



Honor Award | Public Design
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City Garden at Garfield Park Conservatory
Chicago, Illinois

Landscape Architect:
*Douglas Hoerr Landscape
Architecture, Inc.*
Client:
Chicago Park District

Engineer:
Infrastructure Engineering
Contractor:
Clauss Brothers, Inc.

Consultants:
*Hydro Dramatics, Jose De Avila &
Associates, Lightscape, Inc.*



Upper left: Retaining walls along cut-through mound are fluted metal that frame a view of the elevated train beyond, grounding the garden in its urban context.



Garfield Park Redefined

Designed by renowned landscape architect Jens Jensen, Garfield Park's City Garden was unorthodox when it was constructed in the 1880s. So when the Chicago Park District decided to update the park in 2003, it seemed fitting to challenge prevailing notions of what a large public garden should be and create something more forward-thinking in the 12-acre area. For that reason, there are none of the trendy and seemingly ubiquitous "outdoor rooms" here, but instead a series of "experience zones" delineated by changing topography, winding paths, moisture, shade and sun.

Building on Jensen's original idea for an elliptical open space, the oval form now appears as the park's main structural and unifying motif through the use of lawn shapes, grasses and a series of levels or layers. Elements that link the garden to its urban surroundings include recycled street pavers around the pool and beach glass in the gravel garden that creates a nice crunch under foot. Sound plays a role in the space as well: visitors can hear the unexpected sound of the waterfall beneath the bridge in the lily pond or an elevated train racing past, offering train riders a glimpse of green.