

# COLUMBIA | Manhattanville

## ARCHITECTURAL FACT SHEET

### The Square Columbia University Manhattanville Campus



#### Project Description

Approximately one acre in size, **The Square** is a publicly accessible green space in the heart of Columbia University's new Manhattanville Campus. Situated between the Columbia Business School's two new buildings, David Geffen Hall and Henry R. Kravis Hall, The Square emphasizes accessibility and openness, creating a new kind of urban academic campus that fosters social interaction and collaboration among students, faculty members, alumni, and the neighboring community. It is the largest public green space on any of Columbia's campuses.

The design is a geometrically simple yet bold circle within a square, 40,000 square feet in area overall. The 23,000-square-foot circular lawn in the middle is ringed with a paved path. The lawn is modulated with two distinctive native tree groves: a towering pine and oak grove on the north and an intimate flowering grove on the south. Custom furnishings within and surrounding the lawn accommodate a range of interactions, from quiet relaxation to larger gatherings, events, and performances. The Woodland Walk, a mid-block pedestrian passage, links The Square to all the new buildings and open spaces on the campus.

To the west of The Square and Kravis Hall, facing 12th Avenue, The Plaza is designed for maximum flexibility, allowing it to accommodate a wide variety of community and campus programming.

#### Opening

January 2022

## Design Architect

James Corner Field Operations

### Principal Design Features

As one of the major open space elements of the Manhattanville Campus Master Plan, The Square is a hallmark green space, creating a heart for the campus and a significant new community space open seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. from April to October 31 and from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. from November through March. To this end, the circle, a democratic shape detached from the adjacent buildings, is the primary organizing element of the design: a center that is all its own, with surrounding spaces around it. This “circle in the square” principle also delineates a threshold between the soft green spaces inside the circle and the active, hard spaces or “corners” of the encompassing square. As a result, three primary open spaces are realized within The Square:

- The **Central Green**: the inside lawn with both open and tree-covered areas
- The **Social Ring**: a delineating and dynamic frame and social connector serving the dual functions of the walkway and social space, with radial benches, viewing platforms, and study lounges
- The **Active Corners**: the vibrant, inviting entry points created around the central lawn. These corners accommodate additional programming and give The Square recognizable landmarks at each key entry point:
  - The **Stage Corner** – a terraced platform usable for everyday gatherings as well as special performances, classes, or meetings
  - The **Meet Corner** – with a bench encircling a specimen magnolia tree, a seasonally distinctive beacon for assembly and meet-ups
  - The **Art Corner** – a place for a signature artwork or rotating art installations celebrating culture, creativity, innovation, and imagination
  - The **Water Corner** – an interactive feature with water jets and dynamic lighting providing a cooling and playful element within The Square while offering visual interest and a soothing sound to buffer noise from the surrounding streets

**The Woodland Walk**, the mid-block pedestrian corridor through the middle of the campus, creates a direct connection from 125th Street to 133rd Street. It provides an internal spine that links the major campus open spaces and buildings. Paralleling the main circulation passage, a linear grove of native trees reinforces the importance of this north-south axis. It features flexible seating along with natural stone slab benches, creating a beautifully textured and sheltered experience beneath and among the trees.

### Dimensions

**Overall project:** 40,000 square feet

**Lawn:** 23,000 square feet

### Trees and Plantings

In contrast to traditional high-maintenance and high-water-use lawns, the central green features LEED-certified and sustainable low-maintenance and drought-tolerant sod featuring a mix of native grass species. In addition to the large open lawn, 86 trees will be planted in and around the square. Informal groves of pine and oak trees and multi-stem flowering trees edge the Social Ring and extend into the lawn on its northern and southern edges. This mix of native trees in the lawn and the Woodland Walk yields a rich and diverse palette that will provide seasonal interest throughout the year. The street tree plantings follow the strategy laid out in the master plan, with each east-west street lined with a different species. All street tree species were selected for suitability within an urban context and fall color.

## Sustainability

The Square supports the new Columbia Business School buildings' efforts to achieve LEED Gold Certification. Highlights include selecting native species for the tree and grass plantings and utilizing Kebony, a highly sustainable and durable wood product, for the furnishings. Additionally, The Square satisfies the requirements of the LEED-ND certification for the overall campus. As a result, the Manhattanville campus is the first neighborhood development in New York City to earn the prestigious LEED-ND Platinum designation from the US Green Building Council.

## Relationship to the Campus

The Square is one of the three key open spaces around which the Manhattanville Campus Open Space Plan is organized as described in the 2007 Master Plan document and updated in the 2012 Master Plan document. The other two open spaces are The Plaza, completed in 2017, which serves as a welcoming gateway to the campus on 125th Street and provides a space for gathering and meeting; and the Woodland Walk, which ties the campus together along a central north-south green pedestrian corridor parallel to Broadway.

## The Square Project Team

**Project Lead, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design:** James Corner Field Operations

James Corner, RLA, Design Director

Tatiana Choulaka, RLA, Principal-in-Charge

Kimberly Cooper, RLA

**Project Manager, Design/Construction:** Youngsoo Kim

**Project Designer, Design:** Mike Abate, Construction Administration Lead

**Structural Engineering:** WSP

**MEP and IT Engineering:** Jaros, Baum & Bolles, Inc. (JB&B) Civil Engineering: Stantec

**Waterproofing Consulting:** WJE Engineers and Architects, P.C.

**Lighting Design:** Tillotson Design Associates

**Soil Science:** Urban Trees + Soils (James Urban) / Wolf Josey Associates

**Irrigation:** Northern Designs LLC

**Cost Estimating:** Gardiner & Theobald Security: Security: DVS

**Water Feature Design:** Crystal Fountains, Inc.

**Expeditor:** Milrose Consulting, Inc.

**ADA/Code Consulting:** Holmes Keogh Associates