



Butler Rogers Baskett Architects to complete 225,000 s/f construction project at One Bryant Park

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One Bryant Park, the dramatic new high-rise under construction on the Avenue of the Americas between 42nd and 43rd Sts. diagonally across from the park for which it is named, is expected to be the first new building in Manhattan to achieve LEED Platinum certification. In relocating its offices to One Bryant Park, nationally-renowned law firm Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld LLP, too, made a commitment to a high degree of sustainability, as did Butler Rogers Baskett Architects (BRB) in designing the firm's new high-profile space.

As an issue of energy conservation, health, and quality of life, maximizing the use of natural light is critical in sustainable design, an objective that One Bryant Park's floor-to-ceiling low-iron glass curtain wall amply fulfills. To ensure that the abundant daylight penetrated the office interiors, the BRB design team used translucent glass for the corridor walls of the attorney offices, ranged along the perimeter of the floorplate. Some of the interior support spaces are enclosed with full-height walls of solid material up to five feet and glass panels above, further enabling natural light to reach deep into the space.

Because the choice of materials is also critical to LEED certification, BRB selected carpet and upholstery made of natural and/or recycled fiber; paint and adhesives with low VOCs; and other materials obtained from local sources. In designing the lighting, the team emphasized fixtures that maximize energy-efficiency and reduce the need for cooling. They also used the building's under-floor air circulation system to give individuals local control of their heating and cooling preferences.

Sustainability and design excellence are equally evident in the new law offices, where BRB capitalized on the base building's architecture and site and their client's location on seven of the highest floors. The reception area and Conference Center entrance, for example, capture the spectacular views to the east and south, all the way to the Statue of Liberty. The 25-foot double-height space, located along the 42nd St. side of the building, is made still more dramatic by the open stair connecting the conference center's two floors. Juxtaposed against the irregular geometry of the base building perimeter, along which the attorney offices are located, a full-height, solid, rectangular (yellow) space anchors the center of the floorplate, serving as an organizing element and housing many of the firm's support functions.

The overall aesthetic, modern and sleek, makes a strong contrast with the organic quality of Bryant Park, while the use of walnut veneer walls and stone floors deliberately recalls the natural materials of which the park is made.