

7 Bryant Park

New York, United States of America

With little fanfare, an eye-catching work of corporate architecture has landed in Midtown: a 30-story, glass-and-stainless-steel building called 7 Bryant Park, between 39th and 40th Streets, along Sixth Avenue. The building clearly is not just another spec office tower, or at least it wasn't designed to look like one. It makes the case for why architecture matters. It's a two-tiered midrise, with a setback a third of the way up and an arresting pair of cones incised almost as if by a giant ice-cream scooper out of one corner, the one facing the park. The first cone rises from the setback to the roof. The other, opening downward, clears space for a circular canopy, made of stainless steel, hovering, a little like the Starship

Environment:	urban
Use:	panel façade
Material:	316L with 316L with Deco Linen M25 finish
Fabricator:	Christian Pohl GmbH
Manufacturer:	Outokumpu
Architects:	Pei Cobb Freed & Partners
Photographs:	Outokumpu
More information:	outokumpu.com



Enterprise, above the building's entrance. The effect is something akin to a flashing Broadway billboard, begging for attention. Hines was the developer. The architects are Yvonne Szeto and Harry Cobb from Pei Cobb Freed & Partners. Mr. Cobb's Tour EDF in Paris, an elliptical skyscraper with a similar conical cavity, built for France's main electric company in 2001, will come to mind among architecture aficionados. The architects found a way to animate the façade so that, seen from the park, it plays off its neighbors, the stately rhythm of its 10-foot-wide modular windows syncopating with the busier window patterns of the buildings around it. From inside, those modules open up the office floors of 7 Bryant Park to the outdoors, generously. Where the windows curve and incline to shape the cones, the effect is akin to standing on the

prow of a ship, gazing down.

From outside, the wide modules ensure that the cones don't become a distracting muddle of millions when the building turns the corner. It's an elegant, sculptural solution.

In the evening, colored lights in the spandrels outline a kind of mirrored Christmas tree. Artists talk about creativity feeding off restraints, self-imposed or otherwise, a truism architects have to live by. Mr. Cobb and Ms. Szeto capitalized on the limitation of a city setback rule to sharpen the points where the two cones meet. So there's also a crispness and concision to the geometry, derived partly from necessity.

