











Soldier Field and North Burnham Park Redevelopment

Chicago, Illinois, USA

The original 1924 Soldier Field structure was intended to serve events including track and field, football, auto racing and public assemblies, but it never fully responded to the different needs of its varied users, becoming home to the Chicago Bears in 1971. Compared to other NFL facilities, the stadium had a poor seating configuration, few amenities, primitive concessions and restrooms, and small, archaic suites. It was an outdated stadium surrounded by 66 acres of paved parking before a joint venture of two firms revitalized the site: Goettsch Partners, with primary responsibility for the master plan and North Burnham Park project, and Wood + Zapata, with primary responsibility for the architectural design of the Soldier Field stadium.

The concept—not replicating the old facility but creating a modern stadium within the confines of the historic structure—juxtaposes the historic colonnades against a contemporary steel-and-glass stadium with an asymmetrical shape, featuring four levels of skybox suites and club seating on one side and cantilevered grandstand seating on the other. The long spans and cantilevers used throughout accommodate the existing structure's width and ensure unobstructed views while adding a sense of movement.

The Bears now play on natural turf heated from below, and the team's training and dressing rooms are modernized. Stadium amenities for fans feature added and enhanced restrooms and concessions, 62,000 seats, improved sightlines, two 23' x 82' video-replay boards, 133 luxury suites, and three club lounges that overlook the historic colonnades and Lake Michigan. The surrounding 17 acres of landscaped parkland include a veterans sculpture and water wall, a children's garden, a police memorial garden, a winter garden, and a sledding hill. Chicago residents and visitors now enjoy year-round access to the historic colonnades, a new boulevard for improved vehicular circulation, underground parking, the expanded parkland, and a more cohesive and welcoming campus that connects to the adjacent Field Museum, Shedd Aquarium and Adler Planetarium.

Project Data

SIZE

1,600,000 sf total

FEATURES

62,000 seats

17 acres/6.88 ha new parkland

5,800 parking spaces underground and surface

CLIENTS

Chicago Bears Football Club

Chicago Park District

Recognition & News

RECOGNITION

2005, Patron of the Year - Chicago Architecture Foundation

2005, Honor Award - American Society of Landscape Architects, Illinois Chapter

2005, Outstanding Project Award – National Council of Structural Engineers Association

2004, Distinguished Building Award – American Institute of Architects, Chicago Chapter

2004, Building Team of the Year, Grand Award – Building Design & Construction Magazine

2004, Merit Award for New Construction Chicago – Chicago Building Congress

2004, Merit Award, Innovative Design and Excellence in Architecture Using Structural Steel – American Institute of Steel Construction

2004, Best Large Structural Project Award – Structural Engineers Association of Illinois

2004, Outstanding Engineering Achievement Award – Illinois Engineering Council

2004, Construction & Design Award – Engineering Society of Detroit

2004, Engineering Excellence Honor Award, Special Projects – Consulting Engineers Council of Illinois

2004, Best Open Space Project – Friends of Downtown

2004, Building With Trees Award of Excellence – The National Arbor Day Foundation

2004, Green Roof Award of Excellence, Intensive Industrial/Commercial – Green Roofs for Healthy Cities

2004, 1st Place, Rooftop Gardens, City-wide – Mayor Daley's Landscape Awards Program

2004, Outstanding Project of 2003-2004 – Association of Subcontractors and Affiliates

2004, Build America Award – Associated General Contractors

2003, Project of the Year Overall – Midwest

