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Project for the 1992 Chicago World's Fair

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Project for the 1992 Chicago World's Fair

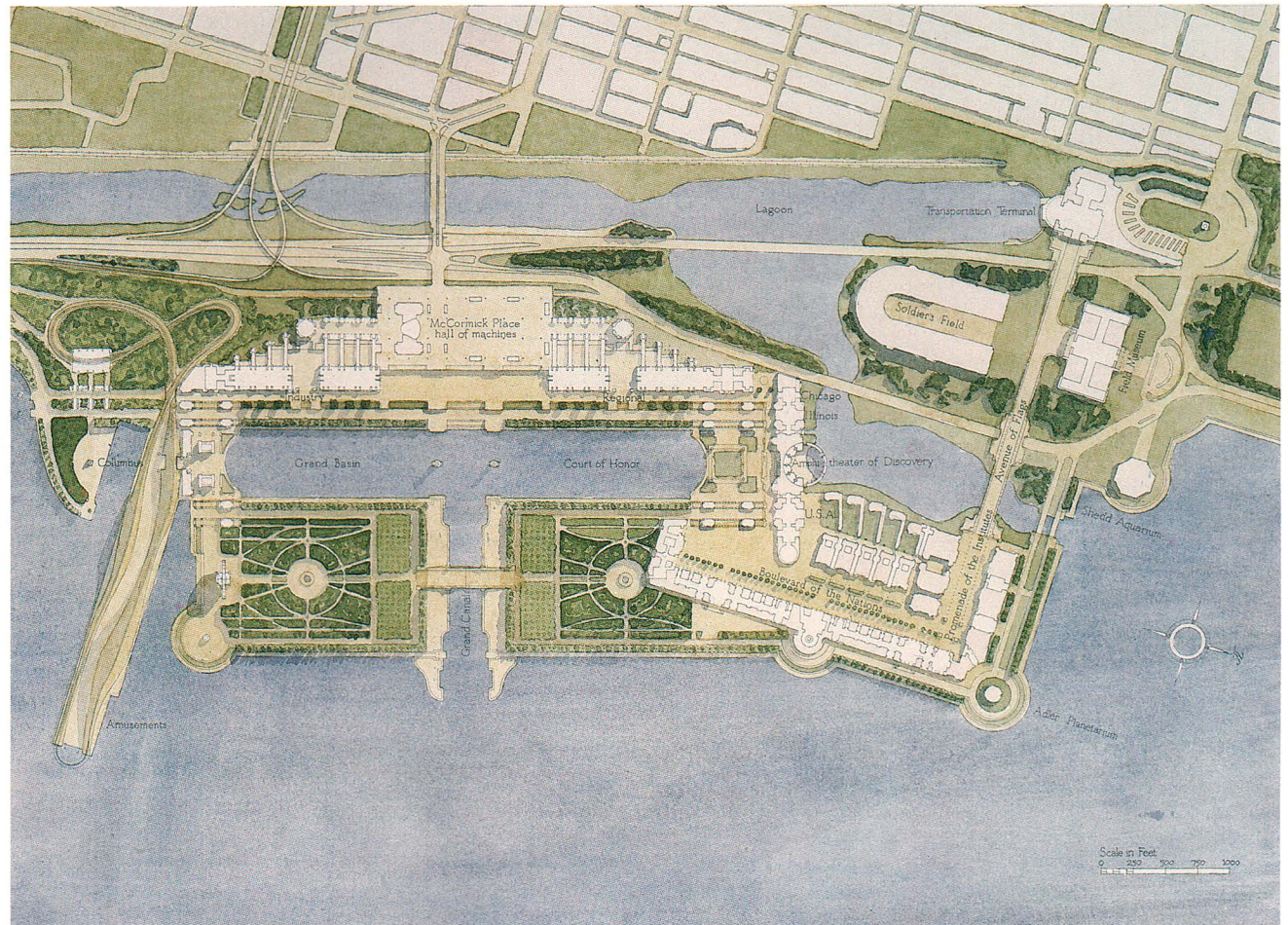
Stuart Cohen and Anders Nereim

with Max Underwood, Paul Janicki, Paul Danna, and Steve Lacker

The drawings for this project were completed in the summer of 1982.

In 1992 Chicago will be the site of a centennial celebration of America's discovery. As in 1892, Chicago will host a "World's Columbian Exposition" dedicated to the theme of discovery. The site for this World's Fair will be along the waterfront immediately to the south of Chicago's urban center. Present plans call for the creation of a landfill site which will extend the existing Meggs Field, a landing strip for small planes which was constructed on the site of the 1933 Century of Progress Fair. This land is just to the south of a group of cultural institutions—the Field Museum, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Adler Planetarium. To the south of the Field Museum is Soldier's Field, a great "U" shaped neoclassical arena used for sports events. The Field Museum and Soldier's Field are bordered on each side by the north and south bound lanes of Lake Shore Drive. The other major elements of the site are an existing lagoon, part of the 1933 Fair, and McCormick Place, a vast exposition hall acclaimed as one of the classics of the "Second Chicago School of Architecture."

Our proposal for the fair features a formal plan with a grand water basin and a "Court of Honor," similar to the 1892 World's Columbian Exposition. At the north end of the basin and the Court of Honor would be the "Hall of Discovery," a huge outdoor amphitheater (with a retracting roof) designed for the performance of



1992 Chicago World's Fair. Site plan.

pageants and sized to accommodate replicas of Columbus' ships. These would be moored in the adjacent lagoon and would be the first display seen by visitors entering the fair along the "Avenue of Flags"—a bridge over the lagoon flanked by flags of the participating nations and states. The

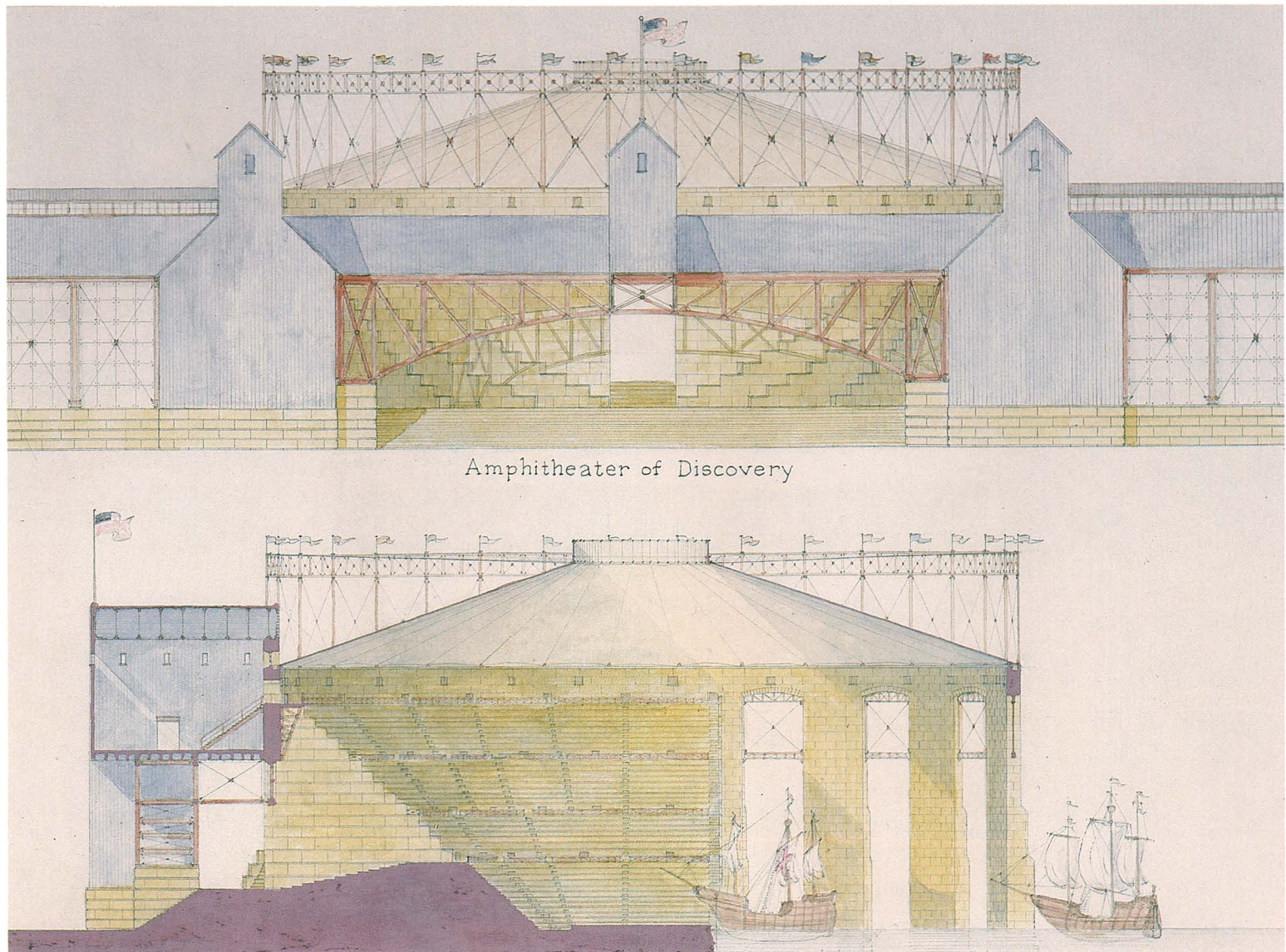
basin and court are designed so that the existing McCormick Place building would be a major visual focus both during and after the fair. The land to the east of the basin is designed as formal gardens. Because of the requirement that class one World's Fair buildings be temporary, the gardens,

esplanade, and lagoon will be all that will remain after the fair has ended. Thus their relationship to the permanent structures already on the site is very important.

Rather than a plan of isolated free-standing buildings, we suggest a



View of World's Fair looking north along the lake front.



Amphitheater of Discovery

1992 Chicago World's Fair. Amphitheater of Discovery part of the Hall of Discovery, the main exhibition building of the Fair located at the north end of the Court of Honor and the Grand Basin.

series of grand scale buildings defining streets and plazas. These buildings would be large exhibition halls with open floor areas connected by arcades. They could be designed as "kit of parts" buildings by a committee of fair architects and then be given out as individual commissions. These buildings would be designed to be rapidly erected and then demounted. They could be made of steel columns, trusses, and metal and glass wall panels, in order to evoke an esthetic that would combine images of Paxton's Crystal Palace and the Mid-western industrial sheds. Within these

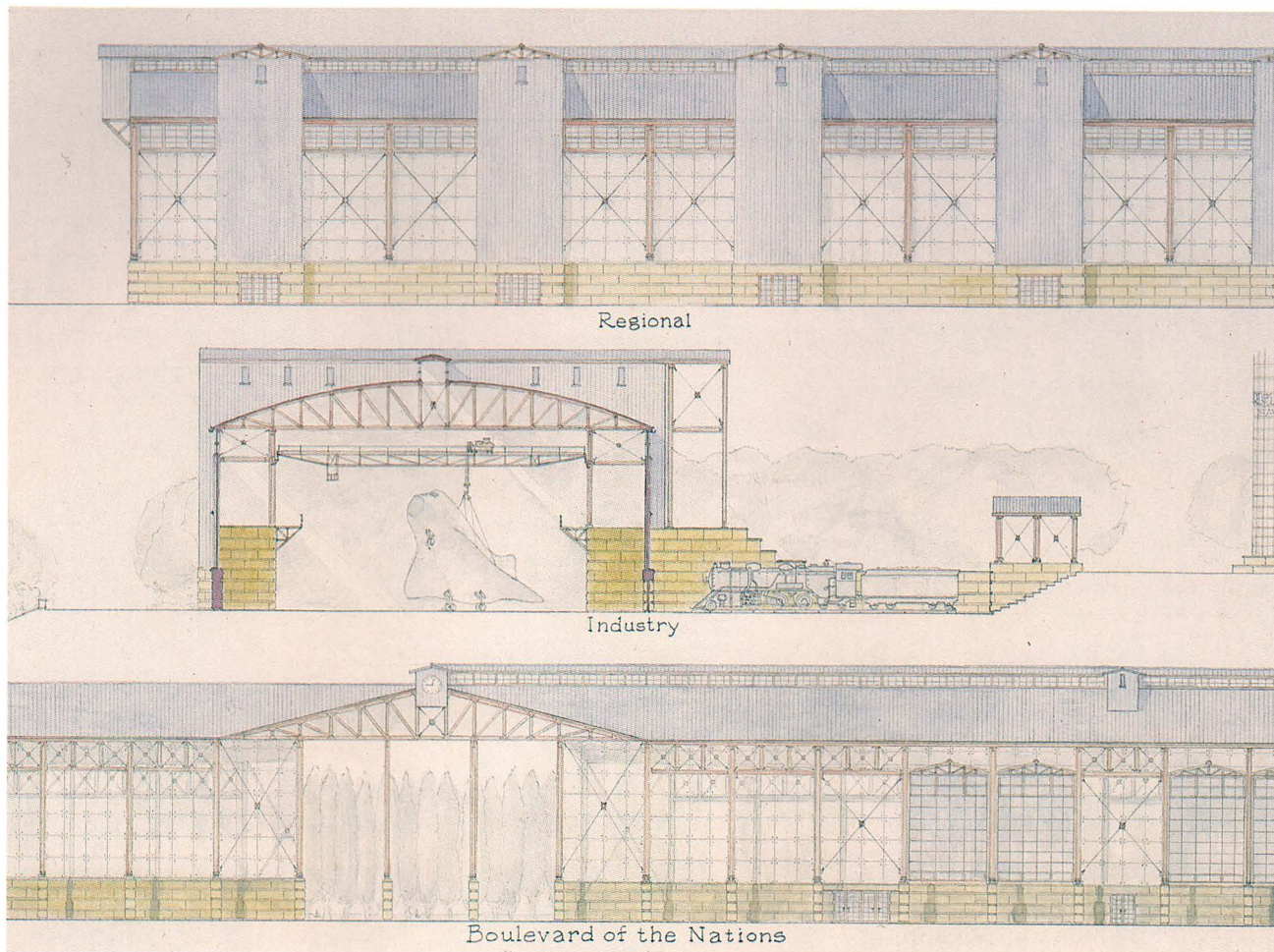
enormous exhibition sheds individual exhibitors—states, countries, and industries—could build separate displays or exhibition pavilions.

Our plan also includes the following suggestions for improvements near the fair grounds. The part of the Illinois Central Railroad's track right of way to the west of Lake Shore Drive, presently not in use, would become lagoons and park rather than parking lots for the Fair and Soldier's Field. This would create an area similar to that which exists in Chicago's Lincoln Park, and would open the area for fu-

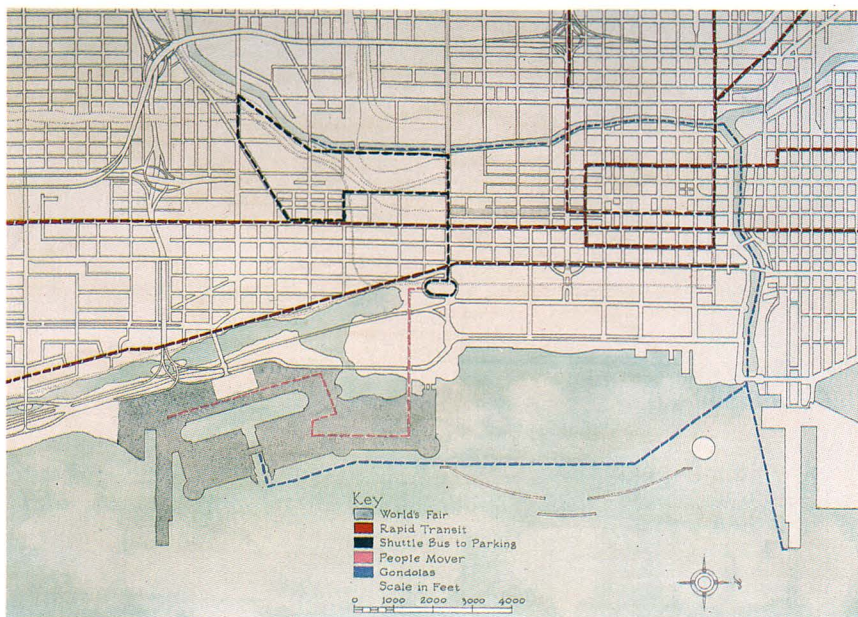
ture development. Lake Shore Drive, with its incomparable panorama of the central city, should remain above grade and not be decked over as has been proposed. No Fair buildings should be built in Grant Park. We believe that the use of large exhibitor's buildings rather than many small individual pavilions for most of the displays will make the use of this additional park land unnecessary. Our plan also locates a new permanent Transportation and Parks building just west of the Field Museum on an extension of Roosevelt Road. It could serve during the Fair as an orientation

building; a terminus for transit links with the central city as well as shuttle buses coming to the Fair and to events at Soldier's Field.

We believe that the Fair's plan must be one which allows gardens and urban spaces to take precedent over individual buildings. We believe that the time has come for a return to the principles of traditional urbanism, and that the 1992 World's Fair must be a demonstration of the potential of these principles for the contemporary city.



Typical exhibitors building.



Transportation and circulation plan.



View of Burnham Harbor and World's Fair from Lake Michigan.