

Levy Park

Houston, TX

The renovation transformed an underutilized space into a world-class urban park with amenity-rich, open, green space that has become a catalyst for building community.

Levy Park has been re-imagined from a forgotten and underutilized space into an unforgettable curated urban park. The renovation of the park into a highly programmed 5.9-acre green space has been warmly embraced as the perfect addition to the City of Houston and has become a catalyst for economic development in the Upper Kirby District.

The design goal was to create a destination with a strong sense of place and community. Levy Park facilitates a multitude of programming needs for locals and visitors, while leveraging innovative environmental practices. Built with public funds and sustained primarily by private lease agreements, the park features two activity lawns, a performance pavilion, dog park, water features, community garden and rain garden, both which harvest and reuse stormwater. A promenade along the north side of the park connects game areas, decomposed granite seating courts and a performance stage and pavilion.

At the heart of the park is a winding, unique children's garden that features imaginative interactive sculptures, playful fountains and a 150-foot-long ADA accessible tree house. The treehouse sits on several large legacy live oak trees that were relocated on-site providing a magnificent canopy. Since opening in February of 2017, the park has seen attendance catapult from pre-renovation numbers of up to 75 visitors per week to ranges between 5,000 and 10,000 visitors per week. The redevelopment of Levy Park has contributed to the revitalization and quality of life in the Upper Kirby area and acts as an exceptional outdoor entertainment and recreation destination for the City of Houston.

Client

Upper Kirby Redevelopment Authority

Size

5.9 acres

Dates

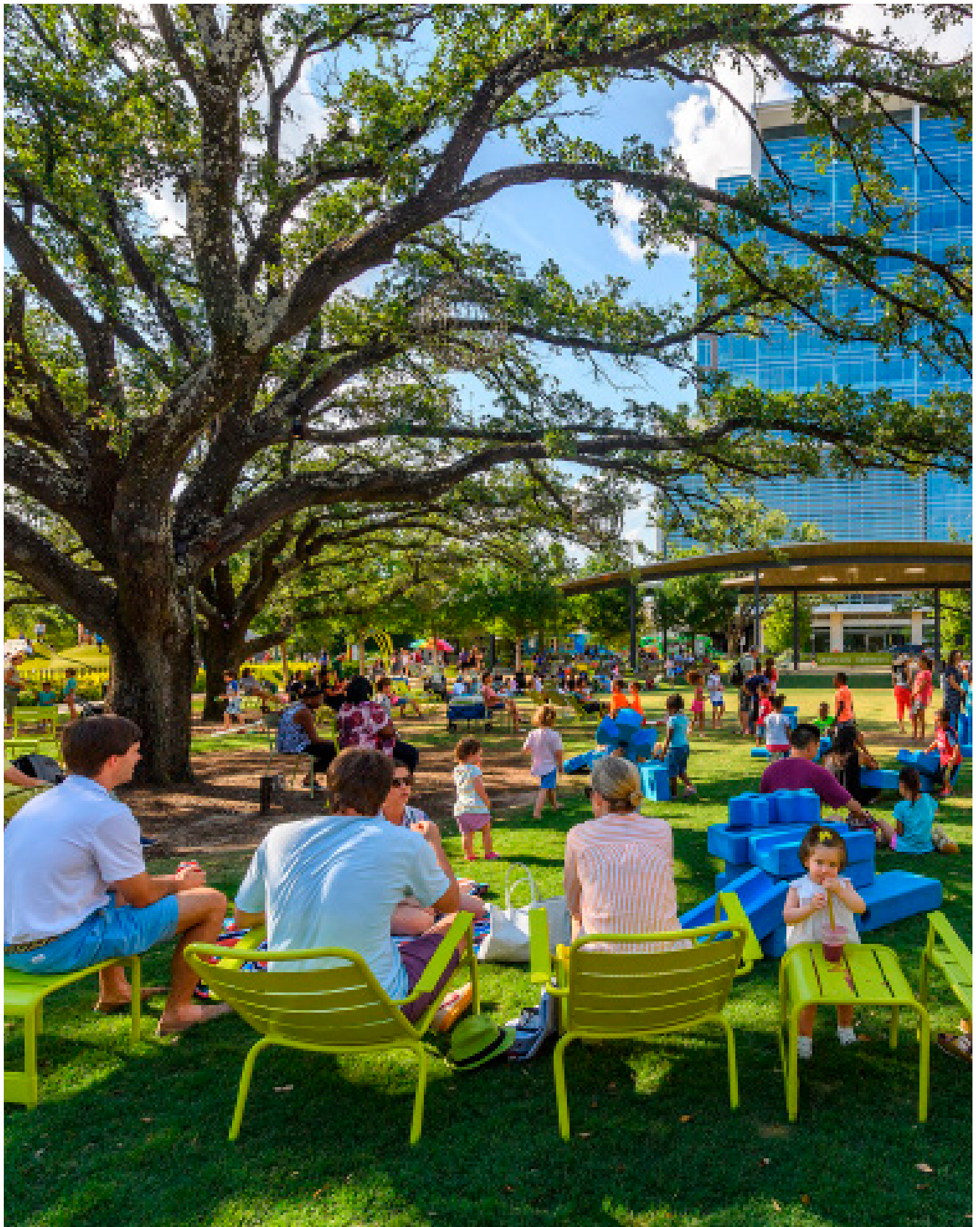
2013 - 2017

Team

Architect: Natalye Appel + Associates
Civil Engineer: Ward, Getz + Associates
Structural Engineer: Matrix Structural Engineers
MEP Engineer: Wylie Consulting Engineers
Irrigation Designer: Ellis Gluek
Water Feature: Fountain Source
Signage + Wayfinding: Minor Design
Placemaking: Biederman Redevelopment Ventures
IT/Audio/Visual/Security: 4b Technology Group

Awards

2018 ULI Urban Open Space Award Winner
2018 ASLA Texas Chapter Honor Award
2018 ULI Houston Urban Open Space Award
2018 ULI Houston People's Choice Award
2017 Houston Press: Best of Houston, Best New Park
2017 AIA Houston Urban Design Award











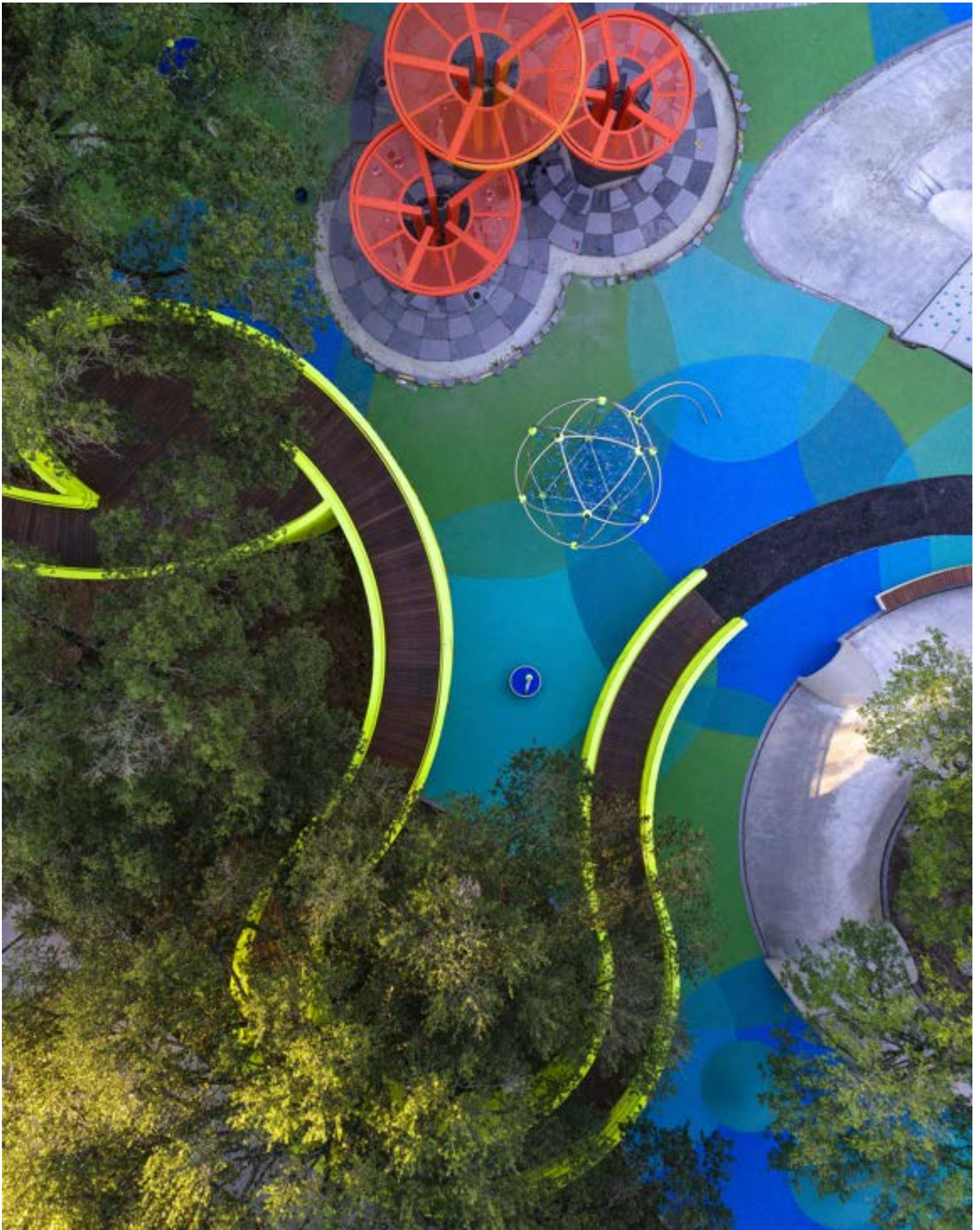
PROJECT NAME

The site's 70-year-old legacy live oaks are strategically incorporated into the design as key components of the elevated boardwalk and tree house located in the Children's Garden. These monument trees provide much needed shade and anchor the center of the park.













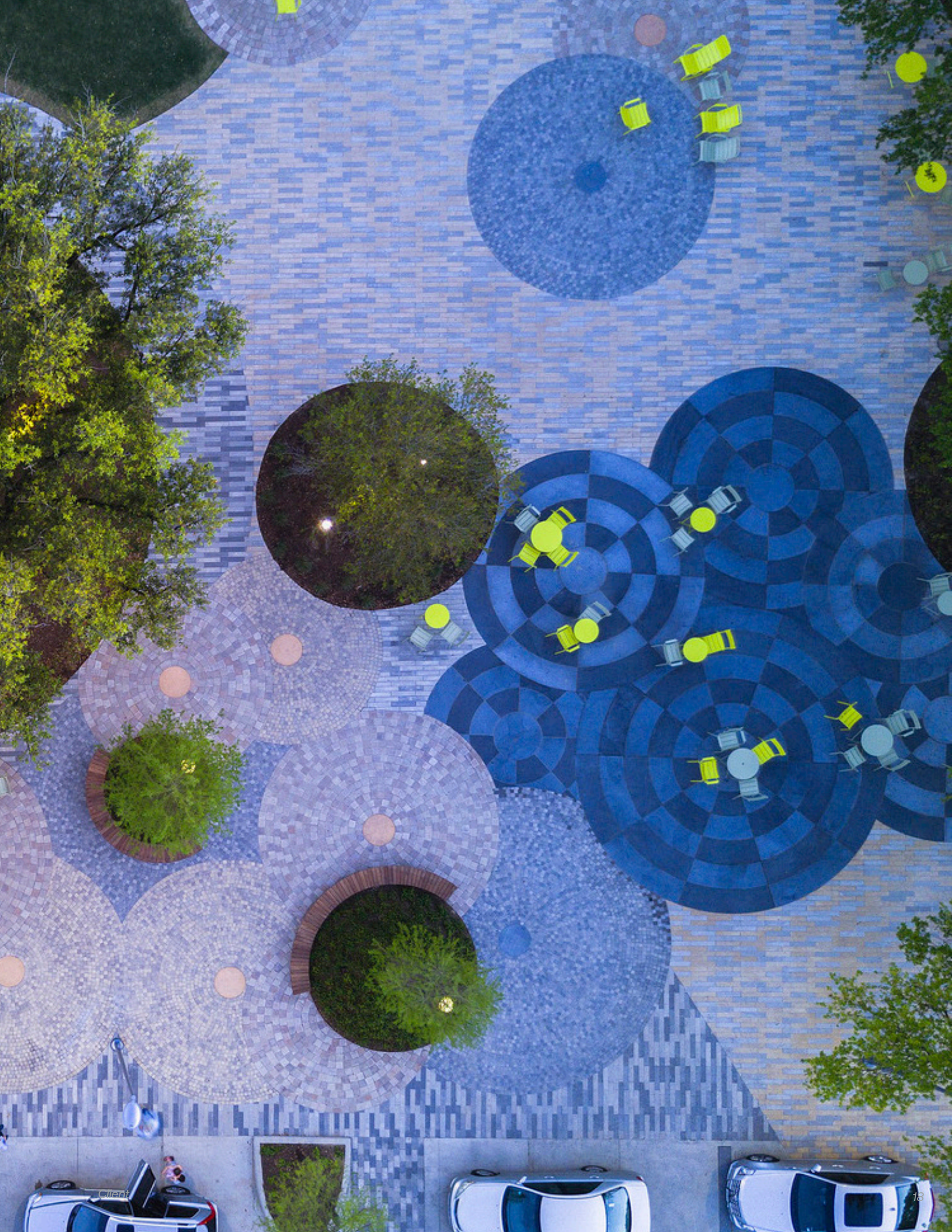














Sustainability

The park acts as an amenity for the residents of surrounding neighborhoods, with a restaurant, activity lawn, dog park, playground, rain garden, educational facilities and fitness.



LAND

Levy Park protects floodplain function.
The project restores a partially degraded site.



PLANTING

The design conserved vegetation by saving and transplanting trees on site.

20 trees were protected on site and 9 large trees with a diameter of 36 – 48 inches in caliper were relocated.

138 trees were planted, including Live Oaks, Allee Elms, Bald Cypress, and Shumard Red Oaks.

Planting encompasses 84,787 square feet.

32% native plant species were used.



WATER

A 7,500 square foot detention garden acts as an amenity while managing storm water.

Houston has many flooding concerns. This design employs a land mitigation strategy and meets a detention requirement.

The trees can intercept 80,000 gallons of storm water runoff on site, which is equivalent to the daily water usage of 800 American residents. *

The project features 3.3 acres of permeable surface.



CARBON, ENERGY & AIR

Large trees provide shade, decreasing the temperature by 10 degrees in the park.

The trees sequester 19,200 pounds of carbon annually. **

During construction, pollutants were controlled and retained.



SOCIAL

The park hosts an active and lively community garden through an organization called Urban Harvest. The design enhanced the existing gardens. The parking lot was designed to accommodate a pop-up farmers market.



ECONOMICS

Property values in the area were increased due to the installation of the project. The price per square foot changed from \$81 to \$140 on the West side (170%+) and from \$46 to \$92 on the North Side (200%+).

*The tree average for water interception is 500 gallons. American's use an average of 100 gallons of water per day (EPA's water trivia facts).

**120 pounds of CO2 per tree annually (This number is based on an average from the National Tree Benefits Calculator) One car produces an average of 8,320 pounds of CO2 per year (The Code of Federal Regulations - 40 CFR 600.113).