

# 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

The Eleanor Boathouse at Park 571 is one of two boathouses on the Chicago River designed by Studio Gang. Like its sister project, the [WMS Boathouse at Clark Park](#), the Eleanor Boathouse creates another crucial access point along the river's edge—this time, on the south branch of the river, serving Chicago's South Side communities.

As the city works to transform the long-polluted and neglected river into its next recreational frontier, Studio Gang's Chicago River Boathouses invite communities 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 turning basin in the river and address different vistas from Ashland Avenue on the west side of the river and the approach to the river from the east side through a residential neighborhood. 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](#), including the Chicago Training Center, Recovery on the Water, St. Ignatius High School rowing team, University of Illinois Chicago rowing team, University of Chicago rowing team, South Branch Park Advisory Council, and the Lincoln Park Boat Club. Teams 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. The Boathouse also provides a classroom space for after-school mentoring. In addition to highlighting the need for the continued revitalization of the river, the new facility allows for the expansion of these rowing and mentoring

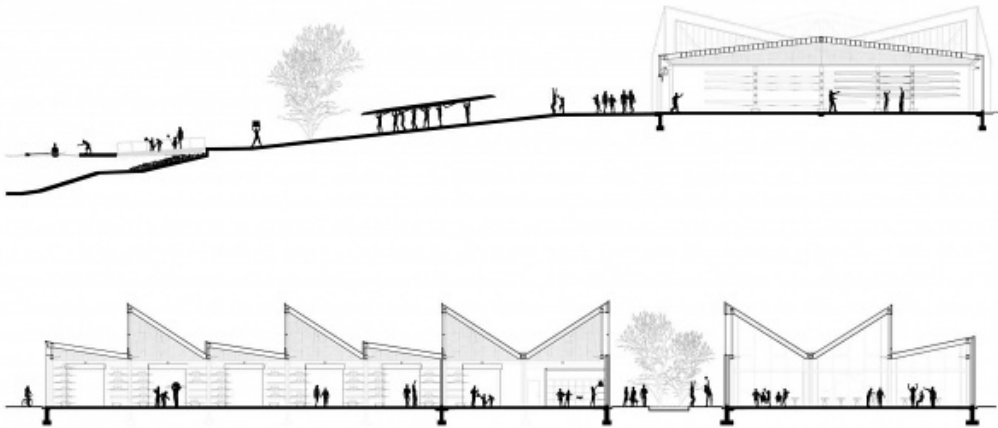
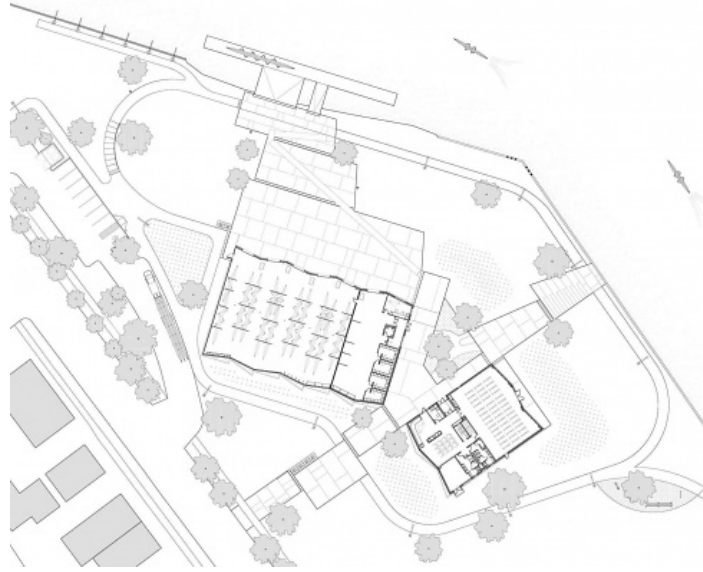
programs and extends their opportunities to people and youth across the city and especially on the South Side.



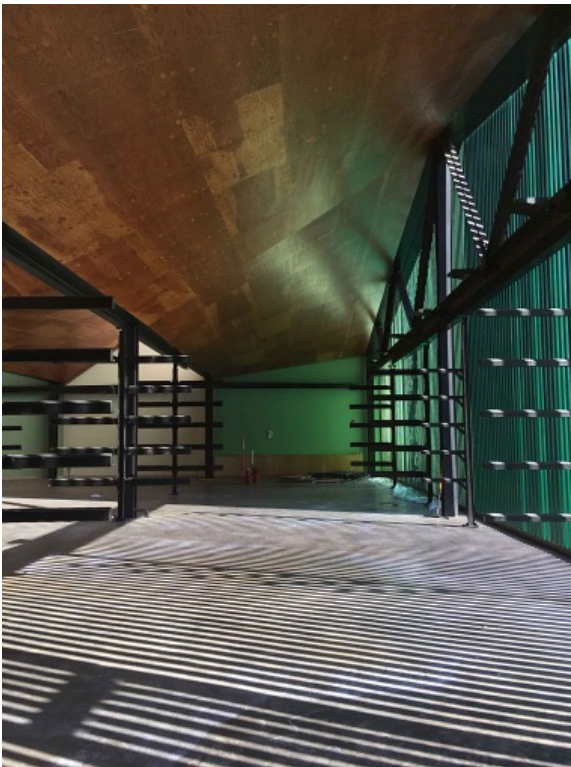
“We wanted the building’s form to reflect the movement of rowing and draw people here to learn and experience rowing and the valuable teamwork it instills. Its alternating roof trusses were generated from studying this motion while creating functional south-facing clerestory windows that bring in sunlight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

–Jeanne Gang

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.







“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 75 boats of various sizes, seating 2 to 8 people.



**Consultant Team**

[dbHMS](#), MEP/FP

[Faithful+Gould](#), cost estimating

[Matrix Engineering Corporation](#), structural engineering

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

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

[WMA Consulting Engineers](#), sustainability consultant

**Awards**

Winner, The Plan Awards, Sport & Leisure, 2017