

Eleanor Boathouse at Park 571



Location

Chicago

Status

Built 2016

Client

Chicago Park District

Type

Civic, Office

Size

19,000 sf

Sustainability

Targeting LEED Silver

Tags

Community, Ecological,
Training Center, Water,
Wood, Bird-Safe

One of two boathouses on the Chicago River designed by Studio Gang, the Eleanor Boathouse at Park 571 creates a crucial access point along the river's edge.

As the city works to transform the long-polluted and neglected river into its next recreational frontier, the boathouse invites communities on the South Side and throughout the city to share in the river's continued ecological and infrastructural revitalization.

The design of the Eleanor Boathouse translates the motion of rowing, using two truss shapes to create a rhythmic roof form. The two buildings—the field house and the boat storage facility—are splayed to embrace the site's distinct turning basin condition and address different vistas from the west and east approach. Complementing the zinc facade, a custom green gradient window screen on the south end of the site creates an aesthetic connection to the river while also enhancing a sense of arrival, welcoming the community to the boathouse.

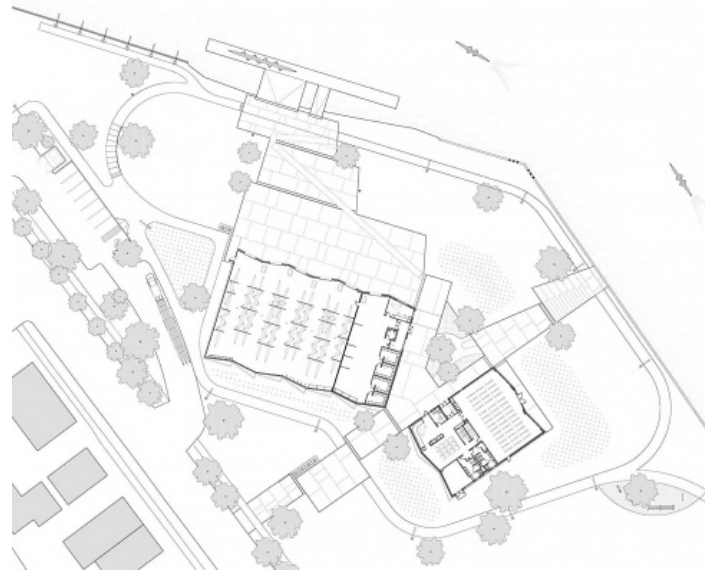
The Eleanor Boathouse is home to several [rowing teams, clubs, and organizations](#) that brave the Chicago River nearly year-round to train for competitions and build self-esteem and leadership skills, ultimately advancing their participants' educational and life goals. In addition to highlighting the need for the continued revitalization of the river, the new facility—which also includes spaces for after-school mentoring and community events—allows for the expansion of these programs, extending their opportunities to people, and especially youth, on the South Side and across the city.



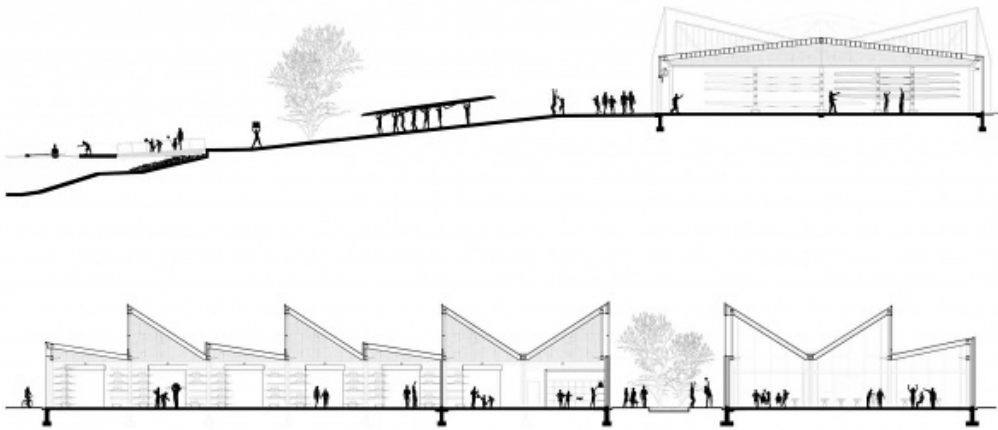
The boathouse is a lively community space that, in addition to supporting youth and adult rowing teams, hosts mentoring programs, yoga classes, and public events.

“We wanted the building’s form to reflect the movement of rowing and draw people here to learn and experience rowing and the valuable teamwork it instills. Its alternating roof trusses were generated from studying this motion while creating functional south-facing clerestory windows that bring in sunlight to warm the boat storage facility in colder months using minimal energy.”

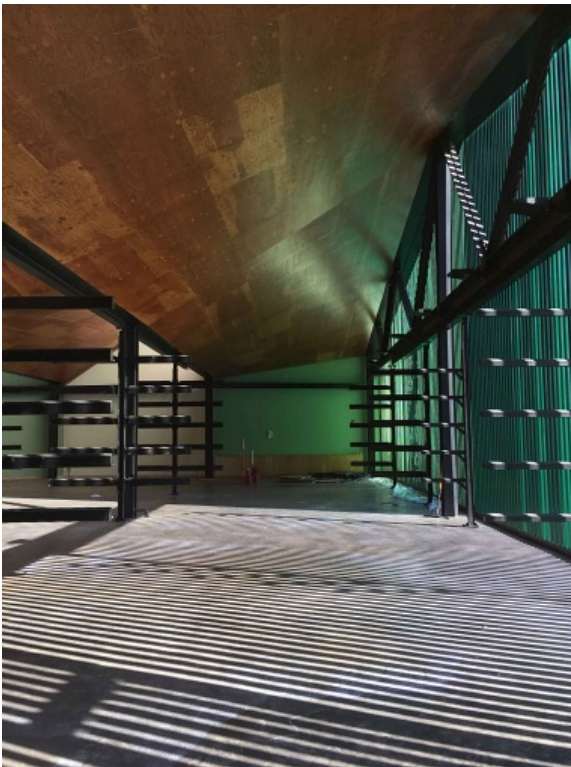
–Jeanne Gang



Site and Floor Plan



Sections



“The Chicago River boathouses are part of a new environmentally friendly vision for the city’s river. By making the riverfront a destination for recreation, anchored by dynamic sustainable architecture, we hope to catalyze long-term stewardship and support for the river’s remediation as well as improve the health of the communities that surround it.”

–Jeanne Gang

The boat storage facility accommodates seventy-five boats of various sizes seating two to eight people. Its custom, green-gradient screen enhances the sense of arrival, welcoming the community to the boathouse.



Consultant Team

[dbHMS](#), MEP/FP

[Faithful+Gould](#), cost estimating

[Matrix Engineering Corporation](#), structural engineer

[SPACECO, Inc.](#), civil engineer

[Terry Guen Design Associates](#), landscape architect

[WMA Consulting Engineers](#), sustainability consultant

Awards

Winner, The Plan Awards, Sport & Leisure, 2017