Dec. 10, 2002

re: Rudy Bruner Award Nomination for Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool

Dear Sirs/Madames:

Please find attached the nomination of the Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool in Lincoln Park for a 2003 Rudy Bruner Award. As you will see, this project involved a unique public-private partnership between the Chicago Park District and Friends of Lincoln Park. It resulted in a 2.5 million dollar restoration of a historically significant landscape that had suffered severe deterioration over the years. This project involved a community process that took into consideration all of the divergent points of view and resulted in consensus.

We are aware that any projects funded by the City of Chicago cannot be considered for the 2003 Rudy Bruner Award. The Chicago Park District is a completely separate municipal agency from the City of Chicago. (The Park District is chartered by the State of Illinois). In addition, there was no funding from the City of Chicago for the Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool planning or restoration efforts. Therefore, the restriction does not apply to this nomination.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Robert J. Megquier
Director of Planning & Development
**PROJECT DATA**

*Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.*

**Project Name**: Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool  
**Location**: Lincoln Park, Chicago, IL

**Owner**: Chicago Park District

**Project Use(s)**: Open Space/Historic Landscape/Nature Area

**Project Size**: 2.6 Acres within 1,200 acre park  
**Total Development Cost**: $2.5 Million

**Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate)**

**Date Initiated**: Focus groups-1997  
**Construction**: 2001  
**Percent Completed by December 1, 2002**: 100%

**Project Completion Date (if appropriate)**: October, 2001

**Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates**

**Application submitted by:**

**Name**: Robert J. Megquier  
**Title**: Director of Planning & Development

**Organization**: Chicago Park District

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**Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)**

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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Key Participant</th>
<th>Telephone/e-mail</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public Agencies</td>
<td>Chicago Park District</td>
<td>Dan Purciarello</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developer</td>
<td>Friends of Lincoln Park</td>
<td>Steve Zelner</td>
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<td>Professional Consultant</td>
<td>Kathleen E. Dickhut</td>
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<td>Community Group</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>Chicago Ornithological Society</td>
<td>Christine Williamson</td>
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<tr>
<td>USDA Forest Service</td>
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<td>(847) 866-9311 X16</td>
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Please indicate how you learned of the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*. (Check all that apply).

- [X] Direct Mailing  
- _Magazine Advertisement_  
- _Previous RBA entrant_  
- _Other (please specify)_

- _Professional Newsletter_  
- _Previous Selection Committee member_  
- _Magazine Calendar_  

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**Signature**: [Signature]

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ABSTRACT

Project Name: Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool in Lincoln Park
Address: Fullerton Ave. btwn. Stockton Dr. and Cannon Dr. City/State/Zip: Chicago, IL 60614

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals

Tucked between Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo and Lincoln Park Conservatory, the Alfred Caldwell Lily pool is a 2.6-acre historic landscape that had fallen into a terrible state of deterioration and neglect by the 1990s. For years, community members had been concerned about the state of this nationally significant site; however, restoration attempts were stalled by conflicts between user groups and public distrust of the Chicago Park District. In 1997, Friends of Lincoln Park, began a cooperative effort with the Chicago Park District to create a concept plan that would preserve the historic landscape and improve the site's ecology while also meeting contemporary needs such as accessibility for people with disabilities, and satisfying specific user groups, such as bird watchers. Receiving a grant from the USDA Forest Service, the Friends of Lincoln Park conducted a series of focus group meetings that included input from experts on history, ecology, and access for people with disabilities, members of specific user groups, and community members at large. This resulted in a consensus plan, with cost estimates for restoring and maintaining the site. The Friends of Lincoln Park and Chicago Park District jointly funded and managed the 2.5-million dollar project that has preserved the historic landscape, and revitalized the site for contemporary users. The Park District officially re-named the site the Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool, and it has been designated as Chicago Landmark.

2. Why does the project merit the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence? (You may wish to consider factors such as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

This project merits a Rudy Bruner Award for several reasons. This project serves as a model illustrating how a historic landscape can be preserved while also accommodating today's users, including people with disabilities. Also meriting national attention is the unique role of the non-profit community organization, Friends of Lincoln Park, and its productive relationship with the Chicago Park District. Not only did this relationship result in a creative plan resolving the previous conflicts between groups, but also in the raising of the necessary development funds through a public-private partnership. The non-profit organization did not sit back and wait passively after the monies were raised. The Friends of Lincoln Park played an active role in the restoration project, essentially acting as the project developer alongside the Chicago Park District. The resulting work has dramatically improved the site's visual, historic, and ecological qualities. The project is also important because it did not end with construction and planting. Today, the Friends of Lincoln Park and Chicago Park District continue to work together to realize the maintenance plan that was developed for the site. Volunteer stewards help with weeding, planting, and landscape management. The Friends of Lincoln Park is currently raising funds for a full time site manager who will be in charge of the Lily Pool; and a docent program is underway to train volunteers to interpret the site for groups of visitors, both large and small.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. How has the project impacted the local community?

In a 1938 submission to the Chicago Tribune's column entitled “Voice of the People,” an anonymous “park stroller” considered the Lincoln Park Lily Pool, “a rich and beautiful gift to the people of Chicago.” Replacing an earlier Victorian water garden, the Lily Pool was a WPA-funded project designed by Alfred Caldwell in 1936. Caldwell, then an employee of the newly formed Chicago Park District, was a disciple of the renowned Prairie style landscape architect Jens Jensen. Using the natural history of the Midwestern landscape as the design idiom, Caldwell intended the site as a respite from the chaos of city life. For years, the hidden garden did succeed in that goal. A cycle of decline, however, began in the 1950s, when the Lincoln Park Zoo was given permission to use the Lily Pool as an area to breed birds. The birds had a devastating impact on the Lily Pool, then known as the Zoo Rookery. The lack of a landscape management plan also had negative implications. As invasive plants began to take over, the site became dark and the lush green understory soon disappeared. Eventually, the Chicago Park District paved the eroded areas with tons of added stone, and the landscape became foreboding. In the early 1990s, Mr. Caldwell described the site as “a dead world.” The gates were often locked, so visitors had limited and unpredictable access. Today the site is as beautiful as it was in the 1930s. It is now a haven for migratory birds, bird watchers, artists, photographers, students, nature lovers, walkers, and the public at large. The site keeps regular hours, and there is security on the weekends. Visitorship is growing due to a stream of positive press coverage and the increasing popularity of the site with organized tour groups.

2. Describe the underlying values of the project, and any significant trade-offs that were necessary to implement the project.

This project’s major value was to bring together the site’s various constituencies and achieve agreement between them to create a plan that would preserve the historic landscape; improve the site’s ecology; enhance its usefulness as a bird habitat; and provide accessibility to people with disabilities. Bird watchers had previously lobbied against the removal of invasive plants and reintroduction of elements such as the eastern section of the path that had originally looped around the water feature. Preservationists advocated these kinds of changes, which would reinstate the original plan and were also concerned about achieving accessibility, adding other modern interventions, and selecting a plant palette in a manner sensitive to historic integrity. Ecologists advocated a wider range of plant diversity and improving water quality. There were a number of trade-offs made to achieve consensus. The eastern and western boundaries were expanded to create additional bird-friendly habitat and lessen the potential disturbance from humans. This change made the reintroduction of the eastern path more acceptable to bird-watchers and ecologists. That path enhanced historic integrity and accessibility. Re-opening the site’s original east gate also satisfied preservationists and provided an accessible entrance near disabled parking places. Another trade-off was the removal of some sections of historic stone steps to improve accessibility. Despite the removal of this material, preservationists were satisfied with the plan because the steps near the waterfall and pavilion were retained, and these were considered the most historically significant. After the focus group data was incorporated into the concept plan, each of the interest groups felt that their most important concerns had been honored, and that the trade-offs enhanced the overall project.
3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

A strong process of community participation was this project’s key to success. In the past, tensions had run high between some of the groups that were concerned with the Lily Pool. Added to this was such a strong distrust for the Chicago Park District, that in an earlier effort to improve the site, community members shouted and spit at laborers as they attempted to remove weedy vegetation. A partnership between the Friends of Lincoln Park and the Chicago Park District helped allay distrust, and focus group meetings achieved agreement between the groups. The focus groups included people active in the Lincoln Park community; historic preservationists; bird watchers and ecologists; activists promoting improved accessibility for people with disabilities; and a group of random visitors to the Lily Pool. Focus groups were given a tour of the Lily Pool, followed by a presentation on the historic and current states of the site, and video-taped comments by experts representing the related special interests, and the focus groups discussed visions for the Lily Pool’s redevelopment, and attitudes about the site’s specific elements. This resulted in a plan that was later approved by all of the interested parties.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

The budget for the planning, design, and construction of the project totals $2,515,000. This amounts to $21.53 per square foot of the 2.6-acre site. Of this total the Chicago Park District funded $1415,000, and the Friends of Lincoln Park raised the remaining $1,100,000. This included donations from 235 individuals, and well as grants from the State of Illinois, the USDA Forest Service, and many foundations. Here is a partial list of groups and foundations that provided funding: Richard H. Dreihaus Foundation; Sara Lee Foundation; the Pritzker Family Foundation; Prince Charitable Trust; Chicago Community Trust; Kemper Foundation; Deering/ McCormick Family Foundation; and the Friends of Lincoln Park Adopt-A-Monument Program. None of the funds were provided by the City of Chicago.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant issues? Is the model applicable to other urban settings?

This project serves as an import model for other publicly owned landscapes throughout the nation in several respects. The public-private partnership between the Chicago Park District and the Friends of Lincoln Park could inspire similar projects in terms of building consensus between special interest groups, jointly managing a design and construction project, jointly funding the restoration work, and developing strategies together for maintaining and managing the site. The project also serves as a model for other historic preservation efforts throughout the nation. Although the preservation movement focused increasing attention on historic landscapes, throughout America there are many significant public landscapes that suffer from neglect, deterioration, poor maintenance, and the inability to meet contemporary community needs. In addition to creating a consensus plan that preserved the historic landscape, the project is important for the site’s designation as a Chicago Landmark, the adoption of a management plan, and for the current initiatives to involve volunteers in maintaining and interpreting the site.
1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? (Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency(e.g. zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements.)

In the early 1990s, the Park District recognized that the Lily Pool landscape was severely deteriorated. At that time, efforts were made to remove invasive plant materials and begin restoring the site. As the public had not been involved or informed, community members became furious when they saw plants being cleared out. Community members began protesting, and the work was stopped. The site continued to degrade until a new initiative began when Friends of Lincoln Park approached the Chicago Park District and asked to serve as the partner on the restoration project. The Chicago Park District participated in every aspect of the project alongside Friends of Lincoln Park. Park District professionals served as experts on some of the videotapes reviewed by the focus groups, and provided valuable information including historic documentation, plant lists, and ADA requirements. Park District representatives participated in a team to help Friends of Lincoln Park select and hire Wolff Clements & Assoc. to prepare the concept plan. The Chicago Park District and Friends of Lincoln Park agreed to jointly fund the rehabilitation project. The Park District then hired Wolff Clements & Assoc. to develop construction documents, and oversee the rehabilitation work along with representatives of Friends of Lincoln Park and the Chicago Park District. The Chicago Park District solicited bids for construction. The most qualified contractor, Clauss Brothers Inc., was selected through a competitive bid process. Since completion of the rehabilitation, the Chicago Park District and Friends of Lincoln have been working together on comprehensively managing the Lily Pool.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city. What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project?

The rehabilitation of the historic Lily Pool benefits the city of Chicago in a number of significant ways. Firstly, it is located in the dense Lincoln Park neighborhood, adjacent to the highly trafficked Lake Shore Drive, and only a couple of miles from the built-up environment of downtown. Residents, visitors, birds, and other animals all need this natural haven for tranquility, refuge, and habitat. The Lily Pool provides a multitude of opportunities to educate the public about landscape and cultural history; as well as ecology, nature studies, and horticulture. The Park District and Friends of Lincoln Park are developing cooperative programs with the nearby Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum and Lincoln Park Zoo, as well as creating our own docent-training program to realize some of the educational goals. Most importantly, by transforming a degraded, ecologically sick, dark and overgrown space into a healthy landscape with a rich palette of native plants, sunny spaces, and beautiful views, the public can reclaim this space. Fortunately, only minor trade-offs were necessary, and these tended to be specific details requested by the special interest groups. Each of the major special interest group made some compromise to achieve the concept plan, but everyone was satisfied with the final result.
3. Describe the project's impact on the community. Please be as specific as possible.

Considering that the site-users and special interest groups concerned with the Lily Pool had made vocal protests and set out to stop the earlier Chicago Park District attempts at restoration, an extremely high level of consensus and satisfaction has been achieved by this project. By analyzing the concerns of each special interest group through the focus group meetings, bringing in expert opinions to the focus groups and to public meetings, and creating a process by which each group's major goals could be accomplished, this project has had a unique impact on the community. The project has set a new standard by which the Park District has learned that a community organization can play an important role in decision-making. This role goes beyond asking the Board members of the community organization for their opinions; but by reaching out to the special interest groups and surveying site visitors, the process became truly open and public. The result has been that all of the various special interest groups: historic preservationists, advocates for accessibility, ecologists, and bird-watchers, and general site visitors have enthusiastically endorsed the project. Certainly the large number of individuals and groups who donated money to the restoration project attests to a strong level of support for the project.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

This project provides excellent new models of public/private partnerships. One dilemma in any public project is that the government agency may begin a dialogue with the most vocal or well-known community organization, without opening up a broader conversation with other groups, site-users, or constituents. Quite often, a well-established community group assumes that it represents everyone without conducting any sort of survey, or reaching out to other groups or organizations. By conducting the focus group meetings, videotaped interviews of experts, on-site surveys of Lily Pool visitors, and public meetings, the Friends of Lincoln Park and Chicago Park District were able to bring a vast array of opinions and concerns together, and achieve a consensus plan for the restoration project. Another important aspect of the partnership between the Chicago Park District and Friends of Lincoln Park providing a strong model for other cities is the pro-active and involved role of the community organization. While community organizations often discuss their views with a public agency, it is rare to find a model where the non-profit group became an equal partner and played a major role in each aspect of the project, including raising over a million dollars in funding.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

There are many successful aspects of this project, and only a few less successful aspects that are currently being addressed. One of the most successful aspects was the high level of cooperation and mutual respect that all involved in this project shared. Today, this relationship continues to flourish and the Chicago Park District and Friends of Lincoln Park are moving on to new endeavors together. In addition to other benefits, the high level of cooperation resulted in excellent construction management, and while a historic preservation project like this can be difficult due to the high level of craftsmanship and necessary attention to detail, the execution of the work was of the highest quality. Another successful component was the efforts to manage the site for future generations through a maintenance plan, volunteer stewards and docents, a future Friends of Lincoln Park site-manager position, and the Lily Pool's designation as a Chicago Landmark. There were few unsuccessful aspects of the project. One problem, however, has been since there is not yet a site manager, there are several Park District staff members responsible for opening and closing the Lily Pool, and the staff is not always consistent with locking and unlocking the gates at the times which have been posted.
# Developer Perspective

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**Title:** Executive Director

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1. **What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement?**

   Friends of Lincoln Park identified the need for the rehabilitation of the Lily Pool, then known as the Zoo Rookery. We found seed money to hire a planning consultant to build consensus between the various interest groups. After this, our organization hired a landscape architect to prepare a concept plan and determine the construction costs. Friends of Lincoln Park then secured a commitment from the CPD to enter into a 50-50 partnership in the project. We soon began targeting foundations and individuals to raise our share of the commitment. We had continual meetings with the CPD staff and the landscape architects hired by the CPD - from the RFP for construction bids to the formation of the final plans. After the bid was awarded, we attended weekly meetings on-site with the CPD, design and construction team. Our interest continues as we plan to hire a site manager and work very closely with the CPD on the landscape maintenance program.

2. **What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?**

   Although Caldwell's original design for the Lily Pool was well worth restoring, the rehabilitation provided a chance to make improvements deemed important today. For example, a high priority was placed on providing accessibility for people with disabilities. Another objective was to enhance the site as a resting place for migrating warblers and other birds, which was especially important considering the alarming decrease in populations of these bird species in recent years. Through information from the focus group sessions, and input of experts including preservationists and ecologists, the landscape architect created a concept plan that was sensitive to the varied needs of the community that retains the Lily Pool's historic and ecological integrity. During the time when changes were beginning to be implemented, the USDA Forest Service conducted surveys of people using the Lily Pool. These surveys helped gauge the public's response to improvements and helped to fine-tune the design, management, programming, and public education goals.

3. **How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?**

   Since 1999, Friends of Lincoln Park conducted a major fund-raising campaign to raise $1.1 million dollars to help finance the rehabilitation. We targeted private foundations & corporations as well as major individual donors. We are very proud of the fact that 10% of the money raised was from individual or community donations. The remaining money came from fund-raising events.
4. How did the economic impacts of this project on the community compare with or differ from other projects you have been involved in?

This project was by far the most ambitious to date for Friends of Lincoln Park. Never before had this group had to seek the opinion of so many. Friends of Lincoln Park was the key factor in bringing about a strong sense of community participation regarding this project.

5. What about this project would be instructive to other developers?

One unique and inspiring aspect of this project is that a community organization fulfilled the role of developer, encouraging the government agency to pursue a major improvement to a degraded site, developing a plan that took into consideration varied opinions, funding half of the construction costs and reviewing progress at each stage of the project. Another aspect of the project that could be very instructive to other developers is that Friends of Lincoln Park went to the community & other interested parties to discuss & gain input from before the project began. Additionally, there was some distrust by the community for the Park District. Therefore, a partnership with a credible community based organization(s) is a must for a project such as this one. The lesson learned here is it takes a well-informed community & a genuine partnership of all parties involved to embark on a project that means so much to a community.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspect of this project is that it has been completed on time & within the budget allowed. The opening of the Lily Pool marked the fulfillment of one of Friends of Lincoln Park’s most important endeavors, the rehabilitation of the Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool. Preserving and improving the assets of Lincoln Park through the funding and implementation of special projects is the purpose of our organization, and the Lily Pool’s rehabilitation is an example of our commitment to our mission. We are proud to have helped to bring this crown jewel back to the residents of Chicago. Additionally, the partnership formed with the Chicago Park District will ensure that this site, for the first time, is comprehensively managed & programmed.

I can honestly say that there was no “least successful aspect” of this project.
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

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1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

I was hired by Friends of Lincoln Park to begin their program to rehabilitate the Lily Pool. My scope of services included: writing grants to obtain local foundation support to develop a concept plan for the rehabilitation, managing consultants, conducting public outreach and overseeing the publication of a document that would be used to explain the issues to the general public and potential funders. In that role I wrote two proposals to private foundations and one for the federal government securing approximately $150,000 for the concept-planning phase. I hired and managed consultants to conduct focus groups; selected and recruited participants for most of the focus groups hired and managed a landscape architect and a writer for the concept plan and document. Finally, I hired a fundraising consultant to begin the capital campaign for the Lily Pool rehabilitation. All these steps were done with interaction and approval from the Friends of Lincoln Park Board of Directors.

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

The rehabilitation of the Lily Pool was intended to improve a special 1.5-acre landscape within a 1,200-acre urban park. The project would show how rehabilitating a historic landscape design, the interests of the birding community and ensuring access to people with disabilities could all be addressed and accommodated within this small space. Upon completion, the Lily Pool became a restored piece of landscape art that also meets a diverse contemporary urban population need for tranquil places to commune with nature.

3. Describe the project’s impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.

There are many ways to define the Lily Pool community. The residents that live within walking distance have a wonderful, peaceful spot to visit. Those interested in historic preservation can appreciate the finely restored details of the original Caldwell design.
4. **What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did you or your organization participate in making them?**

It became clear through the two prior Chicago Park District attempts to rehabilitate the Lily Pool that there were several key constituents who had interests in the Lily Pool — historic preservationists, birders, advocates for accessibility. Those earlier efforts made concerned citizens feel that the process was all about tradeoffs without any compromise. To address this, Friends of Lincoln Park secured research funds from the USDA Forest Service that were used to analyze the issues. First, a video was produced where each of the three most focal constituents and/or representatives walked through the Lily Pool and explained what aspects of the landscape made it special or were of greatest concern. That video was then used in the focus groups with local park activists, historic preservationists, ecologists and birders, disability activists, and randomly selected members of the public. The focus groups discussed the state of the Lily Pool and how it could be improved along with the issues raised by the three focal constituent groups. From that process emerged a high level of agreement and those areas became the focus of the rehabilitation plan.

5. **How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?**

This focus group process has been instructive and has subsequently been used in addressing other landscape rehabilitation issues in Chicago parks that face similar issues. Urban landscapes are well used and appreciated by the citizenry. That depth and array of feelings that comes from knowledge and experience with a place can make it difficult to agree upon how changes and improvements to well-known landscapes should be made. Decision-makers need to understand how and why people have strong attachments to these places. Those feelings need to be appreciated and incorporated into plans for changes and improvements. A little social research before designing, redesigning or improving a well-known and well-loved landscape can go a long way in ensuring the success of a project.

6. **What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?**

The Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool is beautiful and inspiring once again. The historic features are restored. The landscape is soft and peaceful. The site is almost entirely accessible to strollers and wheelchairs. And, no one (well almost no one) has complained that his or her issues were not addressed. The Friends of Lincoln Park successfully raised the matching funds for the physical rehabilitation of the landscape. Following that effort they have begun to raise funds for stewardship of the space. That has yet to produce the results that their capital campaign did, but then again, they just started.
1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

The rehabilitation of the Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool is not a new design project, but is an historic landscape preservation project. The design concept was developed by Alfred Caldwell in 1936, and the goal of the landscape architect responsible for the rehabilitation was to follow Caldwell’s design, drawings, and writings exactly, wherever possible, to interpret the original intent where there was no documentation, and to make changes, whether they be additions or removals, according to the spirit of the original design where such changes are unavoidable and necessitated by a changed program or changed circumstances.

Wherever possible original materials were retained. Where restoration or other changes or additions were required original materials were used wherever possible. Additional species of plants were added to Caldwell’s plant palette, in order to increase species diversity and improve the ecology and natural qualities of the Lily Pool, but only plants that were consistent with the original plant palette were added.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

The Lily Pool is that rare public landscape, a place that is cherished by many, a place that in many cases evokes rich and deep memories of special childhood experiences. It is a personal and intimate space in a way that very few public spaces can be. The most important social aspect of the design, therefore, may have been the restoration of the physical condition of the Lily Pool so that people with those memories could once again experience the place that they had known as children, and the children of this generation would also be able to have those some feelings and memories. A secluded, green, quiet, natural area in the heart of a dense, mature city is a rare and precious resource, and it was important to preserve and restore the things that made the original experience so special.

The programmatic aspect of the rehabilitation had five major objectives: 1) To use the Caldwell design as a guide and restore the original landscape to the degree and where possible. 2) To remove inappropriate later additions and plantings, including tons of stone that had been added in the 1960s and the hundreds of volunteer trees that had grown up to cloak the Lily Pool in shade all day long. 3) To preserve and enhance the natural features and improve bird habitat, returning sunlight to the ground plane; and adding a rich palette of new trees, shrubs, and perennials, throughout the site. 4) To improve the site’s accessibility for people with disabilities making all of the main features (Fullerton Avenue gate, Cannon Drive gate, waterfall, pavilions, and council ring) accessible by removing steps and reconstructing a path on the east side of the site. 5) To develop a maintenance program as well as a stewardship or volunteer program.
3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

One of the major challenges was to achieve consensus between various special interest groups, many of which feel proprietary and protective about the Lily Pool. Groups include historic preservationists, birders, and people who have been visiting the using the Lily Pool for years. The focus groups were extremely helpful in this regard, as they served from the beginning to identify the many areas where there was agreement and the few areas in which there were potential conflicts. After the focus groups led to the creation of the plan, there were community meetings to educate the broader public about the project. The measure of success was the tremendous community support for the project (over $1.2 million raised by the Friends of Lincoln Park) and the extraordinarily modest vocal opposition (when over three hundred invasive trees were removed only one telephone call objecting to the tree removals was received by the Chicago Park District).

Another major challenge, as in most preservation projects, was adaptation of the historic landscape to contemporary programs and codes. The site had been almost entirely inaccessible; through the reconstruction of the historic path around the east side of the pool, and the removal of steps on the existing stone path, and removal of steps at the council ring and replacement by a ramp of flagstones, all of the important destinations and most of the perimeter of the pool were made accessible.

4. Describe the way in which the project relates to its urban context.

The 1.5 acre Lily Pool is an oasis of green, beauty, quiet, and nature in the heart of Lincoln Park, surrounded on all sides by busy streets and major destinations (including the Lincoln Park Zoo and Conservatory and the Nature Museum). Urban design considerations included maintaining the sense of quiet and “apartness,” restoring the historic gate and access from Cannon Drive, and limiting access from the Lincoln Park Zoo so that the Lily Pool is a destination, not a short cut.

5. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the projects design and architecture.

The strength of the project’s landscape and architectural design is the combination of its faithfulness to the historic design and the sensitivity with which changes and additions were made to that design to accommodate new uses and contemporary criteria. Another strength was the opportunity to spend such a substantial project budget on re-planting a landscape that had been in such an accelerated state of deterioration. Most importantly, this project is exceptional in its attempts not only to satisfy the various user groups without lowering the physical design integrity, but also in its efforts to make sure that the site will be well cared for in future years.

Weaknesses of the project’s landscape and architectural design are more difficult. There are no weaknesses in the architectural design, which consists almost entirely of restoration of the original design. The potential weakness of the landscape design is the possibility that attempt to develop a more natural approach to the planting may not established itself as a self-sustaining ecosystem, and that the planting will develop more like a garden that requires ongoing maintenance to keep it growing in the right direction.
OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

I participated in a focus group and provided input on habitat changes to the Lily Pond/Rookery area that would benefit migrant birds. Chicago's lakefront is an important part of the central flyway that migrant birds in North America use heavily in the spring and the fall. The Lily Pond/Rookery's close proximity to the lake and its dense vegetation make it an important feeding and resting site for migrants on the north- and south-bound journeys.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on your community?

The replanting and rehabilitation of the man-made and natural elements of the Lily Pond/Rookery area have greatly enhanced its attractiveness to migrant birds. That brings more bird watchers to the area and they have been appreciative of the Chicago Park District's efforts to improve lakefront habitat for birds. I have personally bird watched from outside and inside the fence around the Lily Pond/Rookery and birding has improved since its restoration. In fact, in the spring of 2002, I found not one, but two singing male Swainson's Warblers within the fenced area. Swainson's Warbler is a species that has been extirpated as a breeding bird in Illinois and is only rarely seen during migration.
3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

From the perspective of birds and bird watching, any change to a local "hot spot" that already is good for birds is viewed with suspicion. Some bird watchers were reluctant to change what already was working for migrant birds, because they were present in the Lily Pond/Rookery enclosure. However, my group, the Chicago Ornithological Society, and most of its members have become well-educated about and supportive of habitat restoration efforts that remove or control both non-native invasive plant species and aggressive native plants. The Lily Pond/Rookery area was badly overgrown with many undesirable plant species and food sources for birds were not as good as they could be. 

COS members understood that the Lily Pond/Rookery could be made even better for migrant birds and it was clear that Park District staff also shared that belief and a commitment to habitat enhancements for birds. I was impressed with the landscape architects hired by the CPD to handle the project. They were sensitive to the needs of birds and were willing to incorporate our suggestions.

I believe that other park user groups had other concerns regarding the historical template of the area and design changes, but my role in the process was to focus on improvement of the Lily Pond/Rookery for wildlife, particularly birds.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

See above, regarding impact on the birding community. Habitat improvements have helped migrant birds and made the Lily Pond/Rookery even better for birds. It is a success from the bird habitat standpoint. The only negative comment I have does not concern the redesign of the Lily Pond/Rookery. It is frustrating that the opening hours of the fenced enclosure are not at all useful for bird watchers, particularly in the spring, when dawn is at about 4:30 a.m. (when birds land from their overnight migration and head for food and shelter, such as the habitat around the Lily Pond/Rookery). In order to protect the newly rehabbed Lily Pond/Rookery and for public safety reasons, the area is closed overnight. I have never seen the gates opened before 8:00 a.m. and for optimal bird watching, much earlier hours during the spring and fall migration would be desirable. It is ironic that the Lily Pond/Rookery rehab project has been so successful that the area has to remain locked and unavailable at convenient hours in order to protect this lovely, renewed park resource.
1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

In 1997, my Chicago office of the Forest Service funded a cooperative research project with Friends of Lincoln Park to accomplish the following four objectives: 1) Identify interest group concerns for design and management of the historic designed landscape of the Lincoln Park Lily Pool; 2) Develop and implement a process for involving the public groups in identifying preferences and perceptions of management options and alternatives; 3) Develop a process for testing and evaluating alternatives that explores the tradeoffs between design/management options; and 4) Develop guidelines and communications for design and management. As technical representative for the Forest Service, I worked with the Friends, the Park District, and the consultant team to identify interest group concerns that emerged from focus group discussions and subsequent meetings and to assess how the groups' various issues and values were incorporated into final design and management decisions.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

As a social science researcher in a federal land management agency, my job is to help create new knowledge about the relationships between people and nature in urban park and forest environments that can be used to improve planning, design, and management. My "communities" thus include both academic researchers and practitioners. The Lily Pool project has had a significant impact on both of these communities. It is a prime example of how concerns of diverse user and interest groups can be successfully integrated. It is also an effective example for showing how participatory planning and design can work in a highly urban setting. I have presented and written about the participatory planning and design process developed for the Lily Pool and a companion project in Lincoln Park—Montrose Point—at a number of national and international meetings of researchers, as well as in local and regional workshops aimed at practitioners. Two recent examples of these were at an academic conference on "Socially Robust Ecological Design" in Bielefeld, Germany, and for a planner's workshop on "The Restoration of Urban/Suburban Green Space" in Philadelphia.
3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

From my point of view as a researcher, negotiating the trade-offs between the different interest groups was one of the most important and notable parts of this project. Landscape architects and historic preservationists were keen on seeing one of Alfred Caldwell's best and most fully realized designs restored to its former glory. Birding groups were strongly concerned about maintaining and enhancing the desirability of the Lily Pool as bird habitat—particularly during the seasonal migrations—and were acutely sensitive to removals or other changes in the site's vegetation that would detract from this value. Members of the disabled community sought to uphold the spirit and letter of the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide full access to the Lily Pool, requiring changes in Caldwell's pathway system that featured many steps. And local community groups desired to improve and restore the Lily Pool yet maintain its special qualities as a "hidden garden of megalopolis." By keeping the planning and design process open and encouraging dialogue between professionals and lay people, the team was successful in maintaining the integrity of Caldwell's historic design while at the same time meeting the goals of the other interest groups. These negotiations were not viewed as compromises; as the process evolved, the integration of various concerns resulted in value added to the project rather than taken away from it.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

To me, the most successful aspect of this project is the collaborative, participatory effort that underlies the final design. The planning and design process had enormous educational value for the groups involved, including an appreciation for a broader range of values and a recognition that there may be alternative ways to meet a given goal. On the other hand, the value of the final design as it was implemented as a result of these collaborative participatory efforts has not yet been fully realized. In relationship to objective four of our initial cooperative research project (see Question 1 above), further work needs to be done to interpret the design of the Lily Pool to current users and to build a broader base of support for it among the Park District's constituencies. Work is now underway by the Park District and Friends of Lincoln Park to develop a docent and stewardship program that would effectively address these issues.
RUDY BRUNER AWARD NOMINATION
for the Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool
Lincoln Park, Chicago

VISUAL REPRESENTATION

A. Historic Photograph of the Lily Pool (from the Chicago Park District Special Collections)

B. View of the Lily Pool before the Rehabilitation Project

C. View of the Lily Pool after the Rehabilitation Project
B. Before
RUDY BRUNER AWARD NOMINATION
for the Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool
Lincoln Park, Chicago

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

1. The Lily Pool
   Concept Plan for the Rehabilitation of the Lily Pool
   Friends of Lincoln Park, Chicago; 1999

2. "Uncovering an Oasis" by Cathy Jean Maloney, published in
   Landscape Architecture Magazine, v.91 no. 11, Nov. 2001

WELCOME TO THE LILY POOL

Step in to the shady glade, and immerse yourself in an oasis of calm. Breathe in the moist scent of moss, stone and water. Climb a gentle rise to a low stone ledge arranged in a circle. From this vantage point, you can view the calm waters of the Lily Pool below. Or gaze upward, where birds roost in the tree branches.

Meander along the edge of the pond, between the water and limestone walls. When you reach a wooden structure, pause for a closer look. The pavilion has a low, flat roof that shows the design influence of Frank Lloyd Wright. Inside, you find limestone benches have been worn so smooth over the years that the surface is soft to the touch. Sit with your back resting comfortably against a low wall, and watch as dragonflies patrol the pond's still water.
Left. Caldwell intended for the stratified stone ledges to appear as if a flowing river had carved the ledges out of limestone bedrock. 1938. Courtesy of the Chicago Park District Special Collections.

Top. This historical view of the south path, facing east, shows the original amount of sunlight that once shone upon the grassy understory of the Lily Pool. 1938. Courtesy of the Chicago Park District Special Collections.

Right. Today a photo of the same south path as shown above shows the large amount of rock that has been added along the path and ledges. 1997. Wolff Clements and Associates, LTD.
WHAT IS THE LILY POOL?
The one and a half-acre Lily Pool is a landscape of national historic importance. It was designed by Alfred Caldwell, who served as a landscape architect for the Chicago Park District during the 1930s. During his lifetime, Caldwell made important contributions to the Prairie School of architecture and design, a movement led by Frank Lloyd Wright. Caldwell collaborated on significant projects with luminaries such as Jens Jensen, Ludwig Hilberseimer and Mies van der Rohe.

Caldwell wrote in 1942, "[The Lily Pool] was planned as a hidden garden of the people of Megalopolis." More than half a century later, there are few other public spots in Chicago that offer the same sense of natural respite from the harshness of city life.

The Lily Pool is located south of Fullerton Drive and north of the elephant house in Lincoln Park Zoo. Because of the Zoo's proximity to the Lily Pool, the Zoo began to manage the site for breeding birds in the 1950s and changed the Lily Pool's name to the "Rookery," as it is known today. But in this document, to respect the past and reflect the future, the site is referred to by its original name of the Lily Pool.

DECLINE OF LAND AND WATER
Though the scenic glade still possesses the power to surprise and delight visitors, the decline of the landscape is painfully apparent. Naked tree roots rope their way across desolate stretches of bare dirt. The pond has grown stagnant, and its green surface is tangled with fallen trees. Graffiti and rot mar the handsome wooden pavilion.

Since Caldwell's days, rock was laid on grassy, planted areas to counteract erosion. Weedy trees like white poplar and European buckthorn have invaded and grown to maturity, shading out and killing the undergrowth Caldwell envisioned. Songbirds that stop at the Lily Pool to recuperate during their arduous migration find little to eat, for native trees and shrubs with berries have long since died.

REHABILITATION FOR THE FUTURE
In 1997, the Friends of Lincoln Park began an effort in cooperation with the Chicago Park District to create a concept plan for repairing and reviving the Lily Pool. The plan remains faithful to Caldwell's original ideas while accommodating modern concerns. Now with the support of public agencies and private citizens, there's an opportunity for this plan to be implemented, and repairs and improvements to be completed.
The History and Magic of
The Lily Pool: An Historic Landscape Designed
by Alfred Caldwell

INTRODUCTION
Alfred Caldwell designed the Lily Pool in 1936–1937. The site was an existing Victorian garden and lily pond dating from 1889, which had fallen into disrepair. Caldwell transformed the area into a beautiful naturalistic setting planned in his words “as a sanctuary of the native landscape” in the city. The project was undertaken by the Chicago Park District with Federal Works Progress Administration funding.

BIOGRAPHY OF ALFRED CALDWELL
A disciple of the preeminent landscape architect Jens Jensen, Caldwell was the last living Prairie School designer of the twentieth century. Born in St. Louis in 1903, Caldwell moved to Chicago with his family as a child. As a student at Lakeview High School, he studied science under a teacher who helped foster his interest in plants and nature, the noted botanist Herman Silas Pepoon. Caldwell briefly studied landscape architecture at the University of Illinois at Champaign, but was dissatisfied with the experience and quit school. In 1924, a family friend introduced him to Jens Jensen, who is now considered the dean of the Prairie style in landscape architecture.

Caldwell worked as a superintendent in Jensen’s private practice from 1924 to 1931. “He oversaw landscape construction and learned first-hand Jensen’s sculptural way of staking out landscape designs in the field,” according to Dennis Domer, the author of Alfred Caldwell: The Life and Work of a Prairie School Landscape Architect. Caldwell became familiar with Jensen’s characteristic design elements: native plants, stratified stonework, sun openings or clearings, and naturalistic waterways. Jensen’s influence and passionate conservation ethic had a lifelong impact on Caldwell. Additionally, through Jensen, Caldwell became acquainted with architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who also had a profound impact on Caldwell’s career.

The Depression era was a period of great struggle for most designers including Caldwell. After several difficult years of trying to run his own private practice, Caldwell was appointed as Superintendent of Parks for Dubuque, Iowa in 1934. Caldwell developed an impressive “City in a Garden” plan for Eagle Point Park which was a “conceptual realization of his deeply held belief in the unity of man and nature,” according to Richard Guy Wilson, in the Landscape Architecture
A view of the waterfall, looking southwest, shows an attractive path. 1938. Courtesy of the Chicago Park District Special Collections.

The dirt path visible in front was once a bed planted with perennials. Caldwell planted numerous beds of native flowers throughout the Lily Pool site. None remain today. 1997. Wulf Clements and Associates, LTD.

Magazine article, "Alfred Caldwell Illuminates Nature's Ways." However, Caldwell's Prairie style plan was not well understood by the Dubuque Park Board, and after several conflicts he was fired from his position in 1936. He returned to Chicago and was hired by the Chicago Park District, which had been created two years earlier when the city's 22 independent park commissions were consolidated into one new centralized agency. During his tenure as senior draftsman for the Chicago Park District between 1936 to 1941, Caldwell worked on dozens of landscape design projects, including: Riis Park, landfill extensions to Burnham and Lincoln parks, and the Lincoln Park Lily Pool.

**DESIGN INTENT FOR THE LILY POOL**
The Lily Pool was originally established as a Victorian garden in 1889. Introduced by Carl Stromback, Lincoln Park's head gardener, the original design included an hourglass water-shaped pond that was artificially heated to support lilies and other fragile exotic plants. By the 1930s, the site had become severely deteriorated.

The redesign project allowed Caldwell to create the kind of introspective place that he believed city dwellers needed. It was also an opportunity to design a site symbolic of the Midwestern natural landscape.

The design included a meandering lagoon edged by stratified limestone ledges. In a 1942 essay, Caldwell explained the significance of the water and stone feature. "The landscape of all Chicago was once a lake formed by the melting ice of the Lake Wisconsin Glacier," Caldwell wrote. "These dammed-up waters finally broke through the moraine ridge at the southwest extremity of the area. This surging torrent carved out the underlying strata of Niagara limestone. Stone bluffs are the veritable statement of the natural forces that created the terrain of Chicago."

Caldwell designed the lagoon to appear as though it were a river that had cut a channel through limestone bedrock. He placed a cascading waterfall at one end to represent the source of the river.

The site's water and stone elements not only represented the native landscape, but also show the influence of Caldwell's mentor, Jens Jensen. Other elements that had been favored by Jensen and were included in the Lily Pool plan were masses of native plants including wildflowers, sun openings, stone paths, and a circular bench known as a council ring. The influence of the Prairie School architect Frank Lloyd Wright is also clear in Caldwell's design for an open shelter with low horizontal slats.

Caldwell stated that the "entire garden is planted as a forest." However, he did keep the canopy open enough to allow sunlight sufficient for growing lilies and other aquatic plants in the lagoon. He also included small clearings that provided splashes of light for understory plants and wildflowers to thrive. A stone
path originally circling the entire lagoon led observers around the expansive and natural enclave, providing views from varying heights.

Caldwell's relationship with his superiors within the Chicago Park District was tumultuous. He was so frustrated by their lack of support for planting wildflowers in the parks and so dedicated to his vision for the Lily Pool that he cashed in his own personal insurance policy for about $300 to pay for the wildflowers himself.

One day in 1938, while Caldwell was planting the $300 dollars worth of wildflowers at the Lily Pool three German-speaking strangers were observing. Caldwell did not know what they wanted, but later learned that they were renowned architects Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig Hilberseimer, and Walter Peterhans, and were very impressed with his work. Members of the architecture faculty of the Armour Institute, (which later became known as the Illinois Institute of Technology), the three had a profound influence on Caldwell's career. They encouraged him, published his drawings, collaborated on designs, and promoted his ideas. They also recommended his appointment to the faculty of the Illinois Institute of Technology, a position he held from 1945 to 1960.

Caldwell went on to work as a planner for the City of Chicago until 1965. Between 1965 and 1974, he taught architecture and landscape design at the University of Southern California. Throughout the rest of his life he continued working in his private landscape architectural practice, writing, and lecturing. In 1981, Caldwell was selected as the Mies van der Rohe Visiting Professor of Architecture for the Illinois Institute of Technology. He continued teaching until 1996, resigning at the age of ninety three.

**Changes and Alterations**
The Lily Pool landscape remained intact until the late 1950s, when it was designated as a bird sanctuary. During this period the Lincoln Park Zoo began using the site to breed and feed birds, and the Lily Pool became known as the Rookery. The birds had an intense impact on the landscape. They destroyed plants and caused the erosion of lagoon edges. Heavy human foot traffic compounded these problems. In addition, invasive trees such as mulberry and buckthorn took root. They began to thrive and shade out understory plants and wildflowers.

In the early 1960s the Chicago Park District conducted a project to renovate the landscape while retaining its function as a bird sanctuary. Large expanses of stonework were added in response to the erosion problems. The east side of the path that curved around the lagoon was removed. The tree canopy continued to grow and most of the understory plantings disappeared.

Yet despite all of these changes, the Lily Pool is still as Caldwell described it: "A cool, refreshing, clear place of trees and stones and running water."

**Sources**
6. Ibid.
Left. Modern installations such as a large trash can at the north entrance are out of keeping with initial designs for the Lily Pool. The can would be removed and replaced with something in a less obtrusive location. Under the rehabilitation plan the entrance and stone paths will be restored. 1997 Wolff Clements and Associates, LTD.

Bottom. Sixty years ago, the Lily Pool was much lighter and airier than it is today. Sun shone on the pond so aquatic plants could grow. 1940, Courtesy of the Chicago Park District Special Collections.
How The Plan Was Developed

The Challenge of Blending Past and Future
Caldwell's original design for the Lily Pool was superb, and is well worth restoring. But the current effort at rehabilitation also provides a chance to make improvements in the original design. For example, it's important today that the Lily Pool provides access for people who have disabilities that restrict their access to nature.

And the Lily Pool's status as an important resting site for migrating warblers and other birds must be protected. Since populations of these bird species have decreased alarmingly across the country in recent years, it's critical that alterations at the Lily Pool enhance its usefulness as bird habitat.

A Collaboration Between Experts and Community Members
The U.S.D.A. Forest Service and other participants in the project recognized early on that it was important to have key people in the community—including members of the general public who visit the Lily Pool—help shape the plan. The following steps were taken to develop a plan sensitive to the varied needs of the community and that retains the Lily Pool's historic and ecological integrity.

- **Focus Groups** were conducted, interviewing people with diverse and potentially divisive special interests about their hopes and concerns for the site.
- **A Video** documenting the problem was filmed. Experts on history, ecology, and access for people with disabilities were interviewed, and the video was used with focus groups and to inform planners about the issues confronting the site.
- **Historical Expertise** was sought. Park historian Julia Sniderman Bachrach conducted research into Caldwell's work at the Lily Pool and consulted with landscape architects who developed the plan and drawings. Jim Slater and Jo Ann Nathan assisted this effort. (See Bachrach's essay on page 3.)
- **A Concept Plan** was developed by Wolff Clements and Associates, LTD. (See pages 6 and 11.)
- **Estimates of Expenses** for repairs and improvements were drawn up by Wolff Clements and Associates, LTD. (See page 12)

During the time when changes are beginning to be implemented, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service plans to conduct surveys of people using the Lily Pool. These will help gauge the public's response to improvements, and will help fine-tune the design, management, programming, and public education goals.

How Five Focus Groups Were Selected and Conducted
One focus group consisted of people active in the Lincoln Park planning process and the community in general. Another was composed of experts in historic preservation and other people who were known to care about the historical significance of the site. A third group's participants were those who care primarily about birds and the Lily Pool's ecological significance. The fourth group had activists who work to ensure access to public spaces for people with disabilities. And the fifth was composed of members of the general public, with no known specificity of interest in the Lily Pool. While the special interest participants were recruited by a consultant familiar with the stakeholders, members of the general public were recruited by professional interviewers who stopped and talked with people who happened to be visiting the Lily Pool in the spring of 1997.

Each group's session began with a brief tour of the Lily Pool. This was followed by a group discussion in a nearby conference room. Participants were shown a series of poster boards with "before and after" photo-
Right. Contemporary fixtures, such as this unused shed, will be removed during the rehabilitation. 1997. Wolff Clements and Associates LTD.

Bottom. The council ring was a central feature of Jens Jensen’s designs, and Caldwell credits Jensen’s influence for the ring at the Lily Pool. It was intended to be used for gatherings, where all who sit in the circle are equal. This shows the ring in its original condition; in the 1960s, the ring was set in asphalt. The ring will be reset in the rehabilitation.

graphs, comparing the Lily Pool’s current condition to the way it looked soon after the construction in the 1930s. They were shown details of Caldwell’s original design, and a short videotape of comments by experts representing each of the special interests in the Lily Pool redevelopment. Participants were asked to concentrate their discussion on the current state of the Lily Pool, visions for redevelopment, and their attitudes about specific elements within the site.

High Level of Agreement
Encouraging news emerged from this process. Among the diverse special interests, there is a high level of agreement on the following critical points:

- The site is in great need of rehabilitation.
- The redesign should be sensitive to Caldwell’s design intent, while also accommodating current-day considerations.
- Access for people with disabilities is critical.
- More grass should be planted, and shrubs and perennials of varying heights and forms should be added.
- The amount of additional limestone added in the 1960s should be reduced.
- A path along the east that was present in the original plan but that’s been closed off for many years should be restored in a way that allows access for people with disabilities and that doesn’t diminish—and if possible, enhances—habitat for birds.
- Continued maintenance after rehabilitation is mandatory.
The Proposed Plan of Action

The Plan's Key Elements

Flowering and fruiting trees, shrubs, and native grasses and flowers will be replanted throughout the site. Staghorn sumac, nannyberry, and other native plants will be replanted at the site. Where possible, plant material will be faithful to Caldwell's original design; in other cases, substitutions will occur. Plants selected will be in keeping with Alfred Caldwell's intent to produce a Midwestern wooded glade, and will also increase food plants for birds. Some trees and weedy vegetation will be removed to return the Lily Pool to a closer approximation of Caldwell's vision and to provide sunlight for understory plantings.

Large amounts of stone and concrete will be removed. Some of the rock added over the years will be taken out. The erosion problem, which the stone was meant to address, will be checked by plantings.

The pond will be dredged, and its water plants will be replanted. Currently choked by silt, the pool will be dug out and the edges replanted to decrease the amount of dirt eroding into it. A system for aeration will also be put in place.

The historic structures will be repaired and restored. The pavilion, the council ring, the waterfall, and the Fullerton entry gate will all be repaired.

A path around the entire pond will be restored. As it is now, only two-thirds of the pond edge has a trail open to walkers and less than a tenth of the circumference is accessible to wheelchair users. A new limestone path will be laid, providing complete access to the pond’s perimeter for people on foot and greatly-improved access for people in wheelchairs. People in wheelchairs will be able to reach each of the Lily Pool’s star attractions: the pavilion, the waterfall, and the council ring which will have a ramp as well as stairs. The only section someone in a wheelchair would not be able to traverse will be the area between the waterfall and the pavilion, and the stairs to the council ring. These are historically important features intended to provide a sense that the visitor is taking a hike in natural woods, and it’s important they be retained.

The Lily Pool landscape will be expanded to the east and west. Increasing the amount of land that is landscaped as bird-friendly habitat lessens the potential disturbance to birds caused by increased public access.

Caldwell’s original entrance on the east border will be reopened. This entrance will be made accessible for people in wheelchairs. Disabled parking will also be placed close by.

Programs for visitor management and education will be put in place. A docent program where volunteers explain the historic and ecological significance of the site to visitors will be an important component of the Lily Pool’s new life. Brochures for self-guided tours will be provided, and schools will be offered the opportunity to bring art, ecology, or history classes through for tours.

Hours when the site is open will be posted, consistent, and clear.

A plan and budget to maintain the site will be put in place. The Lily Pool’s best chance for excellent maintenance is to have one person in charge who understands the plan and can implement it on a daily basis. A critical component of the budget is to raise money for a Stewardship Fund for education and volunteer docent programs at the Lily Pool and similar landscapes within Lincoln Park.
The Lily Pool is located within Lincoln Park, two miles north of downtown Chicago.

Left. This rendering of the plan shows the principle physical changes that are part of the proposed rehabilitation plan. Superfluous stone work and a small building will be removed. Historic structures will be repaired. The pool will be dredged and restored to good health. A path around the entire pond will be restored. The major features, such as the council ring, waterfall and pavilion will be accessible to disabled visitors. And Calumet's sunny understory, with its beds of flowers and other perennials, will be restored.
## Estimated Expenses

### Research, Planning and Design (completed)
- Focus groups, videography, historic and architectural research, concept design, publication, public opinion assessment: $70,000

### Physical Rehabilitation of the Lily Pool
- **Landscape:** Trees, bed preparation and mulch, shrubs, perennials, wetland planting and erosion control: $496,000
- **Stonework:** Repair and replacement of existing limestone paving, and installation of new limestone; repair of council ring and waterfall: $384,000
- **Restoration of structures:** Fixing pavilion and Fullerton entrance gate: $294,000
- **Removing stones, shed, fence, asphalt and gravel, concrete wall, miscellaneous site furnishings; installing an aerator and light fixtures, and making adjustments to utilities; and pruning and removing trees:** $150,000
- **Earthwork:** Fine grading, pond survey and excavation, installation of clay liner for pond: $127,000
- **Fencing and site furnishings:** Fence, Cannon entrance gate, trash receptacles and signs: $81,000

**REHABILITATION SUBTOTAL:** $1,602,000

### Stewardship Fund
- **Docent Program and Education:** $250,000

**STEWARDSHIP FUND SUBTOTAL:** $250,000

### TOTAL

**TOTAL:** $1,852,000
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This is a publication of Friends of Lincoln Park, a nonprofit organization of citizens dedicated to preserving and improving the assets of the park through the funding and implementation of special projects, such as the Lily Pool rehabilitation. The Friends' activities supplement the work of the Chicago Park District by mobilizing the energies and talents of the local community. For more information, write Friends of Lincoln Park; 2000 North Racine Avenue, Suite 2080; Chicago, Illinois 60614; or call 773.883.7275.

Front Cover. A view of the Prairie Style pavilion, looking north. 1940. Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society.

Back Cover. Caldwell's drawings for park designs were so handsome and compelling that "even his worst enemies (in the Chicago Park District bureaucracy) recognized their value and wanted to sign them....Sometimes the drawings carry the signatures of six approving officials." (Alfred Caldwell: The Life and Work of a Prairie School Landscape Architect by Dennis Domer.) This illustration shows an arbor seat and lamp planned for the Lily Pool; the Japanese quality of the plan and this drawing show Frank Lloyd Wright's influence on Caldwell.
Caldwell's original rendering of the Lily Pool is shown opposite. "Nobody could draw better than Caldwell," says Dennis Diner, Caldwell's biographer. "He was a Michelangelo." Shown here: Looking north across the pool, August 2001. This contemporary view shows how the lagoon has been restored and overgrown trees removed. Ground-cover plantings were still getting established when this shot was taken, and the pavilion restoration was under way.
In downtown Chicago, a classic Prairie School landscape is restored to life. By Cathy Jean Maloney

Uncovering An Oasis

Shortly before he died in 1998, Alfred Caldwell returned to the Lily Pool, his masterpiece of Prairie School landscape architecture nestled in Chicago's Lincoln Park. Some 60 years had passed since he first created this sylvan haven, and time had not been kind to the site. Weed trees and shrubs choked sunlight from the clearing, stonework was broken, and the lagoon was murky and filled with debris. This was the place for which Caldwell had once cashed in his own life insurance policy to pay for needed perennials. Now, no flowers grew.

"It's a dead world," Caldwell said, upon first sight. Dan Purciarello, a Chicago Park District landscape architect who accompanied the nonagenarian Caldwell to the Lily Pool, vividly recalls these words. As project manager for the rehabilitation of the Caldwell Lily Pool, Purciarello, along with an unprecedented assemblage of community groups, is trying to bring this dead world to life. With interested parties ranging from bird-watchers, preservation advocates, and local governments, to common citizens, this is not a run-of-the-mill resurrection.
Alfred Caldwell (1903–1998), designed the Lily Pool in the late 1930s as a refuge from the city. With his signature prairie style, acquired through mentorships from Jens Jensen and Frank Lloyd Wright, Caldwell redeveloped an old Victorian pond to a 1½-acre naturalistic sanctuary.

“The Lily Pool was one of the most complete projects that Caldwell worked on for the Chicago Park District,” says Julia Sniderman Bachrach, park historian and longtime preservation advocate. During the WPA years, although many projects were under way in the Chicago parks, few allowed Caldwell full rein in artistic expression. Bachrach believes the Lily Pool is unique, despite the ravages of time. “It is a very intact example of Caldwell’s work,” she explains. “Because of the [smaller] scale, Caldwell was able to articulate all the landscape elements that were important to him.”

The bones of Caldwell’s original design have held together over the years. His plan included a lagoon, made to look like a prairie river cut through limestone bedrock. Inviting stonework paths circled the lagoon, and a council ring was sited on a hill, providing views to the Lily Pool below and glimpses of Lake Michigan to the east. The strong inward orientation of the site encourages personal reflection and relaxation, despite the hectic pace of its urban surroundings.

Caldwell’s characteristically detailed drawing called for groupings of crab apple, sumac, serviceberry, and hawthorns underplanted with native shrub roses, viburnum, and literally tens of thousands of woodland perennials. “He knew plants upside down and backwards,” says Dennis Dormer, author of the biography Alfred Caldwell (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). Having studied with both Jensen and Chicago botanist H. S. Peppoon, Caldwell was not only a master stonemason but a plantsman as well.

When the Lily Pool first opened in the 1930s, the public responded enthusiastically to the new space. So enthusiastically, in
fact, that the effect of human traffic caused significant erosion and damage to the plantings. Compounding the problem, the Lily Pool had been designated a bird sanctuary in the 1950s and became a spot for the adjacent Lincoln Park Zoo to breed and feed migratory birds. Renamed “The Rookery,” the site was host to birds who came from far and wide on their lakeshore migrations and turned Caldwell’s quiet sanctuary into an avian O’Hare.

The Chicago Park District attempted a restoration in the 1960s, but with the intent to retain the space as a bird nesting ground. Inappropriate stone was added to check the erosion, and the eastern footpath that circled the lagoon was removed. Desperately needed maintenance was limited, at best, throughout the next decades.

“Even in the state it was in, people would come upon it and be amazed that it was there,” says Carol Parden, president of the Friends of Lincoln Park. “So many of us remember taking walks through the Lily Pool as young children. This was such a special spot.” Friends of Lincoln Park (FOLP), a grassroots advocacy group, spearheaded the fight to return the Lily Pool to its former beauty and purpose. In 1997, the FOLP began an effort with the Chicago Park District to develop a concept plan for the Lily Pool. The FOLP and the Chicago Park District will share the estimated $2.3- to $2.4-million-dollar cost of the rehabilitation.

Getting input from all of the constituents who felt they had a claim to the Lily Pool was critical to the success of the plan. Grants were obtained from the USDA Forest Service, The Chicago Community Trust, and the Graham Foundation for the concept plan. Working with Wolff Clements and Associates, a Chicago-based landscape architecture firm, the team produced educational videos, obtained historical expertise, and conducted a series of focus groups.

Birders, ADA advocates, historic preservation proponents, nearby residents, and general park users were all invited to the focus groups. Part of the sessions were educational, with participants shown before-and-after photos of the Lily Pool. Individuals were then asked for their ideas about redevelopment.

What could have been open warfare when the concept plan was unveiled turned into “the closest you could possibly come, at a public meeting, to a love-fest,” according to Carol Parden. Ted Wolff, of Wolff Clements and Associates, says this was largely because the research had been done, and they had the facts. “Instead of having these interest groups fighting with each other, we were able to identify areas where people agreed,” Wolff says.

Key points of agreement included a commitment to Caldwell’s original design, access for persons with disabilities, removal of 1960s limestone, additional plantings of various heights and forms, and continued maintenance after the rehabilitation. The concept plan therefore specified significant restoration of the stonework on paths, ledges, waterfall, and the council ring; reconstruction of two prairie-style pavilions; reopening of the eastern path; and extensive replanting.

The first phase of the work, begun in the fall of 2000, was more a process of subtraction than addition. More than 400 weed trees such as mulberry, box elder, and buckthorn were removed, according to Shawn Kingzette of Hendricksen, The Care of Trees. The Hendricksen group had inventoried the site and, using old photos and Caldwell’s notes, identified historically significant specimens. When old trees had to be removed because of disease, the decision was not made lightly, nor were the trees unceremoniously dumped. A big old cottonwood, for example, diseased beyond repair, was recycled as a climbing tree for the bear habitat in the Lincoln Park Zoo.

In deference to the bird advocates, all work was scheduled so as not to conflict with prime migration seasons. The lagoon was dredged with utmost care not to disturb the wildlife, a key concern of some constituents. A family of turtles, for example, was gently carried to a neighboring pond.

In the spring of 2001, work began on the
WOLFF CLEMENTS'S SITE PLAN was based on Caldwell's original 1930s plan. Features include (A) restoring the original paths, adding ADA accessibility where needed; (B) restoring the council ring; (C) restoring Caldwell's pavilions; (D) dredging and aerating the pond and restoring aquatic vegetation; (E) restoring the waterfall; and (F) restoring the entrance gate.

Now that the invasive trees have been removed, sunlight pours into the clearing, just as Caldwell intended. Until recently, however, not everyone was able to enjoy the Lily Pool. Like many pre-ADA landscapes, less than one-tenth of the site was accessible to wheelchairs in the original plan. Now, almost all of it will be. An interesting compromise was involved in reopening the eastern footpath, which is a key access point for visitors in wheelchairs. Bird advocates were concerned that the increase in foot traffic would disturb nesting in that area. To settle this issue, more land was acquired on the perimeter to provide additional refuge for the birds.

Birders will also be happy with the new mix of plantings. Now that the invasive trees have been removed, sunlight pours into the clearing, just as Caldwell intended. Understory plantings laden with berries for the birds will thrive again. To prevent an "instant landscape" look, specimens of varying maturity were purchased. "We have a nice, extensive palette of native plants," says Purciarelo. Unintentionally echoing Daniel Burnham, Chicago's great city planner of the 1900s, Purciarelo says, "This is no small plan."
In a rehabilitation work of this magnitude, surprises are inevitable. But Wolff describes them more as questions of policy or principle. Historic pictures, for example, showed that both prairie-style pavilions near the lagoon had roofs. Research later showed that the original design called for one open roof as opposed to the flat cover that is on it now, but that Caldwell himself added the roof later. To roof or not to roof was a rough call, more from preservation purity than from a construction standpoint.

Decisions like these are made as part of weekly planning sessions that are held with the team of landscape professionals, the Friends of Lincoln Park, and the Chicago Park District. One of the biggest challenges facing the group now is the issue of future maintenance. No one wants the Lily Pool to succumb to its earlier fate. Yet, the very attractiveness of the Lily Pool can be its own undoing. “The stone looks like Adventureland to kids,” observes Wolff.

Purciarello agrees. “We have to establish some decorum here. We don’t want to make this an unfriendly place, but it’s a different experience from the zoo.” Indeed, since Caldwell’s time, additions to the zoo have located exhibits like the polar bears immediately next to the Lily Pool. Busloads of school children were previously allowed to romp straight from the zoo to the tranquil space of the Lily Pool with no buffer zone.

While the details are still being worked out, one idea is to have the Friends of Lincoln Park establish a conservancy and contribute to the upkeep of the Lily Pool. It’s hoped that by limiting the hours and having docents available to explain the significance of the Lily Pool, the problems of the past won’t be repeated.

Last month, a small dedication ceremony was held to mark the end of the major rehabilitation work. The Lily Pool will be closed during the winter, but in the spring of 2002, a grand opening will be held. Fittingly, spring wildflowers, like those Caldwell bought with his own money, will burst forth, a dead world no more.

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PROJECT CREDITS

Program manager, owner: Chicago Park District.
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Mechanical and electrical engineer: Weber Consultants, Ltd., Chicago.
Civil engineer: Infrastructure Engineering, Inc., Chicago.
Tree consultants: Hendricksen, The Care of Trees, Chicago.
SPRING COMES TO THE PARK.
Chicago, March 14.—Thanks to the Chicago parks for a rich and beautiful gift to the people of Chicago. Last Saturday, lured out by the lovely spring weather, I wandered through Lincoln Park. Stirred by thoughts of spring, I was in a discontented, unsatisfied state of mind, for our parks are so hopelessly mundane and uninspiring, when lo, I found a jewel of rare and exquisite beauty lying directly in the path behind the zoo.

This was a garden, a garden around a pool, a pool below a waterfall—magic words! The carven gates were locked, but I crept through. Inside the magic gates lies a real garden in every sense of the word. Stone, as stone really is, cleft by falling water, wet and matted with ferns and moss, dappled by sun, shining through tall, slim birch and maples. Stone ledges, creviced by hawthorne and sumach, real trees like our own woodlands. Further along the magic path, under melting snow, a carpet of violet plants and how many more of our own real woodland wild flowers?

Then, wonder of wonders, a real garden building! The perfect fusion of building and garden—stone and real timbers, heavy and hewn from the tree, a haven of beauty and repose to refresh one's soul. I look forward to spring and all the seasons, each bringing a different mood and meaning to this lovely garden.

PARK STROLLER.