's lobby, which looks south to Bryant Park, will soon feature African mahogany wood panels and a new concierge/reception desk. Serving as the lobby's centerpiece, the concierge desk will be fashioned with satin bronze panels curved in the shape of two offset circles, which are intended to reflect the exterior form of the Grace Building itself.

A halo light fixture has been custom designed and will soon hang above the concierge desk. New electronic directories, which also mirror the appearance of the building, will be installed at either side of the spacious lobby. The building's 30 passenger elevators will also receive a makeover. While it will take several months for all of these cars to be reworked, they will feature the satin bronze and African mahogany used in the lobby. The elevator's bronze accent pieces and circular soffit recall the Halo fixture and will also relate to the distinctive style of the Grace Building.