The Met Breuer
NEW YORK, NY

BBB has guided the restoration of Marcel Breuer’s iconic 1966 building—originally designed as the Whitney Museum—and helped transform it into The Met Breuer. In this iconic space, The Metropolitan Museum of Art presents exhibitions of modern and contemporary art. The building is bold and intimate at the same time, with an integrity, beauty, and honesty of design, materials, and execution that places it among the most distinguished mid-century modern buildings in New York.

The restoration was approached as Breuer himself would have, carefully preserving the authentic patina of aging materials and allowing visitors to understand and appreciate the building’s evolution over time.

Planning for the lobby focused on enhancing both circulation and the visitor experience. Retail is minimized and visitors are provided with free access throughout the lobby and lower level. A new, specially designed ticketing desk and ticketing kiosks help to minimize waiting times for entry.

Restoration of the public interior spaces and exterior Sunken Garden was undertaken with a consciously conservative approach. Focus was given to restoring the building’s signature attributes, including concrete walls, bluestone floors, bronze fixtures, wood handrails, and lighting, carefully distinguishing patina from damage and reserving gentle, targeted cleaning for areas that suffered soiling and damage. Inappropriate or obsolete interventions made after 1966 have been removed and new interventions are limited, contemporary, and capture the spirit of Breuer’s aesthetic and intent. Discreet contemporary elements—all inspired by Breuer’s use of sculptural forms and natural materials—complement the restored interiors and establish a contemporary Met presence.

Client  The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Size  82,000 SF
Completion Date  2016
Construction Cost  Confidential