

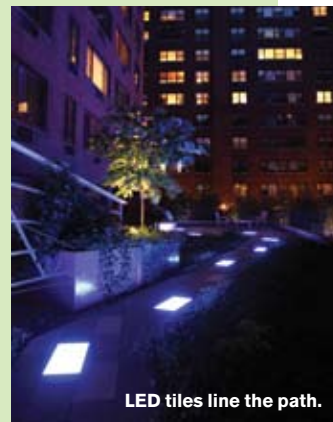
Secret Garden

New York is a city of close quarters—its buildings, subways and even apartment closets leave little wiggle room. Consequently, New Yorkers have become experts at finding creative ways to maximize limited space. With no room to build outwards, the Royal York Owners Corp., used the roof of a two-story parking garage nestled between two of their condo buildings on Manhattan's Upper East Side to house a courtyard garden.

Michael Franco of the landscape design-build firm Town and Gardens, Ltd., was selected to redesign the 15,000-sq ft rooftop following the renovation of the existing roof membrane. Franco devised a lightweight greenroof system—including two protective layers topped with soil—to cover the membrane. The landscape design was based on the concept of water-like movement and motion in which “strategically placed raised planters are an abstract representation of sculptural boats with sails,” notes Franco. Running in a zig-zag pattern through the foliage is a walkway constructed from raised pedestal precast pavers.

Instead of using traditional area lights, Franco opted to embed the lights within the path, itself. Forty-three LED tiles from LightWild dot the gray walkway giving the illusion of moving water, while providing ambient light for the garden and illuminating the walkway. After considering fluorescent and fiber-optic sources, Franco chose the RGB LightWild tiles for their efficiency, color-changing capability, durability and size (12 in. by 24 in.). Fitted in between the pavers, the lights, like the garden itself, make the most of a small space.

—Elizabeth Hall



LED tiles line the path.



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