INTRODUCTION

From Elevated Railway to Urban Park

BRIAN ROSA AND CHRISTOPH LINDNER

An innovative public promenade created atop a disused elevated railway in Manhattan, the High Line is recognized worldwide as being among the most iconic urban landmarks and public spaces of the early twenty-first century. It has stimulated public interest in landscape design while simultaneously reintegrating an industrial relic into the everyday life of New York City. As many critics and journalists have noted, through its elevation from the street below, the High Line provides a unique experience of being at once in, and separate from, the city (see chapter 6, by Christoph Lindner). Its architectural and horticultural design, arts commissions, and cultural programming further offer unique, immersive experiences while encouraging an appreciation of the historic urban landscape in a zone restricted exclusively to pedestrians. The park offers views onto former industrial districts and the waterfront, dramatizes the creative reappropriation of disused infrastructure, and revives the nostalgic, faded pastime of the urban promenade.

Since opening in 2009, with second and third branches completed in 2012 and 2014, this unique greenway has attracted unprecedented numbers of visitors and has stimulated investment and property development in

Manhattan's West Side. The High Line is widely celebrated as a monument to neighborhood activism, an innovative example of the adaptive reuse of urban infrastructure, and cutting-edge ecological design. Accordingly, the park has inspired a proliferation of similar initiatives to redesign infrastructural and postindustrial landscapes in cities throughout the world.

Apart from a handful of newspaper and magazine articles and some recent scholarly publications, a select few of which are republished in this volume, the vast majority of initial commentary on the High Line has been celebratory in tone, treating the park as an unmitigated success in terms of producing new public space, raising surrounding property values, and increasing property tax revenue for the city (Levere 2014). Indeed, the High Line has stimulated public interest in urban design and landscape architecture in a remarkable way, leading to claims that it is "America's most original urban park" owing to its "revolutionary landscape, romantically post-industrial and progressive in its embrace of emerging ecologies" (LaFarge 2014: 21). For the most part, the High Line has been treated as a quintessential "win-win" scenario: a new public open space was—through the perseverance of neighborhood activists, philanthropists, and the Bloomberg administration—creating a new way of experiencing the city and providing newly accessible green space, as well as stimulating revitalization in a district that was seen by some as run-down or left behind, reincorporating a disused structure into the urban fabric in the process. The transformative effects of the High Line are undeniable.

However, as the impact of the High Line has become clearer in recent years, including a proliferation of high-end signature architecture projects lining its corridors, some journalists, bloggers, and scholars have become increasingly critical of the ways that the elevated park has impacted its surroundings (Cataldi et al. 2011; Duany and Talen 2013; Littke et al. 2015; Millington 2015; Rothenberg and Lang 2015). The blogger writing under the pseudonym Jeremiah Moss, for example, published a high-profile rebuke of the High Line in a 2012 opinion editorial in the *New York Times.* Calling the High Line "Disney World on the Hudson," Moss lamented that it had become "a tourist-clogged catwalk and a catalyst for some of the most rapid gentrification in the city's history," and that it was part of "the [Mayor Michael] Bloomberg administration's creation of a new, upscale, corporatized stretch along the West Side. . . . Gone entirely will be regular New Yorkers, the people who used to call the neighborhood home. But then the High Line was never really about them" (Moss 2012). Beyond being elevated

FIGURE 1.1. Tourists, cranes, and high-rises under construction, 2015. Photograph by Brian Rosa.

above and separate from the everyday life of the city, the High Line is increasingly imagined by "regular New Yorkers" as being aloof. When Mayor Bill de Blasio, Bloomberg's successor, declined to attend the inauguration of the third section of the High Line in 2014 and acknowledged that he had never visited the park, he reinforced speculations that he was positioning himself as a champion of struggling parks in the outer boroughs, rather than the highly funded, showcase park that had come to symbolize the mayoralty of his predecessor (Grynbaum 2014). Questions of uneven funding for parks and emerging issues of equity are addressed in chapter 5, by Julian Brash.

To date, these critiques have largely existed in isolation, and at a distance, from larger conversations about broader trends in contemporary urbanism. It is time that the High Line and its implications within larger processes of urban transformation—whether social, ecological, economic, or cultural—be explored critically by scholars and urban practitioners. It makes little sense to consider the successes and failures of the High Line as a new type of urban public space without acknowledging its relationship to larger processes of entrepreneurial, neoliberal, and culture-led urban restructuring, trends that are often associated with making urban spaces increasingly unequal and exclusionary (Brash 2011; Brenner and Theodore 2002; Hackworth 2007; Kaminer et al. 2011; Peck and Tickell 2002).

In this regard, the High Line needs to be understood as being deeply site-specific, while at the same time indicative of larger processes of urban change and new trends in the revalorization of urban infrastructure through landscape architecture. With one of the main theoretical trends in contemporary landscape design being "landscape urbanism" (Waldheim 2006), an attempt to scale up landscape design and to engage with postindustrial and infrastructural spaces, the High Line serves as the most high-profile exemplar of broader contemporary trends in design approaches to rationalizing and programming the residual spaces of infrastructure in cities worldwide (Allen 1999; Hauck et al. 2011; Rosa 2014, 2016).

Further, it is our view, as well as the overall position of this book, that the celebratory responses that the High Line so often attracts benefit from being counterbalanced with a more critical perspective—one that gives greater attention to the more troubling, and sometimes unanticipated, processes that the park aids and instigates. The theoretical approach of critical urban theory informs this endeavor. Rather than focusing on normative questions of best practice, technocratic concerns of economic efficiency or rationality, or the inevitability of growth-oriented urban entrepreneurialism, "critical urban theory emphasizes the politically and ideologically mediated, socially contested and therefore malleable character of urban space—that is, its continuous (re)construction as a site, medium, and outcome of historically specific relations of social power" (Brenner 2009: 198). From this perspective, any understanding of the value and significance of the High Line would therefore be incomplete without a careful examination of its impact on its immediate surroundings and New York City as a whole, the ways in which it has influenced other urban design initiatives throughout the world, and what it reveals about contemporary processes of urban redevelopment. Seeking to address precisely these issues, this interdisciplinary volume brings together scholars from across the fields of architecture, urban planning and design, geography, sociology, and cultural studies to critically interrogate the aesthetic, ecological, symbolic, and social impact of the High Line. In so doing, the book also considers the High Line's relation to public space, creative practice, neoliberal modes of urban renewal, and policy-led gentrification.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE HIGH LINE

To help provide more context for the discussions that follow, we wish to offer here a brief history of the creation of the High Line. Many details and key points are, of course, further developed, analyzed, and supplemented by the individual chapters within this volume. It is also important to mention that there are various sources available that delineate the major events of the site's transformation (David and Hammond 2011; Design Trust for Public Space and Friends of the High Line 2002; LaFarge 2014; Washburn 2013), and a selective timeline relevant to this volume's main concerns can be found in the front matter. For the sake of brevity, and to avoid repeating what is readily available elsewhere, we focus here on essential background for understanding not only the transformation of this former elevated railway but also this volume's various critiques of that transformation.

The physical structure that would later become known as the High Line is a steel railway viaduct that snakes through the West Side of Manhattan. Built on top of landfill, the landscape and industry west of Tenth Avenue in Manhattan has long been dominated by the railway, which was built at-grade along Tenth Avenue in 1847. The viaduct was constructed between 1929 and 1934 as part of Robert Moses's West Side Improvement project,

FIGURE 1.2. Section 3 in 2011, before construction began. Photograph by Brian Rosa.

which intended to relieve street-level congestion and safety hazards by lifting the railway twenty feet overhead, carrying primarily food products from the waterfront to warehouses, factories, and slaughterhouses. In its original form the railway ran from St. John's Park Terminal to 34th Street. As one of the latest elevated railways (or "els") constructed in New York City, and responding to a general public distaste for the appearance, noise, and dereliction associated with els and their corridors (Brooks 1997; Cheape 1980; Dennis 2008), the High Line was constructed in the middle of the block, in order to minimize its visual presence in the city. In this sense, it was unique compared with the majority of other earlier els within Manhattan, which were constructed primarily above the north–south avenues. At the points where the High Line viaduct was visible at street crossings, it was adorned with art deco detailing, while elsewhere its aesthetics were more purely utilitarian. It was also integrated into many of the refrigerated warehouses and food processing centers of the Meatpacking District, reflecting the functionalism and aesthetics of architectural modernism.

Despite the massive public outlay of funds and spatial intervention in the city, within only two decades this massive infrastructural modernization project was already starting to become obsolete for the needs of the food processing industry. With the development of the interstate highway system in the 1950s and 1960s, industry was encouraged and able to decentralize from congested urban districts. By 1960, rail traffic to St. John's Park Terminal was shut down, resulting in the southernmost end of the railway between Bank Street and the terminal being closed and quickly dismantled. Twenty years later, the railway was closed entirely and left in a state of disuse, and the structure was again truncated in 1991, when the five-block section between Bank Street and Gansevoort Street was dismantled by the Rockrose Development Corporation as part of the conversion of a warehouse into loft apartments. According to the president of Rockrose, "The day [the viaduct] was removed, it was like lifting a weight off the West Village" (Dunlap 1999). The High Line now terminated abruptly in the meatpacking district at Gansevoort Market, while still extending northward to 34th Street near the Javits Convention Center.

Although disused and apparently abandoned in the 1980s, in legal terms the High Line nonetheless continued to constitute a railway easement and could therefore have been restored for use as a railway at some point. The viaduct was sold by New York Central Railroad to Penn Central Railroad

in 1968 and was then acquired in 1976 by the federal government's Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail), which had assumed control of a number of failing railways in the Midwest and Northeast. By the 1980s, Conrail was seeking to divest from the structure completely. The first proposed reuse of the structure was not for a linear park but for its restoration as a rail line. Spearheaded by the West Side Rail Line Development Foundation's (WSRLDF) founder, Chelsea resident Peter Obletz, this initiative would continue through the mid-1980s. Obletz's group came close to being able to purchase the structure, which might have been used to expand Amtrak's service, but in 1986 the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) ruled that the WSRLDF did not have the appropriate resources to run and maintain railway infrastructure (David and Hammond 2011: x).

While various groups sought alternative uses for the High Line structure, including forms of mass transit as well as more far-fetched proposals such as housing, a powerful coalition was emerging who actively sought the demolition of the viaduct. The Chelsea Property Owners (CPO), a cadre of property investors and developers who owned land beneath and along the viaduct, were pushing the ICC as early as 1989 to issue an order requiring Conrail to abandon and demolish the structure. For more than a decade, the CPO continued to pursue the demolition of the el through various legal channels and public campaigns. CPO represented landowners whose properties would be prime for development if the High Line were demolished—a process many of them anticipated in purchasing cheap land for temporary use as parking and storage, waiting to realize its value when the structure was removed. Though the group won a 1992 court order to demolish the structure, the members could not arrive at an arrangement about how the costs of the demolition would be distributed, leading to a standstill.

The CSX Corporation, which had assumed control under the privatization of Conrail, inherited the viaduct in 1999. Considering the options of restoring the structure to active use or releasing its hold on the site, CSX commissioned the Regional Planning Association (RPA) to conduct a feasibility study for the reuse of the viaduct, with the RPA suggesting restoration of the structure for light rail usage or converting it into an elevated greenway. At this point there was a great deal of interest in housing development on the West Side, and the planning establishment and the Giuliani administration were firmly behind the push to have the viaduct dismantled. Joseph Rose, commissioner of the New York City Department of City Planning,

was quoted in 1999 as saying, "that platform has no right to be there except for transportation, and that use is long gone. . . . This has become the Vietnam of old railway trestles" (cited in Design Trust for Public Space n.d.).

It was in 1999 when two Manhattan residents, Joshua David of Chelsea and Robert Hammond of the West Village, met at a community board hearing addressing the High Line viaduct. This is often considered to be the genesis of the High Line's transformation. Both men were interested in saving the structure from demolition, although they were initially unsure of what it should or could become. Together they cofounded Friends of the High Line (FHL), a nonprofit organization that became the driving force behind preserving the railway and, later, behind creating the High Line park. David and Hammond embarked on a savvy campaign to raise awareness of the structure and solicit ideas for its reuse. Though this was not the first proposal for the repurposing of the High Line, they were able to catalyze interest among the economic and cultural elite of the city and influence the mayoral debate, eliciting the support of all six mayoral candidates for the viaduct's reuse.

Backed by wealthy patrons and leaders of the fashion and art world in the vicinity of the High Line, FHL was quick to organize a team to produce a variety of studies, panel discussions, and campaigns promoting the reuse of the site. Among the most influential documents for realizing the park as it currently exists was *Reclaiming the High Line*, a comprehensive feasibility study produced by the Design Trust for Public Space and FHL in 2002. The main results of the study, which attracted support from incoming Mayor Bloomberg, were that reuse outweighed demolition and that any reuse should be focused on pedestrian rather than railway usage. The justification for this strategy is telling. It emphasized the commercial activity that could be stimulated by the new park and that property values adjacent to the High Line would greatly increase because of their proximity to the new open space.

These claims were further articulated by Bloomberg in his foreword to the design study, where, echoing the rhetoric of green renewal surrounding Paris's Promenade Plantée and its redevelopment of the Vincennes railway in the early 1990s (Heathcott 2013), he argues for a direct link between parks and the revitalization of neighborhoods: "New York City would be unlivable without its parks, trees, and open spaces. They provide aesthetic relief, enhance our health, add to our enjoyment, and increase our property values. Where parks have been revitalized, the neighborhoods have

blossomed with new life. Where public open spaces have been renovated, the surrounding areas have become cleaner and more secure" (Bloomberg 2002: 4). Bloomberg's quotation reveals much about the approach to public space provision and planning that would guide his time in office. As Julian Brash reveals in *Bloomberg's New York* (2011), it was an approach that promoted environmental sustainability within a market logic, emphasized urban entrepreneurialism, aligned with the property and banking sectors, and branded New York as a world-leading city of luxury.

The 2002 design study reveals with great clarity the motivation and justifications behind the creation of the park. Arguments focused on economic development were central in the early phases of the process, framed as offering a symbolic boost to the recovery of New York City in the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center the previous year: "It is clear that all new construction in Manhattan, of private buildings and public spaces alike, has a vital role to play in our city's recovery. Any brick put down or any tree planted must recharge the urban economy; it must attract *new* businesses, residents, and visitors by creating appealing, healthful, safe work and home environments; it must spark financial activity, raise property values, and generate tax revenues. . . . Preserving open land and creating new public spaces boosts property values and generates higher property tax revenues" (Design Trust for Public Space and Friends of the High Line 2002: 15, emphasis in original). This guiding document offers insight into the strategic alliance building between FHL, resistant property owners, and the city government. To coax owners into believing that their properties could be worth more if the viaduct remained, FHL worked with city planners to rezone the area for new residential and commercial development so that oppositional property owners would be able to monetize their unused property rights, resulting in what came to be known at the "West Chelsea rezoning."

In the planning process that led to the creation of the Special West Chelsea District, concerns over the potential impacts of the High Line were apparent, and a number of players found themselves in conflict. According to David, "You had a group fighting to keep buildings as low as possible, and a group pushing for more affordable housing. There was a smaller group pushing for retention of manufacturing space, not just for the galleries, but also to support a continued manufacturing sector. . . . The reality was [that] moving the development rights away from the High Line sites was going to mean that some buildings were going to be taller. And in order for the

economics of the development right transfers to work, there had to be a major chunk of market-rate housing in the formula, which was not what the affordable housing group wanted to hear" (David and Hammond 2011: 65). Hammond and David went along with the rezoning, while David expressed some misgivings on what effect the High Line would have. Aside from being concerned that too much residential development would displace the art galleries from West Chelsea, David explained that "we didn't want to set up a dynamic in which the High Line was perceived as being in competition with these other good interests" (David and Hammond 2011: 65). It is not entirely clear, however, that the concessions associated with rezoning were purely about economic and legal feasibility.

In an interview in *The Edge Becomes the Center*, a city official who had served on the community board in Chelsea from 1996 to 2003 argues that a deliberate process of industrial and commercial displacement was under way: "There was an economic development analysis that determined you could invest in the High Line and make it a park without changing any land use along the corridor. The naturally occurring rate of return would be enough to justify the investment. But City Planning wanted to put that area on steroids and really capitalize on rapid large-scale development and that's what they've done. . . . When you go over there you see tourists from all over the world but you don't see local residents because it's not really a place for us" (Gibson 2015: loc 2197). As Darren Patrick points out in chapter 9, the High Line is estimated to have stimulated more than $2 billion in real estate development and to have increased property values within a five-minute walking radius by 103 percent. Michael Levere (2014) estimates that the opening of the High Line led directly to a 10 percent increase in home value within one-third of a mile of the park. At the same time, the green corridor takes up a disproportionate amount of the city's parks budget. It is, by far, the most expensive park per acre in the entirety of New York. Therefore, despite the fact that much of the High Line has been funded by philanthropic capital, the rezoning of West Chelsea and the significant public expenditure illustrate the ways in which the city has used the provision of urban green space to stimulate gentrification. Furthermore, the proportion of the High Line that was funded by multimillion-dollar donations and the disproportionate amount of public resources being poured into it raise some troubling questions about public space provision and its relation to real estate speculation (Millington 2015).

The real estate boom instigated by the High Line has raised concerns not only about the social and economic impacts of the new linear park, but also about the transformation of its surroundings. A widespread concern is that, aside from issues of crowding and domination by tourists, the experience of walking the High Line has been diminished by the proliferation of high-rise, luxury housing. David Halle and Elisabeth Tiso write this argument off, noting that, despite the fact that the 2005 West Chelsea rezoning allowed "developers to initiate a frenzy of high-priced new condominiums . . . giving [the area] a monied aura," ultimately it was worthwhile because the new, bold architecture "somewhat offset New York's reputation, earned over the previous three decades, for mediocre new architecture" (Halle and Tiso 2014: 154). Downplaying any displacement that may have occurred as outside the definitions of "traditional" gentrification, Halle and Tiso see the transformation as worthwhile in its monumentality and boldness of design. Still, with an aesthetic playing on the marginality, wildness, and industrial nature of its surroundings, the industrial landscape emphasized in the High Line's design is increasingly incongruous with its opulent surroundings. Though locations such as the Gansevoort Market Historic District retain much of their superficially industrial character, preexisting land uses are consistently displaced for high-end retail, dining, and other services targeting well-off residents and tourists. Furthermore, considering the number of luxury high-rises already built and reviewing visualizations of future development, the High Line's elevated status is becoming reversed: it increasingly becomes a canyon with a river of pedestrians flowing between towering edifices.

Herein lies an important consideration: whether or not the transformation and upscaling of an urban landscape was the intention of FHL, the park's creation cannot be understood without the rezoning that has ushered in these changes. As Alexandros Washburn, former chief urban designer for the New York City Department of City Planning, notes, "the High Line and its rezoning are one" (2014): the city had thought of the park and rezoning as a package deal to achieve its goal of boosting redevelopment on the West Side of Manhattan. Washburn celebrates the High Line as a "nested, iterative process of urban design where politics, finance, and design intersect," and where, "whether it is a rule . . . a plan . . . or a product . . . the process of urban design was used to make the transformation happen" (Washburn 2013: 137–138). In this conceptualization, the process of urban design is

understood, almost primarily, as an adjunct to policy-led gentrification, all with an air of postpolitical consensus.

Regardless of the intentions of FHL, from the perspective of the city government and property interests along the corridor of the High Line, the rezoning and upscaling of the Meatpacking District and Chelsea was precisely the point. And, indeed, the increasing property values stimulated by the High Line have led not only to the displacement of residents and longstanding small industrial businesses and restaurants, but also to many of the art galleries that originally put Chelsea on the map (Bloomberg News 2015). It is against this backdrop of rapid urban change that the essays in this volume set out to critically analyze the High Line, paying close attention to the tensions, controversies, and contradictions involved not only in the park itself, but also in broader urban trends of postindustrial renewal within—and beyond—New York City.

FROM DESIGN TO EFFECT

This book is arranged in four closely related and interlocking thematic parts. Part 1, "Envisioning the High Line," focuses on the design of the park, including the vision and values informing its realization and operation. Emphasis is given to the High Line's significance to landscape architecture theory, the park's public programs, and the role of art and creative practice in popularizing the space. Part 2, "Gentrification and the Neoliberal City," examines the connections between the High Line, gentrification, and neoliberal urban redevelopment. In particular, the essays grouped here analyze the High Line's impact on the surrounding neighborhoods (real estate, business development, cultural life) and the ways in which the park has become enmeshed in broader processes and conditions of globalization. Part 3, "Urban Political Ecologies," explores the political-environmental aspects of the High Line's experiment in constructed urban nature. Essays in this section address issues such as private park conservancies, the incorporation of abandonment and ruin in the design and experience of the space, the use of nature as a tool for property revalorization, and the possibilities for alternative ecological politics. Part 4, "The High Line Effect," examines the influence of the High Line on other, similar elevated park projects in New York City (the QueensWay) and elsewhere (Rotterdam's Hofbogen and São Paolo's Minhocão). The emphasis in this section is on the circulation and

FIGURE 1.3. Keep off the grass: "Lawn closed for restoration," 2015. Photograph by Brian Rosa.

exchange of landscape design and planning practice in the wake of the High Line. This section also questions the extent to which the High Line model of urban development is transportable to other locations in an era of global policy mobilities (Ward 2011).

Part 1 opens with a self-reflective essay on the vision and thinking behind the design of the park by James Corner, principal of Field Operations and lead designer of the High Line. In "Hunt's Haunts," Corner places his vision for the park in the broader context of the history and theory of landscape architecture—particularly the work of John Dixon Hunt—and reflects on how the High Line contributes to an extended genealogy of experimentation with constructed landscape. Corner's overall argument is that Hunt's notion of the "haunting excess" of good gardens—as both place and idea—is applicable to the High Line, but also complicated by the ways in which the park's design deliberately plays with memory, history, and imagination.

In "Community Engagement, Equity, and the High Line," Danya Sherman, urban planner and former director of Public Programs, Education and Community Engagement at Friends of the High Line, examines the High Line's changing visions of social inclusion, equity, and public participation in the creation and growth of a new public space. After outlining the various

and evolving programs that FHL has created to encourage the participation of local residents, Sherman analyzes the uneven ways in which social equity has been addressed in the form and function of the High Line. Emphasizing the experimental and largely unprecedented nature of the project, Sherman considers how such projects can minimize the negative impacts on groups that have traditionally been marginalized in urban redevelopment, and how the political, aesthetic, and economic programs of such flagship projects may sometimes hinder democratic inclusion.

In "Loving the High Line: Infrastructure, Architecture, and the Politics of Space in the Mediated City," architect and designer Alan Smart reflects on the design sensibilities of Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, seeking to contextualize their work in the political and aesthetic regimes that contemporary designers occupy, and to understand how designers situate themselves within ecological, symbolic, political, and economic processes. In exploring the symbolic monumentality of the High Line in relation to other signature cultural spaces in cities, such as Frank Gehry's Guggenheim building in Bilbao, Smart emphasizes the limits of the social agency of architects within contemporary processes of urban transformation and questions how design may articulate a more collective politics.

In Part 2, sociologist Kevin Loughran shifts the focus from questions of vision and design to issues of privilege and power. In particular, his chapter "Parks for Profit: Public Space and Inequality in New York City" explores the ways in which economic, political, and cultural elites use the creation of new urban parks like the High Line as tools to leverage profit and boost public revenue. Through an ethnographic sketch of the High Line, Loughran identifies how privilege becomes spatialized and how cultural capital allows for elite forms of consumption that are, by their very nature, exclusionary. He notes the overt and subtle ways that the High Line employs surveillance and design to regulate behavior and exclude members of the public deemed undesirable. He also demonstrates how contemporary growth coalitions support neoliberal redevelopment strategies by tapping into elite cultural networks, solidifying difference and distinction, and steering away from the pluralism that has often guided the ideals behind the development and maintenance of public space.

Anthropologist Julian Brash extends the critique of contemporary urban parks as spaces to observe and analyze social inequities in his chapter "Park (In)Equity." Responding to Loughran's work, but attempting to escape the binary between celebrating the High Line as a cherished new public space

or castigating it as a symbol of socio-spatial inequity, Brash suggests that the High Line may have inadvertently supported the demand for parks equity in New York City. Focusing on emerging demands of community activists in underinvested districts of the city, Brash uses the High Line as a case study to explore the equitable distribution and quality of public park spaces, raising larger questions about the distribution of resources and services within the city as a whole.

Approaching the High Line from a more theoretical perspective, the final chapter in part 2 considers how the park's "slow landscape" simultaneously interrupts and accelerates urban flows and mobilities associated with neoliberal globalization. In "Retro-Walking New York," cultural theorist Christoph Lindner critically examines the history and design of the park, paying particular attention to the ways in which aesthetics and memory, as well as industrial heritage and transport infrastructure, are used in the High Line design and its various spin-off projects, such as the QueensWay and the Lowline, to refigure the decelerated, pedestrian conditions of the street. It is this refiguring of the street, he argues, that stimulates surrounding conditions of urban speed, supergentrification, and neoliberal renewal—conditions that the palliative urbanism of the High Line is paradoxically designed to alleviate.

In the first chapter of part 3, journalist Tom Baker focuses on how the High Line emblematizes contemporary aesthetics of the "neo-pastoral." Drawing on the work of art critic Julian Stallabrass, Baker argues in "The Garden on the Machine" that the High Line serves as a particular form of romanticized, ornamental "urban wilderness," an update on the traditional pastoral ideal of designed urban landscapes such as Central Park. Unpacking the ideology behind pastoralism, he reflects on the contrived nature of the park's design while emphasizing that the aestheticization of "wild" nature is a testament to how much the supposed newness of the High Line falls within the legacy of highly domesticated pleasure gardens of the leisure classes.

In "The Urban Sustainability Fix and the Rise of the Conservancy Park," urban-historical geographer Phil Birge-Liberman connects the political economy of park provision to contemporary discourses of sustainability, and contextualizes the High Line by placing it in the historical geography of urban parks in the United States. His discussion analyzes the ways in which urban power regimes deploy nature and exert social and economic influence to produce a new kind of park typology—the conservancy

park—which reflects the entrepreneurial values of neoliberal urbanism. In the process, he argues that, from a political ecological perspective, the High Line can be understood as an urban sustainability "quick fix"—one that helps to improve the urban environment but that also creates the conditions under which an improved urban quality of life can be used to promote ecological gentrification and neoliberal renewal.

In "Of Success and Succession: A Queer Urban Ecology of the High Line," urban scholar and activist Darren Patrick views the park as a novel form of both gay and green gentrification, while arguing that the "success" of the project needs to be critiqued in light of both its queer and ecological history. Drawing on substantial primary fieldwork, Patrick provides an original account of the High Line's redevelopment in terms that trace the complex relations between queers and the urban political ecologies in which they are constitutively immersed. Patrick calls for an ethics and politics of responsibility *to* and *for* abandoned spaces, which pay consequential attention to the queer, the ecological, and to their ongoing entanglements.

Part 4 opens with a chapter analyzing a High Line spin-off project also located in New York City. In "A High Line for Queens: Celebrating Diversity or Displacing It?," urban geographer Scott Larson examines plans to transform a 3.5-mile section of the former Rockaway Beach Branch of the Long Island Railroad into an elevated, linear park. As Larson discusses, the QueensWay project seeks to replicate many aspects of the High Line, including its grassroots community organization and key elements of its design vision. Led by the Trust for Public Land in collaboration with a private group calling itself Friends of the QueensWay, the proposal envisions the new park attracting tourists, catalyzing redevelopment investment, and enhancing area property values, while also preserving existing local businesses and celebrating the ethnic diversity of Queens. Questioning the project's claims while tracing the influence of the High Line, Larson considers whether neighborhood revitalization and community preservation are compatible goals.

Shifting attention from New York City to the Netherlands, cultural studies scholar Daan Wesselman offers a detailed analysis of the stalled Hofbogen project, which has been attempting to build a pedestrian public space on top of a disused railway viaduct in Rotterdam. His chapter, "Programming Difference on Rotterdam's Hofbogen," focuses on how the Dutch proposal assimilates and reconfigures the High Line's approach to urban renewal, including the aim to create a heterotopian space—that is, a space

of radical difference and otherness. Wesselman shows how, despite the similarities between the projects, each space displays its own strategy of postindustrial urban renewal, cultivating difference from the surrounding city according to local conditions and needs. For Wesselman, the Hofbogen is made different by being a *double* space: both a strange obstacle that cuts across the city and a lived space that represents everyday life in Rotterdam. Wesselman concludes that the Rotterdam viaduct is an illustrative case for projects aiming for the "High Line effect" because it shows how both the High Line and the Hofbogen call not for some general design formula, but instead require a focus on what makes each space specifically different in its own urban setting.

The book's final chapter, by geographer Nate Millington, examines a structure that oscillates between being a congested inner-city overpass and a recreational public space. In "Public Space and *Terrain Vague* on São Paulo's Minhocão: The High Line in Translation," Millington examines São Paulo's Minhocão, a two-mile stretch of elevated highway running through the city center, that closes to traffic in the evenings and on Sundays, and reopens for public leisure access, accommodating a variety of activities ranging from jogging and soccer to skateboarding and performance art. Although the Minhocão shares the same infrastructural typology as the High Line—an elevated viaduct built for mass transit—and also similarly repurposes the space for public use, it differs in several important ways. Most notably, the Minhocão remains a functioning highway and therefore lacks the landscaping and park design elements found at the High Line. Related to this, unlike the High Line, the Minhocão is not permanently repurposed, but transitions almost daily between two seemingly incompatible functions. As Millington explores, the resulting ambiguity surrounding the overpass's shifting identity mirrors the uncertainty of the site's future, as various competing urban forces seek to claim and develop the space.

HUDSON YARDS AND THE END OF THE HIGH LINE

One purpose of this volume has been to assemble a variety of critical, theoretical, and disciplinary approaches to explore the effects of the High Line on contemporary urbanism. As this book goes to press, we are still in the midst of the dramatic transformation of the West Side of Manhattan, complete with the extension of the 7 subway line and the massive Hudson

Yards mega-project, itself a bold reimagining of an urban space explicitly oriented around infrastructure. As a field-test for the emerging "smart city" urban ideal, in which nearly all elements of the built environment are technologically controllable and measureable, Hudson Yards is currently being constructed as the largest private redevelopment project in United States history and the largest redevelopment project in Manhattan since the 1930s. In this district of corporate high-rises and luxury living, "circuits are the new topology of this terrain, once dominated by tunnels and tracks" (Mattern 2016), a landscape seeking to perfect the marriage of urban built form and informatics. In May 2016, the first of the site's towers was completed, straddling the High Line.

This linear greenway has, and will continue to play, an instrumental role in the ongoing transformation of this former industrial and arts district. Though the conversion of the existing elevated railway is ostensibly "complete," the imagined expansions of the High Line seem almost limitless. While the viaduct has been bookended at its southern terminus by the new Whitney Museum of American Art, a new spur has been proposed at Hudson Yards, extending a platform from the northern tip of the High Line through the development, leading to a tower called "the Spiral." Proposed by developer Tishman Speyer, the office tower, designed by Bjarke Ingals Group, would feature a gardened terrace spiraling up the building, appearing to extend the High Line further into the sky, twirling to the top of the sixty-five-story skyscraper. As a blogger for *Gothamist* has wryly commented, perhaps "The High Line won't stop until all of Manhattan's West Side is one sleek, vegetated sun deck" (Heins 2016).

Furthermore, with the construction of the new Whitney Museum in 2015 came the first new architectural interventions beneath the High Line: part of Renzo Piano's museum building beneath the Gansevoort Street entrance of the park for the Italian restaurant Santina. In 2016, London-based Lisson Gallery opened its first New York space in a purpose-built building under the High Line, consciously playing on a postindustrial aesthetic. Beneath the Standard Hotel lies a new German-style Biergarten. The voids beneath the viaduct, once seen as nearly valueless and relegated to parking and storage, are now slowly being filled in—a fate hardly imaginable by the Chelsea Property Owners in the 1980s and 1990s.

Critically analyzing a project such as the High Line requires understanding and coming to terms with the relationships between the material and the symbolic, the local and the global, the public and the private. We

FIGURE 1.4. Hudson Yards under construction, as seen from the High Line, 2015. Photograph by Brian Rosa.

consider this book a starting point in this endeavor. The volume provides a compendium of critical readings of the High Line, acknowledging that the linear park and its impact are still unfolding. While recognizing both the park's popularity and its provision of an innovative form of public space, the authors show that the High Line must also be understood as playing a key role in current urban transformations that are central to, but also transcend, the remaking of New York City. Accordingly, there are particular concerns to which the authors repeatedly return throughout the volume. These include the contested processes of gentrification, neoliberal urban redevelopment, the use of iconic design in urban restructuring, and entrepreneurial city branding. Each author addresses these concerns in a unique way and from different perspectives, and we see these thematic interrelations as a strength of the text, as they identify both dominant and emerging themes within contemporary urban theory.

Understanding the High Line as a result of political economic processes, while paying attention to the importance of culture, ecology, and aesthetics, demonstrates the extent to which the park is at once a highly local and a deeply global phenomenon. Issues raised by this volume's critiques of the High Line—as well as of other projects worldwide that have been inspired by the park—demonstrate the globalized (and frequently repackaged)

nature of urban design, inextricably intertwined as it is with global finance capital and property speculation. The essays that follow explore the social, political, and cultural elements of policy-led gentrification and industrial displacement. They reveal the extent to which the aesthetics of the postindustrial built environment and the unruliness of urban nature have been mobilized as cultural drivers of urban redevelopment. And they provide a way into thinking about the condition and future of postindustrial cities, the role of urban green space in renewal strategies, and contemporary interest in redesigning landscapes rich in transport infrastructure.