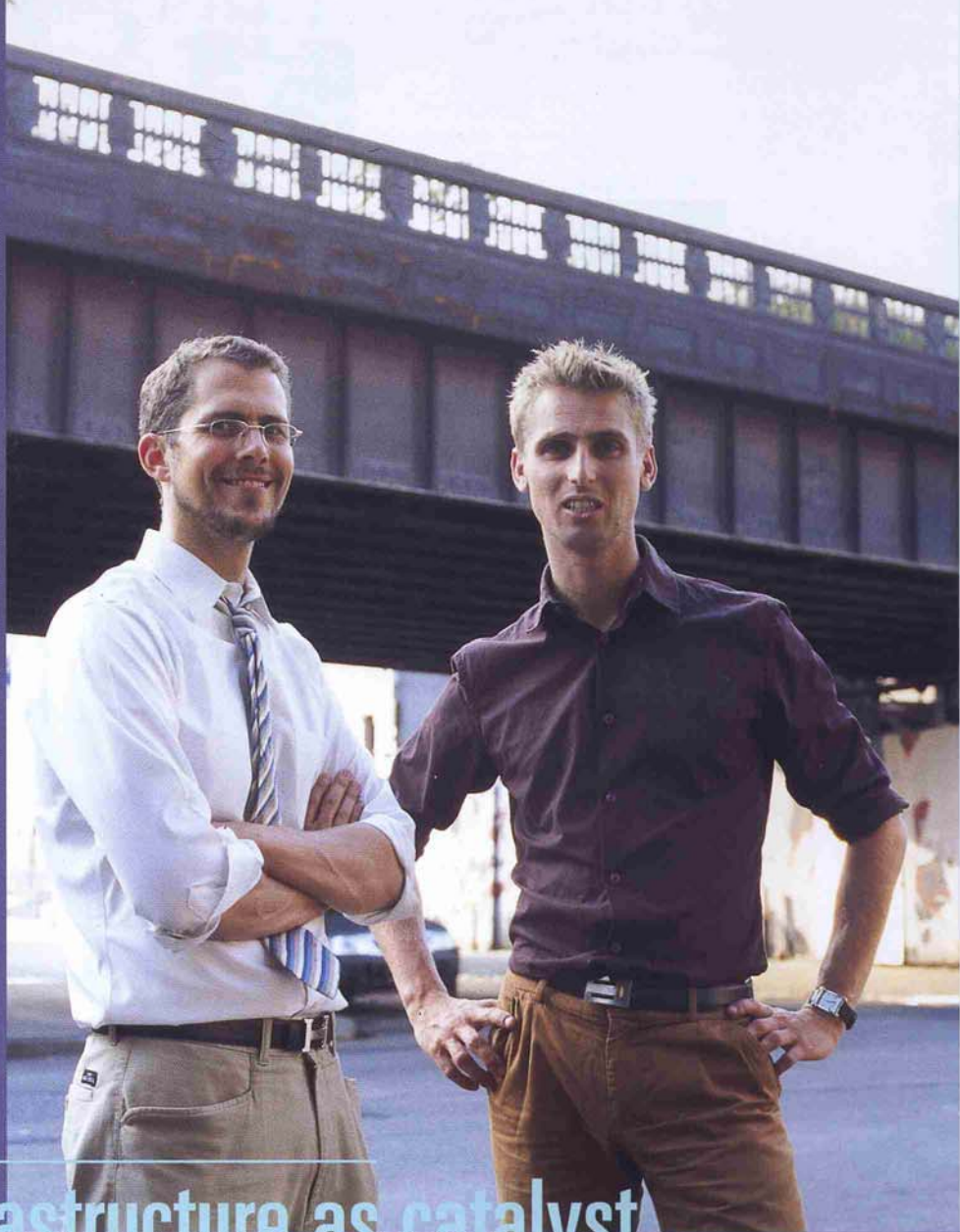


Creativity & the City

By Ruud Slierings,
photography: Lajos Geenen

Robert Hammond, co-founder Friends of the High Line, New York, USA
Frank Uffen, managing director NADC, New York, USA



Robert Hammond:

'Old infrastructure as catalyst for revitalisation'

From 1934 until 1980, goods moved from Manhattan's West Side factories along a 2.3-km elevated railway, bound for destinations across the country. But when lorries replaced trains, the rails were left to weather and wildflowers. Landowners beneath wanted the High Line torn down, but Robert Hammond, a local resident, envisioned a different future. He co-founded Friends of the High Line with another neighbourhood resident, Joshua David. 'We were convinced that this unique infrastructure should be preserved to create a great new public open space for New York City and a new identity for an emerging cultural district.'

An energetic campaign with high-profile competitions, fundraising events, and community engagement forums raised public awareness and secured political support. Today Friends of the High

Line are working with the City of New York and designers to develop a master plan for a \$ 65-\$ 100 million elevated public open space in the centre of a new mixed-use district. 'We still face many challenges, but it is amazing to see how creative planning has catalysed planning for new businesses, residences, galleries, and cultural institutions.'

The creative and entrepreneurial approach of Friends of the High Line inspires cities all over the world. CityCorp, a consortium of housing developers in Rotterdam, explores the redevelopment potential of the Hofpleinlijn. Frank Uffen, who helps Rotterdam plan the transformation of the Hofpleinlijn:

'The High Line shows the importance of reusing historic infrastructure to create vibrant urban communities with unique identities.'