

Chicago's Mary Bartelme Park

Landscape Architecture by site design group, ltd.



Mary Bartelme Park is a 2.3-acre urban green space that replaced an old infirmary in the West Loop of Chicago, Ill. Five skewed square stainless steel arches form an iconic gateway at the northwest corner of the former brownfield site, and two large lawn berms provide ample viewing space for community activities such as parades, recreation, and movies in the park on an inflatable screen (background, right).

Mary Bartelme Park in Chicago, Ill., is a 2.3-acre contemporary urban park that occupies the site of a former infirmary in the West Loop, one of the fastest growing neighborhoods in the Windy City. As recently as the late 1980s, the West Loop was a dangerous and dilapidated industrial warehouse district; over the last two decades, however, it has been renewed by the addition of numerous upscale residences and some of the nation's most well-known and fashionable restaurants. The rapid residential growth exacerbated the lack of green space, and the community did not hesitate to voice their displeasure. Sited on a single city block and surrounded by rehabbed industrial buildings, Mary Bartelme Park was formed in response.

MANAGE STORM WATER UNDER
StormPAVE
 Permeable Clay Pavers
 Pine Hill Brick
 claypaver.com 800-354-8689

ZEAGER
 LANDSCAPE & ENVIRONMENTAL
 NATURAL BEAUTY.
 HIGHLY ACCESSIBLE.
 BONDED WOODCARPET® SYSTEMS

Ridiculously obsessed
 with quality.
 ALL STEEL TOOLS
 MADE IN THE USA
 SINCE 1994
WOLVERINE
 Products

Ridiculously obsessed
 with quality.
 ALL STEEL TOOLS
 MADE IN THE USA
 SINCE 1994
WOLVERINE
 Products

STOKES
 LADDERS
 TRIPOD LADDERS
 • Built for strength, durability & safety
 • Adjustable 3rd Leg and Hard Surface Kit Available
 • Exceeds all Arboricultural ladder safety standards (ANSI Z133.1-2009)
 800-842-7775 www.stokesladders.com
 "Stokes Ladders, Any Climb, Any Place"

FREE **XL**
 Risk Management Tools
 for the Design Professional
xldp.com/Library
 E&O for Landscape Architects from XL Group

If it mows,
 grows or glows,
Horizon's Got It.
 All landscape and
 irrigation. All here.
 All the time.

Turf Diagnostics & Design
 Accredited Testing
 for
 green roofs & landscape soils



Water-activated photocatalytic pavers were installed below the steel arches to alleviate the urban heat island effect and reduce air pollution. On hot days, the arches produce a fine mist of vaporized water that immerses the area in a cloud. The water feature is designed to expend just 10 percent of the three gallons of water per minute that a typical Chicago spray feature uses. At night, built in LED lights illuminate the arches.

Design & Preparation

Mary Bartelme Park is located on a former industrial “brownfield” site, which required careful remediation and sensitivity to the threat of groundwater contamination. Working in collaboration with the Chicago Park District, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and the City of Chicago Department of Water Management, landscape architecture firm site design group, ltd., created a plan to store excavated earth beneath mounds and import clean soil to provide a buffer between the surface and rectified soils. Site design group used recognized environmental concerns, such as an existing underground storage tank, to inform the site’s topography and minimize the amount of resources required while meeting regulations for treatment and remediation.



The primary paths on site are made of permeable pavers; runoff from across the site is directed into a leach field located under a central berm, where the stormwater is cleansed and infiltrated into the ground.

Extensive public input became the heart of the design process. Site design group helped to define the program and design concept through polls, discussions with city agencies and a highly invested community group. The design ultimately selected by the community and stakeholders consists of three intersecting paths that define the programmed areas as irregularly shaped zones with varying uses. The zones include a contemplative garden, open lawn, dog park, gateway fountain, viewing mound and sculpted playground.



Weathering steel railings and retaining walls that reflect the West Loop's industrial past contrast with brightly colored seasonal plantings and ornamental grasses.

Fountain

The fountain is located at the northwest corner of the park, the most highly trafficked corner of the site, and serves as an iconic gateway to the park for the community. Five skewed square stainless steel arches produce a fine mist of vaporized water that cools visitors and immerses the area in a cloud of mist. The arches were designed with water efficiency in mind, and use only 10 percent of the three gallons of water per minute a typical spray feature uses in the city of Chicago. At night, the gateways light up with internal LED lights that cast a unique pattern on the ground. A seven-foot high viewing mound along the northern extent of the park showcases a view of the rest of Mary Bartelme Park, with a backdrop of the Willis Tower (formerly Sears Tower) and the Chicago skyline. Just south of the viewing mound, a large mounded open lawn creates the central spine of the park. These two lawns provide ample space for community activities such as holiday parades, movies in the park and recreation.



Terracotta artifacts salvaged from the infirmary building are nestled in seat walls, planter beds, and within the mounds. The unique details and industrial references within Mary Bartelme Park have made it a popular location for wedding and engagement photos.

Sustainability & Hardscape

The dense urban area around the park made the sustainability of the design essential to the Chicago Park District

and the design team, who set a goal of zero infrastructure for the treatment of stormwater runoff at the beginning of the project. The primary intersecting paths on site are made of permeable pavers, where all runoff from across the site is directed. Water infiltrates below the surface and into a leech field located under a central berm, where the water is cleansed and infiltrated into the ground.

Beneath the gateway fountain, photocatalytic smog-eating pavers alleviate the urban heat island effect and reduce air pollution. Sunrays activate the photocatalytic reaction within the white TX Active pavers (Unilock), which destroy organic and inorganic compounds before they have a chance to adhere to their surface. Organic pollutants decompose into oxygen, water and harmless salts.

While the photocatalytic properties of the pavers clean the air on a clear day, on a rainy day their permeable solution allows rainwater to flow through their surface rather than being discharged into local sewers. The innovative practices allowed Mary Bartelme Park to serve as a successful sustainable design pilot project for the Chicago Park District, which has gone on to implement permeable pavement and other sustainable solutions throughout many of its 580 parks.



The playground provides inventive, exploratory play experiences and physical challenges for ages 2 to 12, and accommodates a number of physical and cognitive disabilities.

Playground & Planters

For families with small children, the northeast corner of the park is a popular stop, with a fully accessible playground comprised of custom play structures and complex topography. Formed from recycled rubber surfacing, the mounds are connected with a series of custom-designed bridges, slides, stepping pods, and climbing structures that promote creative, non-linear play. Without strictly separating age groups, the playground provides inventive, exploratory play experiences and physical challenges for ages ranging from two to 12, while accommodating a number of physical and cognitive disabilities. An enclosed seating area flanking the southwest corner provides a calm and contemplative community garden that contains a number of hidden design features. Terracotta artifacts salvaged from the demolished infirmary building are nestled in seat walls, planter beds, and within the mound, which are covered by profusions of more than 24,000 periwinkle-blue flowering bulbs in the spring. Surrounding the garden are weathering steel retaining walls that will oxidize over time, paying homage to the previously industrial use of the site and neighborhood. As they oxidize, the walls will develop a rich patina, changing to a rusted orange hue. Rustling river birch trees create a calmer entrance to the southeast, near custom egg-shaped benches.

The West Loop neighborhood, previously underserved by green space and predominantly occupied by high-rise condominiums and loft spaces, now features a well-loved and well-used green space that doubles as an icon of the revitalized community. Chicago Tribune architecture critic Blair Kamin lauded the park as part of a “new generation of geometrically-complex, engagingly interactive and highly-stylized urban parks that eschew the cliché of grass and a gazebo.”



The fully accessible playground contains custom play structures (Berliner, Kompan, Landscape Structures) and complex topography that allows multiple age groups to play and be challenged together.

Materials & Vendors

Drainage/Erosion

Custom drainage system consisting of underdrain, permeable pavers, CA-7 and geotextile in leach field

Fences/Gates/Walls

Omega II

Furniture

Wausau Tile custom pre-cast

Hardscape

Unilock TX Active, Eco-Priora, Umbriano

Kafka Granite Midnight Blue stabilize

Lighting

Bega, traditional concrete base & Hadco luminaire

Parks/Recreation Equipment

Berliner, Kompan & Landscape Structures

Plants

Midwest Growers

Playground Surfacing/Turf

Forever Lawn K9 artificial turf, Select LX playground turf & Total Surfaces Rubber Surfacing

Water Management/Amenities

Most Dependable Fountains



Mounds formed from recycled rubber surfacing (Total Surfaces) are connected

with a series of custom-designed bridges, slides, stepping pods, and climbing structures that promote creative, non-linear play.

Project Team

Architect of Record, Landscape Architecture
and Project Management
site design group, ltd.

Ernest C. Wong, Principal-in-Charge

Michelle M. Inouye, Lead Designer

Hana Ishikawa, Associate Project Manager and Designer

Brad McCauley, Project Manager

Civil Engineering

Terra Engineering, Ltd.

Electrical Engineering

Hinkle Engineering, Inc.

Environmental Engineering

GSG Consultants, Inc.

Fountain Design

Fountain Technologies, Ltd.

General Contractor

The Lombard Company

Structural Engineering

Gagarin Farruggia Gibisch Reis, Inc.



A sunken dog park includes an oversized, continuously filling water bowl. Anti-microbial and short-bladed artificial canine turf was installed for furry activities. Ramps, steps, and seat walls provide pet owners with places to rest and means for the dogs to exercise as well.



The design was developed through an extensive public process with public agencies, community members and stakeholders. Numerous public gatherings are held in the park each year, including an annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

Credit: Matthew Raney Photography, Inc.

 Like  Share 14 people like this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends like.

 SHARE

 Share  46

Comments

 by [Html Comment Box](#)

No one has commented yet. Be the first!



Fatal error: Cannot redeclare class common_class in `/home/land/includes/class/common_class.inc` on line 4