

Adaptive Reuse Case Study: The High Line in New York City

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1. Introduction

- **The High Line:** a public park built on a disused elevated freight railway on Manhattan's West Side.
- Opened in phases from 2009, it is a celebrated example of adaptive reuse of infrastructure.

2. Background

- The rail line, built in the 1930s, fell out of use by 1980 and faced demolition.
- Community group Friends of the High Line campaigned to preserve and repurpose it.
- Designers James Corner Field Operations, Diller Scofidio + Renfro and Piet Oudolf led the transformation.

3. Design Features

- The linear park retains rail tracks integrated into planting and paving.
- Naturalistic, drought-tolerant planting recalls the self-seeded vegetation that grew on the tracks.
- Elevated walkways offer unique views of the city and the Hudson River.

4. Impacts

- Revitalised surrounding neighbourhoods and spurred major investment.
- Became a globally influential model for reusing redundant infrastructure.
- Raised concerns about gentrification and rising property values.

5. Lessons

- Demonstrates the value of preserving and reinventing existing structures.
- Shows the power of community advocacy in urban regeneration.
- Highlights the social equity challenges that accompany successful redevelopment.