



Handel Architects celebrates the opening of \$66.3 million Natatorium and Ice Rink in Queens

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On February 29, Handel Architects joined the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and the New York City Economic Development Corporation in celebrating the opening of the Flushing Meadows Corona Park Natatorium and Ice Rink in Queens. The project is the first indoor public pool to open in New York City in four decades and was completed by Handel Architects in association with Kevin Hom + Andrew Goldman Architects, PC. Construction cost for the complex was \$66.3 million.

The new 110,000 s/f building features an Olympic-sized swimming pool and NHL-regulation ice rink which will serve as a year-round community facility for competitive and recreational use. The facility was originally initiated as part of New York's 2012 Olympic bid and was intended to house Olympic water polo events. The project first broke ground in 2001, but construction was halted after 9/11 due to funding constraints.

Inspired by the 1939 and 1964 World's Fair pavilions, a canopy roof is suspended over the natatorium and rink with soaring masts supporting a cable stay structure. This allows for the walls running the length of the facility to be removed for the addition of a temporary bleacher structure, and then reinstalled without having to transfer any loads. Insulated pre-cast concrete panels punctuated with colored glass tiles enclose the shell with a glass lobby marking the entry. The pool and rink are oriented end-to-end, juxtaposing liquid and frozen water, humid and dry environments, bundled bodies and bare skin, users can simultaneously enjoy the seasonal changes outside and physical recreation within.

One-third of the floor of the ADA-accessible pool can move vertically, allowing for a variety of depths and programs (including diving), while movable bulkheads configure the swimming area for different competitions. The pool arena seats 414 spectators overlooking the water from the mezzanine level with dramatic views out to the park to the south. Public locker rooms, toilets, and showers are situated on the second level below the seating. The pool holds over one million gallons of water.

A National Hockey League regulation-size ice rink with bleacher seating for 440 will serve as a year-round venue for competitive leagues and recreation skaters. Changing rooms and support areas for hockey teams and officials are located below the seating. Concessions and skate rentals will overlook the rink.

At the complex's grand opening, Economic Development Corporation senior vice president David Kane said, "This building is a feat of architecture and structural engineering, with its elegant and exceptionally efficient cable-stayed roof design; not dissimilar to the construction of the some of the great bridges of the world. Additionally, the way in which the building is sited, with such tremendous views of Flushing Meadows Corona Park and the grand yet inviting nature of its spaces, is a signal of the City's commitment to design excellence and to the creation of public architecture worthy of our

great City."

Flushing Meadows Corona Park is approximately 1,250 acres and is located in the center of Queens. The Park hosted the 1939 and 1964 World's Fair celebrations and today serves the borough as a flagship park for a multitude of activities. The new Natatorium and Ice Rink joins The Queens Museum, the Flushing Zoo, the Hall of Science, The New York Tennis Center, and the Playground for All Children as features along the Park's borders. The project is located on the North edge of the park on Meridian Road and fronting the Van Wyck Expressway, thus acting as a transition between the neighborhood and the green space.

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