THE RETREAT AT GEAUGA LAKE

Kate Jackson
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my parents who grew up going to Geauga Lake and also took me when I was a child. Your nostalgia of this park, are what inspired this project. Thank you for your unending love and support. I love you both so much and I hope this project brings some justice to this park.

To my God, who has given me far more grace and mercy than I could ever hope to deserve.

To my professors, whose guidance and support has been invaluable throughout this entire process.
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Originally named Giles Pond, after settler Sullivan Giles, Geauga Lake became a scenic destination to visitors of Aurora, Ohio. In the 1880's this land became designated as picnic space, dance hall, and cottages for vacationers to enjoy.

In 1887, the park opened under the name Geauga Lake. The name itself comes from the Native American word “Sheauga” which means raccoon. Before the turn of the 20th century, the park expanded to include small rides, roller rink, photo gallery, billiard hall, and bowling alley, and a hotel on the far side of the lake.

In the 1920's the park saw the erection of the park’s first roller coaster, the Big Dipper. Overtime, the park changed hands, and SeaWorld opened across the lake. The park would later change ownership again after being purchased by the Six Flags franchise. Then, becoming what was the largest contiguous park at the time, Geauga Lake (known as Six Flags Ohio at the time), merged with SeaWorld to become Six Flags Worlds of Adventure.

After a huge investment into the park, Six Flags sold to Cedar Fair. Many consider this a strategic move by the Cedar Fair corporation to eliminate competition from nearby Cedar Point, because Geauga Lake was closed within a few years of the purchase. The water park in the former SeaWorld location remained open until the final closure in 2016. Since then all rides were sold or demolished, leaving the park abandoned.
1887 - Park opens
1889 - Park gets its first ride, a steam-powered carousel
1925 - The Big Dipper roller coaster opens. The tallest and fastest of its time.
1927 - Olympic圃eter sets world record in park's pool
1969 - Geauga Lake is sold and purchased by Funtimes Inc.
1970 - SeaWorld is opened across the lake
1999 - Geauga Lake becomes Six Flags Ohio
2000 - Six Flags invests $30 million into the park
2001 - Six Flags merges with SeaWorld to become the largest amusement park at the time
2004 - Six Flags sells its Delta Park and the park is renamed Geauga Lake
2005 - Former SeaWorld site becomes Wildwater Kingdom water park
2007 - Geauga Lake is closed. Wildwater Kingdom remains open
2016 - Wildwater Kingdom is closed. Rides are demolished or sold
2018 - The last of the rides, including the Big Dipper are removed
THE SITE
This site is located in the city of Aurora, Ohio, about 30 miles southeast of Cleveland via Route 43 which runs along the southern boarder of the site. Additionally the site is bordered by the 50 acre lake to the eastern side. The site is currently owned by Cedar Fair Entertainment and totals at 500 acres (although the scope of this project focuses only on 24 of those acres). The site is zoned commercially, as are the strip of businesses that boarder Route 43. Outside of that are large areas of residential neighborhoods and development.
Aurora, Ohio has a population of 15,712 people, with a population density of 686 people per square mile. This city is a relatively affluent area. The majority of the residents make over $60,000 a year in salary and the average property value is $246,200. However, this is also an aging population. The median age is 46, and some of the largest industries in this area are healthcare, particularly senior living. Since the park closed there has been a decrease in the amount of young people living and working in this city as there is no draw here for them anymore.
The entirety of the Geauga Lake Property encompasses 500 acres. However, this project aims to focus on only 24 of those acres within the most historically significant portion of the site, the area extending from the park’s former entrance, down to North Aurora Road (Route 43). The main focus of this project is the footprint of the Big Dipper roller coaster as this was the first true landmark of the park, and the last ride to be removed.
To bring new life to this amusement park by creating a new place for people to gather and enjoy. Including a hotel, event center, and park with walking trails. As this is an adaptive reuse project, the aim is to preserve as many of the original landscape features as possible including the original hardscape, the former lazy river, and the original boardwalk. The project aims to emulate the original form of the roller coaster and include many sustainable features, such as solar panels, green roofs, and a louvred facade. Furthermore, the majority of the natural landscape that has been allowed to take over in the park’s absence will remain untouched to give the effect of nature reclaiming the park.

**Step 1:**
Utilize outline of the “Big Dipper” the first roller coaster erected in the park, and the last to be demolished.

**Step 2:**
Elevate to provide space for the hotel rooms and to recall the height that the roller coasters had previously given the site.

**Step 3:**
Step the form upwards in an abstraction of a roller coaster, creating terraces. Additionally, create an interesting, undulating form in the roofline of the event center that further mimics the roller coaster shape.

**DESIGN ABSTRACT**
To bring new life to this amusement park by creating a new place for people to gather and enjoy. Including a hotel, event center, and park with walking trails. As this is an adaptive reuse project, the aim is to preserve as many of the original landscape features as possible including the original hardscape, the former lazy river, and the original boardwalk. The project aims to emulate the original form of the roller coaster and include many sustainable features, such as solar panels, green roofs, and a louvred facade. Furthermore, the majority of the natural landscape that has been allowed to take over in the park’s absence will remain untouched to give the effect of nature reclaiming the park.
Hotel
Event Center
Lazy River
Cottages
Original Entrance to the Park
"Monorail" Elevated Walkway
Restaurant
Original Hardscape Walking Trails
Parking
Solar Panels
Marina
Boardwalk
From the 1960’s until the year Cedar Fair bought Geauga Lake, a monorail ride encircled the Big Dipper, providing views across the park. To mimic this, there is now an elevated walking trail in the space where the monorail was. From here you can see the lazy river, cabins, and the allowance of nature to reclaim the site.
As a callback to when this area was known as Giles Pond, the decision was made to include new cottages in the program. The cottages were placed on the former boardwalk, which had been void of buildings since the park’s closing, and mimic the bright colors and scale of the shops formerly in their place. Each cottage is four bedrooms, and four bathrooms, enough for two families to share.
In an effort to not impede walkability of the site, the majority of the parking was brought underground. Additionally, this serves to mitigate the heat island effect. The underground parking garage can hold 153 cars and has access to the park with two ramps and staircases that go straight outside. Additionally, there are stairs and elevators that access the hotel and the event center.
The first half of the level 1 consists of a 15,000 square foot ballroom that can be sub-divided into three additional rooms, as well as the restaurant. Both of which are designed to encourage public enjoyment of the space.
LEVEL 1 Continued

The second half of the ground floor consists of the hotel portion of the building. The hotel side contains a lobby, breakfast area, conference rooms, fitness center, and 16 guest rooms, enough to sleep 57 guests.
The 2nd floor contains 23 rooms, enough for 92 people, a seating area adjacent to the elevators for waiting and socializing, and a lightwell that reaches from the 4th floor down to the lobby on the 1st floor as well as two terraces that connect to the "monorail" an elevated walking trail that perforates the building. Additionally, there is a rooftop bar that can be enjoyed by guests and the public alike.
LEVEL 3

The 3rd floor hosts 26 rooms, enough for 90 people, a seating area adjacent to the elevators for waiting and socializing, and a lightwell that reaches from the 4th floor down to the lobby on the 1st floor.
The 4th floor contains 26 rooms, enough for 90 people, a seating area adjacent to the elevators for waiting and socializing, and access to a green terrace that has a skylight that looks down to the 1st floor.
The 5th floor contains 12 rooms, enough for 39 people, a seating area adjacent to the elevators for waiting and socializing, and access to a green roof terrace.
The 6th floor contains 13 rooms, enough for 43 people, there’s also a seating area adjacent to the elevators for waiting and socializing.
In an effort to mimic the Big Dipper that once stood in its place, the exposed vertical members as well as the arches of the restaurant and event center are made of glue-laminated timber.
DETAILS: LOUVRES

These louvres are the main shading and facade treatment of the building. Although this is a cool climate, because the majority of the building faces to the west, which could create excess heat in the summer and thereby create large cooling loads. Therefore, to offset this heat, and the create the effect of nature reclaiming an old wooden roller coaster, vines would grow up these louvres. In the winter the vines would become dormant and the leave would fall off, allowing for the sun to enter the building when it is most needed, thereby reducing heating loads in the winter.
2nd FLOOR TERRACE


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