

# Lower Manhattan's GREEN PLAZA

## A DOWNTOWN OASIS IN ZUCCOTTI PARK

In the past few months, Zuccotti Park gained a lot of media recognition as the main campsite of the Occupy Wall Street movement here in Lower Manhattan, but there's a lot more to this Downtown plaza than just tents and protests.

After the property owners negotiated a deal with the City of New York, United States Steel built the original park in 1968 and named it Liberty Plaza Park, sitting next to One Liberty Plaza. Digging over eight feet sub grade into the street, the park was one of the few open spaces with tables and seating in FiDi.

In the months following the attacks, the already weak foundation was exacerbated by the heavy weight of the emergency vehicles and equipment that cracked and dented the plaza's pavement.

Slowly but surely, the plaza was cleaned up and rebuilt and on June 1, 2006, the park reopened under the name Zuccotti Park in honor of John E. Zuccotti, the former City Planning Commission chairman and first deputy mayor under mid-1970s Mayor Abe Beame, and current co-chairman of Brookfield Properties. The \$8 million renovation was funded entirely with private money from Brookfield Office Properties and was designed by

Cooper, Robertson & Partners. Since then, one of Lower Manhattan's largest privately-owned public parks has been used as site for many 9/11 commemorations, including housing the World Trade Center cross for a short time before it was finally moved to the 9/11 Memorial.

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Besides the spacious and plentiful benches in Zuccotti, the park is also home to two sculptures: *Joie de Vivre* and *Double Check*, both of which were damaged by the 9/11 attacks. *Joie de Vivre*, a magnificent 70-foot tall sculpture of intersecting red beams, was designed by Mark di Suvero and installed in 1998, standing at the southeast corner of the park. In 1982, John Seward Johnson II created *Double Check*, a life-sized bronze businessman sitting on a bench and preparing his papers for an upcoming meeting. Heavily damaged and covered with debris after the 9/11 attacks, Johnson took the sculpture back to his studio and bronzed the commemorative objects left on the statue by mourners, adding them to the figure permanently. The figure was returned in 2006 after the renovations, where it still sits at the northwest corner of the park.

—MATT ESSERT



### 1968

Original park is constructed by United States Steel and named Liberty Plaza Park.

### 1982

*Double Check*, a bronze sculpture of a business man sitting on a bench, is installed in Liberty Plaza.

### 2001

Liberty Plaza serves as base site for emergency crews during and after 9/11 attacks and receives heavy damage.

### 2006

After renovations and reconstruction, plaza reopens as Zuccotti Park.

### 2006

70 foot tall *Joie de Vivre* sculpture installed in the park. Having been damaged in the 9/11 attacks, the *Double Check* sculpture is also returned to the park after restoration.

### 2011

Occupy Wall Street movement begins and sets up camp in park.