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Ground force

When it comes to going green, American cities are having a golden age, says **Paul Clements**

All over the US, the search is on for public recreational spaces. Disused industrial land, derelict warehouses and even decommissioned military sites are being 'greened' and converted into alfresco areas.

Last year, Denver converted its defunct Stapleton airport into Central Park, an 80-acre space with a sledding hill, boulder climbs and state-of-the-art playgrounds; the control tower was kept as a landmark (+1 303 355 9600, stapletondenver.com).

Los Angeles has introduced Fitness

California, is being replaced by spectacular parkland. Great Park, America's biggest landscaped municipal green space in more than a century is one and a half times the size of Central Park in New York. When finished, it will include a botanical garden, sports area with room for 21 football fields, and a canyon lined with woodlands. For now, visitors can take a free balloon ride that gives panoramic views across the whole county (+1 866 829 3829, oceg.org).

New York's big re-greening project is the renovation of the High Line (+1 212 206 hehighline.org). The elevated goods yard that snakes around Manhattan's edge was built during the Depression, stood derelict since 1980. The disused line is slowly being transformed into an urban walkway. After a four-year construction, the first section – from West Street to 20th Street – is set to open at the end of the year, coinciding with the launch of Andre Balazs' latest Standard Hotel (+1 212 645 4646, standardhotels.com), which strides over the raised park. Book now for a room with the coolest garden in town.

If that sounds exhausting, then head for San Francisco's Presidio, a former military base near the Golden Gate Bridge. A 1920s aircraft hangar has been converted into Foggy Bridge (foggybridgewinery.com), a winery with a 120-seater brasserie, sun terrace and a tasting room.

Meanwhile, a former military airport east of downtown Irvine in Orange County,

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