20 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago

These architecture firms are leading the way in Chicago and beyond.

Architizer Editors

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Chicago is near the top of many enthusiasts' lists or architectural pilgrimages. After being destroyed by a fire in 1871, like a phoenix, Chicago rose from its ashes, and in the process, it became an urban incubator for skyscraper design. Throughout the next several decades, architects explored the possibilities of steel frame construction and plate glass. Architects like Daniel Burnham, Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright and Ludwig Mies pioneered novel theories and designs, in the process devising methods for erecting taller and taller buildings with unique ways of expressing their structural prowess.

Fast forward to today, and Chicago remains an influential producer in the architectural world. More and more, the city has turned its attention to landscape architecture and the architecture of public places. This urban-oriented approach is apparent in many leading firms found in the following list.

With so many architecture firms to choose from, it's challenging for clients to identify the industry leaders that will be an ideal fit for their project needs. Fortunately, Architizer is able to provide guidance on the top design firms in Chicago based on more than a decade of data and industry knowledge.

How are these architecture firms ranked?

The following ranking has been created according to key statistics that demonstrate each firm's level of architectural excellence. The following metrics have been accumulated to establish each architecture firm's ranking, in order of priority:

- The number of A+Awards won (2013 to 2022)
- The number of A+Awards finalists (2013 to 2022)
- The number of projects selected as "Project of the Day" (2009 to 2022)
- The number of projects selected as "Featured Project" (2009 to 2022)
- The number of projects uploaded to Architizer (2009 to 2022)

Each of these metrics is explained in more detail at the foot of this article. This ranking list will be updated annually, taking into account new achievements of Chicago architecture firms throughout the year.

Without further ado, here are the 22 best architecture firms in Chicago:

22. dSPACE Studio

ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE

We are an award-winning architecture firm dedicated to architecture, interiors, and landscape. Our work is defined by thoughtful design and innovation. Every project is tailor-made. Project types include residential and commercial, with a focus on urban dwellings, vacation homes, and unique business spaces. Projects include new construction, renovations, and additions.

APPROACH

We approach all projects individually. Each project starts with an exploration of client needs and evolves from budget, location, and context without imposition of preconceived styles or solutions. We strive to integrate environmentally sustainable design with green technologies and materials, whenever possible.

PHILOSOPHY

We are dedicated to client satisfaction by meeting mutually agreed upon project requirements and goals.

Some of dSPACE Studio's most prominent projects include:

- Escape Pod- 2013 AIA Award Winner, Chicago, IL, United States
- Old Town Modern, Chicago, IL, United States
- Sonoma In The City- 2019 AIA Award Winner, Chicago, IL, United States
- Zinc House, Chicago, IL, United States
- Riverwoods, Riverwoods, IL, United States

The following statistics helped dSPACE Studio achieve 20th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

Featured Projects	2
Total Projects	16

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19. Pappageorge Haymes Partners

© Pappageorge Haymes Partners

Since 1981, the architecture of Pappageorge Haymes Partners (PH) has had a profound influence on attitudes toward the rebirth of our cities and the promise of urban living. Our unique approach – both passionately civic and distinctly practical – has produced a remarkable and award-winning body of work that includes nearly every product and building type, from single-family homes to high-rises, expansive mixed-use developments, far-sighted neighborhood plans, and the creative adaptive re-use of structures across the United States. Well known for the collaborative, client-oriented approach and insightful skill we bring to every project, PH is widely recognized as an important leader in its field.

Some of Pappageorge Haymes Partners's most prominent projects include:

- K2 Apartments, Chicago, IL, United States
- ARC at Old Colony, Chicago, IL, United States
- One Museum Park, Chicago, IL, United States
- Alta Roosevelt, Chicago, IL, United States
- Wolf Point East, Chicago, IL, United States

The following statistics helped Pappageorge Haymes Partners achieve 19th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

Featured Projects	2
Total Projects	16

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18. Cordogan Clark & Associates

We create great environments. We are a full service architecture, planning and engineering firm with deep experience in academic, civic and residential architecture. Our portfolio includes many innovative, first of their kind projects. We have extensive experience in the design and technical development of building systems and the management of complex projects. We maintain a special focus on architecture that supports and benefits its community.

Some of Cordogan Clark & Associates's most prominent projects include:

- Fay-Cooper Cole Hall, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, United States
- Herget Middle School, Aurora, IL, United States
- Scientel Solutions Global Headquarters, Aurora, IL, United States
- The John C. Dunham Aurora Art Center, Aurora, IL, United States
- Bell Tower for Special Needs Campus, IL, United States

The following statistics helped Cordogan Clark & Associates achieve 18th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

Featured Projects	2

Total Projects	36

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17. STLarchitects

STLarchitects is an architecture and urban design firm founded in 1996 and headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. With projects in the US, Europe and Asia, STLArchitects' design work has been widely recognized for its design excellence and has been published worldwide.

Some of STLarchitects's most prominent projects include:

- Gwangju Library, Gwangju, South Korea
- Carlow VISUAL Arts Centre, Carlow, Ireland
- 400 N Lake Shore Dr, Concept – Chicago, IL, United States
- Korean Museum of Urbanism and Architecture, South Korea
- National Museum of Korean Literature, Seoul, South Korea

The following statistics helped STLarchitects achieve 17th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

Featured Projects	3
Total Projects	15

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16. Searl Lamaster Howe Architects

Searl Lamaster Howe Architects is committed to realizing inspiring spaces for clients who value where they live, work, play and learn. Each project is approached as a unique opportunity with a distinct set of needs and aspirations. Client collaboration at each step of the design and construction process is key to the quality of the office's work. A project's aesthetic is complemented and shaped by a detailed study of program, context, technology, and budget. The studio shares a commitment to creativity, innovation, sustainability, detail, and materiality. The firm portfolio includes residential, commercial and institutional projects that range from master planning to renovations to restorations to new construction; it is a member of the United States Green Building Council and offers full LEED services.

Some of Searl Lamaster Howe Architects's most prominent projects include:

- Lawless Retreat, Jones, MI, United States
- Water Tower One, Chicago, IL, United States
- Water Tower Two, Chicago, IL, United States

- Pearson 2.0, Chicago, IL, United States
- 1212 LSD, Chicago, IL, United States

The following statistics helped Searl Lamaster Howe Architects achieve 16th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

Featured Projects	1
Total Projects	17

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15. Brininstool + Lynch

Established in Chicago in 1989, Brininstool + Lynch has been bringing rigor, vision, and elegance to diverse projects since its founding. The work is firmly rooted in the proud architectural legacy of Chicago; it unabashedly celebrates its kinship with the rigorous modernism of Mies van der Rohe, as well as its sympathy for Frank Lloyd Wright's marriage of building and landscape. And, in the pragmatic Chicago tradition, Brininstool + Lynch is a firm whose work is as much driven by process, as it is by product.

Some of Brininstool + Lynch's most prominent projects include:

- Claremont House, Chicago, IL, United States
- Coffou Cottage, Michigan City, IN, United States
- Lincoln Building, Syracuse, NY, United States
- Wood House, Chicago, IL, United States
- Mariposa House, Malibu, CA, United States

The following statistics helped Brininstool + Lynch achieve 15th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

Featured Projects	5
Total Projects	15

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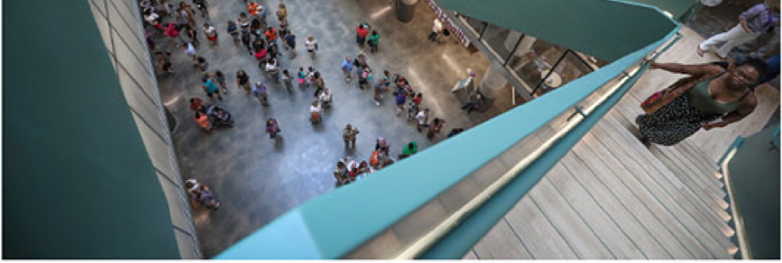
14. Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.



Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) is a global firm of engineers, architects and materials scientists that specializes in the investigation, analysis, testing, and design of repairs for historic and contemporary structures. Since the firm's founding more than sixty years ago, WJE has focused on delivering practical, innovative, and technically sound solutions across all areas of new and existing construction. Our specialists bring the collective experience gained from conducting more than 125,000 investigations worldwide to every construction challenge. With global capabilities, WJE can respond quickly to assignments around the world. WJE combines state-of-the-art laboratory and testing facilities, global offices, and knowledge sharing systems to provide solutions for the built world.

Some of Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.'s most prominent projects include:

- PARALLAX | Salk Institue Community Center, 10010, North Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla, San Diego, CA, United States
- Marquette Building, Chicago, IL, United States
- Crosstown Concourse, Memphis, TN, United States

The following statistics helped Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. achieve 14th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Finalist	1
Total Projects	3

13. GREC Architects, LLC

We are a group of architects, designers, and planners who lead collaborative efforts with our team and our clients to provide creative and efficient project solutions.

Some of GREC Architects, LLC's most prominent projects include:

- EMME, Chicago, IL, United States
- Ace Hotel Chicago, Chicago, IL, United States
- Condé Nast/Pitchfork , Chicago, IL, United States
- Test, Chicago, Illinois, United States
- 5MLK, Portland, Oregon, United States

The following statistics helped GREC Architects, LLC achieve 13th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Finalist	1
Featured Projects	1
Total Projects	20

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12. Hoerr Schaudt

Shanghai Natural History Museum by Perkins and Will; landscape architecture by Hoerr Schaudt

At Hoerr Schaudt, we design beautiful, purposeful gardens that connect people, site, and season.

Gardens elicit joy, soothe our souls, and become places where we interact with each other and the world around us. Drawing upon centuries of time-honored tradition, our work layers botanical silhouettes to shape space and create settings that artfully blend the natural and built environments be it a residence, streetscape, campus, city park, or botanical garden.

Based in Chicago, with offices in Kansas City and Los Angeles, Hoerr Schaudt continues its 30-year mission to make gardens that thrive and delight.

Some of Hoerr Schaudt's most prominent collaborative projects include:

- The Gary Comer Youth Center, Chicago, IL, United States
- SandRidge Energy Commons, Oklahoma City, OK, United States
- Shanghai Natural History Museum, Shanghai, China
- Mountain Modern, CO, United States
- Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, United States

The following statistics helped Hoerr Schaudt achieve 12th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Finalist	1
Featured Projects	4
Total Projects	8

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11. FGP atelier

© FGP atelier

Chicago-based global architecture firm FGP Atelier is changing the paradigm of what constitutes great architecture and building. Helmed by award-winning, Mexican-born architect Francisco Gonzalez Pulido (FGP), FGP Atelier was founded in September of 2017 following Gonzalez Pulido's departure as partner and president of JAHN.

Some of FGP atelier's most prominent projects include:

- Orchid Educational Pavilion, Oaxaca, Mexico
- Nanjing Tower, Nanjing, China
- Rectoria, Monterrey, Mexico

- Shanghai International Financial Center, Shanghai, China
- Shenzhen Gate, Shenzhen, China

The following statistics helped FGP atelier achieve 11th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Finalist	2
Featured Projects	2
Total Projects	10

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10. Wheeler Kearns Architects

Jim Dine
LOOKING
AT THE PRESENT

Wheeler Kearns is a collective practice of architects. We work with people who seek to enrich their lives in spaces that embody their purpose, energy and vision.

When a space we design resonates with your deepest intention, it has a lasting and powerful impact. As we work with you, we devote all our energies to understanding your core purpose, the transformation you seek, your mission. We want to see your challenge through your eyes. Doing this guides us to what we call the "emotional center," the heart around which your entire project revolves. We return to that central idea as we craft concepts, help you make decisions, and refine our responses to those choices.

Some of Wheeler Kearns Architects's most prominent projects include:

- Sun's End Retreat, MI, United States
- Timberlane Shores, MI, United States
- Lakeview Pantry, Chicago, IL, United States
- Wicker Park Residence, Chicago, IL, United States
- Richard Gray Gallery Warehouse, Chicago, IL, United States

The following statistics helped Wheeler Kearns Architects achieve 10th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Finalist	2
Featured Projects	12
Total Projects	30

9. Valerio Dewalt Train

© Steve Hall

Valerio Dewalt Train is a 75+ person national architectural and design practice with offices in Chicago, Illinois and Palo Alto, California. Since 1994, the firm has based its practice on the simple idea that whatever the question, design is the answer. But we also believe that before an answer can be provided, one has to do the research to make sure the question is understood. As designers, we take a research-based approach to the design process; it is immersive and specific. This process allows us to explore the client's DNA, user profile, research best practices and discover early on what "Green" strategies should be integrated in the project.

Some of Valerio Dewalt Train's most prominent projects include:

- Juniper Networks, Bridgewater, NJ, United States
- The Godfrey Hotel, Chicago, IL, United States
- Seven27, Madison, WI, United States
- Live Nation Aragon Ballroom Renovation, Chicago, Illinois, United States
- VMware Prom E, Palo Alto, CA, United States

The following statistics helped Valerio Dewalt Train achieve 9th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Finalist	6
Featured Projects	6
Total Projects	37

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8. Palmyra PLLC

© Palmyra Geraki

PALMYRA PLLC is a woman-owned full-service architecture practice based in Chicago. The practice, like its founder, is named after the city of Palmyra in present-day Homs Governorate, Syria, a city with an independent streak and an incredibly rich multicultural history. The archaeological site of Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was partially destroyed by ISIS in 2015. Even in its ruinous state, Palmyra is a palimpsest, if there ever was any. In our practice we believe that we are never creating in a vacuum and the name of our practice serves as a reminder of that.

Architecture always starts with a problem: sometimes an eminently practical one and sometimes an abstract or conceptual one.

Some of Palmyra PLLC's most prominent projects include:

- Not All White Walls, San Francisco, CA, United States

The following statistics helped Palmyra PLLC achieve 8th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Winner	1
Featured Projects	1
Total Projects	1

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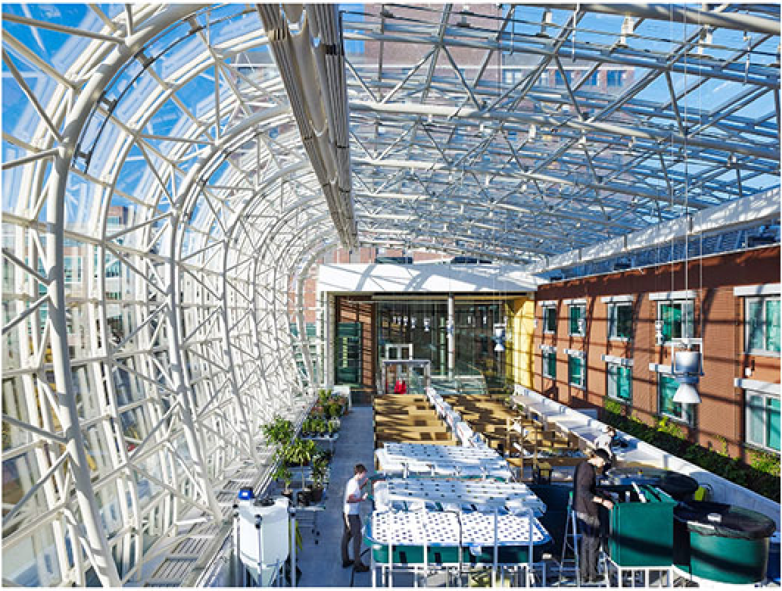
7. Solomon Cordwell Buenz



© Dave Burk

Solomon Cordwell Buenz (SCB) is an architecture, interior design, and planning firm with a thoughtful design vision and a dynamic national imprint. Since 1931, SCB has made a lasting visual impact on skylines, campuses, and neighborhoods nationwide. From offices in Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, and Seattle we offer our expertise to clients across the country, helping them achieve their goals, serve their constituents, and create unique built environments.

Some of Solomon Cordwell Buenz's most prominent projects include:

- Academic and Residential Complex at the University of Illinois, Chicago, IL, United States
- Institute for Environmental Sustainability, Chicago, IL, United States
- 55 Ninth, San Francisco, CA, United States
- Loews North Park Drive, Chicago, IL, United States
- 1899 McKinney Property, Dallas, TX, United States

The following statistics helped Solomon Cordwell Buenz achieve 7th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Winner	1

Featured Projects	2
Total Projects	7

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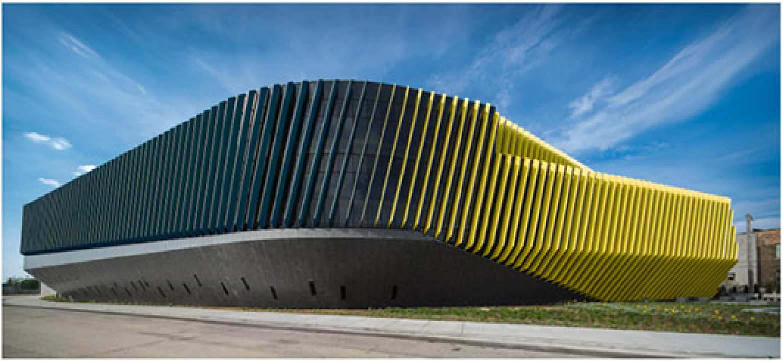
6. JGMA



JGMA is a progressive architecture and design practice committed to active community involvement and the enrichment of peoples' lives through the attentive and dynamic organization of space and materiality. We understand that quality design has a unique ability to influence civic life and transform communities.

We proudly consider ourselves innovators in the field of architecture and are dedicated to formulating consistently unique solutions to every design opportunity. Our work is conceptually driven but exhibits the highest level of quality at every stage of design, construction, and occupancy. JGMA is led by the firm's president, Juan Gabriel Moreno, and is supported by a talented team of experienced architectural professionals.

Some of JGMA's most prominent projects include:

- Northeastern Illinois University – El Centro, Chicago, IL, United States
- Westfield Old Orchard Glass Cube, Skokie, IL, United States
- Bieniek Residence, Naperville, IL, United States
- O'Hare Global Terminal Design Competition
- Cabrini Green Legal Aid Offices, Chicago, IL, United States

The following statistics helped JGMA achieve 6th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Winner	1
A+Awards Finalist	1
Featured Projects	7
Total Projects	31

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5. Formed Space

Space is not just the dimensions of height, depth, and width within which all things exist. Space is also an opportunity, a platform, to design and build your vision, and form it into a physical reality.

Formed Space developed from the idea of balancing both architectural and construction demands, and merging the two seamlessly to create an efficient and effective method to streamline the build process. Our vision stems from Raw Modernism, the idea of creating sustainable, simple and minimalistic spaces using industrial and earth materials.

Whether the project is a new construction or a custom piece of furniture, we welcome creative ideas from individuals and professionals who share the same passion for individuality.

Some of Formed Space's most prominent projects include:

- Boombox Micro Retail, Chicago, IL, United States

The following statistics helped Formed Space achieve 5th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Winner	2
Total Projects	1

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4. LATENT DESIGN

Latent Design is a Chicago based full service architecture firm and strategic design consultancy working at the intersection of design and community development to create social, economic and environmental impact beyond the building. We use design as a tool to make the invisible forces impacting a project at local and global levels; policy, culture, climate, economy, visible through architecture. We offer innovative design solutions to those in resource and budget limited environments through a participatory approach that leverages local assets to directly generate project opportunities. Our collaborations range from small-scale tactical interventions, new construction community buildings, adaptive reuse, neighborhood master plans and design speculations.

Latent Design is a registered Benefit Corporation in the State of Illinois and is required by law to create and demonstrate positive social impact to the community through our work.

Some of LATENT DESIGN's most prominent projects include:

- Jackson Flat, Chicago, IL, United States
- Blah Blah Blob!, Chicago, IL, United States
- Chicago Youth Centers, Chicago, IL, United States
- Chicago Women's Health Center, Chicago, IL, United States
- Demoiselle 2 Femme HOPE Center, Chicago, IL, United States

The following statistics helped LATENT DESIGN achieve 4th place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Winner	2
Total Projects	9

3. Ross Barney Architects

Ross Barney Architects is a Chicago-based architecture and urban design studio. Established by Carol Ross Barney, the studio occupies a unique place within the panorama of contemporary practice that is characterized by a reputation for work in the public realm. From community buildings to campus buildings for premier academic and research institutions, to groundbreaking transit stations that connect vibrant neighborhoods, Ross Barney Architects has produced distinctive structures that have become community icons.

The studio's ideas and projects have been recognized by entities and publications from around the world. Ross Barney Architects' work has been exhibited in Chicago, New York, Washington D.C.

Some of Ross Barney Architects's most prominent projects include:

- Fermilab OTE Building, Batavia, IL, United States
- Chicago Riverwalk, Chicago, IL, United States
- Searle Visitor Center, Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago, IL, United States
- McDonald's Chicago Flagship, Lake Buena Vista, FL, United States
- Ohio State University South Campus Central Chiller Plant, Columbus, OH, United States

The following statistics helped Ross Barney Architects achieve 3rd place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Winner	2
A+Awards Finalist	6
Featured Projects	8
Total Projects	14

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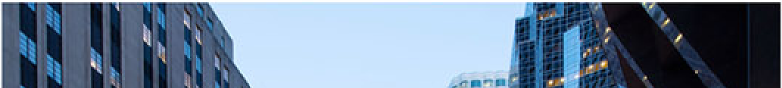
2. Perkins and Will



100 FEDERAL STREET

Perkins and Will, an interdisciplinary, research-based architecture and design firm, was founded in 1935 on the belief that design has the power to transform lives. Guided by its core values—design excellence, diversity and inclusion, research, resilience, social purpose, sustainability, and well-being—the firm is committed to designing a better, more beautiful world. Fast Company named Perkins and Will one of the World's Most Innovative Companies in Architecture, and industry rankings consistently place Perkins and Will among the world's top design practices. With an international team of more than 2,700 professionals, the firm has over 20 studios worldwide, providing services in architecture, interior design, branded environments, urban design, and landscape architecture.

Some of Perkins and Will's most prominent projects include:

- Carrville Community Centre, Library and District Park, Vaughan, Canada
- First Year Student Village, Coral Gables, FL, United States
- The Exchange at 100 Federal, Boston, MA, United States
- The Greater Accra Regional Hospital at Ridge, Accra, Ghana
- Albion District Library, Toronto, Canada

The following statistics helped Perkins and Will achieve 2nd place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Winner	3
A+Awards Finalist	5

Featured Projects	23
Total Projects	93

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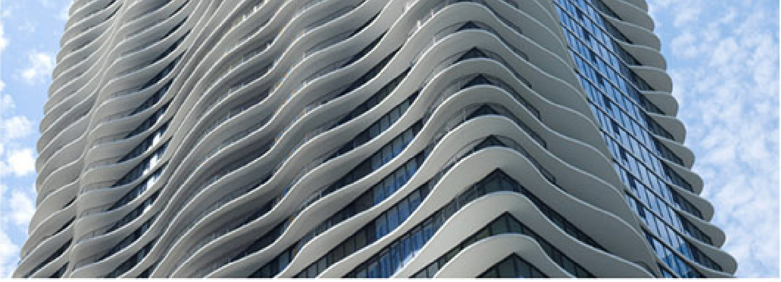
1. Studio Gang



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Founded by MacArthur Fellow Jeanne Gang in 1997, Studio Gang Architects is a collective of architects, designers, and thinkers whose work engages pressing contemporary issues and their impact on human experience. Honored with the 2013 National Design Award for Architecture from the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, the Studio acts as a laboratory—testing ideas on various scales, from cities and environments to material and physical properties. Cross-field research, collaboration, and iterative experimentation using both digital and analog technologies are integral to the Studio's process. Each project is designed to resonate with its specific site and culture while addressing global themes such as reuse and sustainability.

Some of Studio Gang's most prominent projects include:

- Solar Carve, New York, NY, United States
- Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation, New York, NY
- Beloit College Powerhouse, Beloit, WI, United States
- One Hundred, St. Louis, MO, United States
- Aqua Tower, Chicago, IL, United States

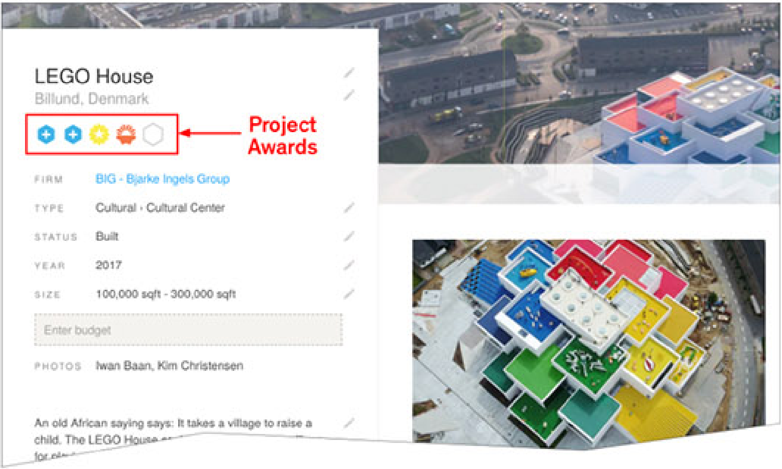
The following statistics helped Studio Gang achieve 1st place in the 22 Best Architecture Firms in Chicago:

A+Awards Winner	11
A+Awards Finalist	8
Featured Projects	26
Total Projects	40

Why Should I Trust Architizer's Ranking?

With more than 30,000 architecture firms and over 130,000 projects within its database, Architizer is proud to host the world's largest online community of architects and building product manufacturers. Its celebrated A+Awards program is also the largest celebration of architecture and building products, with more than 400 jurors and hundreds of thousands of public votes helping to recognize the world's best architecture each year.

Architizer also powers firm directories for a number of AIA (American Institute of Architects) Chapters nationwide, including the official directory of architecture firms for AIA New York.



LEGO House

Billund, Denmark

FIRM	BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group
TYPE	Cultural · Cultural Center
STATUS	Built
YEAR	2017
SIZE	100,000 sqft - 300,000 sqft
	Enter budget
PHOTOS	Iwan Baan, Kim Christensen

An old African saying says: It takes a village to raise a child. The LEGO House

An example of a project page on Architizer with Project Award Badges highlighted

A Guide to Project Awards

The blue ""+"" badge denotes that a project has won a prestigious A+Award as described above. Hovering over the badge reveals details of the award, including award category, year, and whether the project won the jury or popular choice award.

The orange Project of the Day and yellow Featured Project badges are awarded by Architizer's Editorial team, and are selected based on a number of factors. The following factors increase a project's likelihood of being featured or awarded Project of the Day status:

- Project completed within the last 3 years
- A well written, concise project description of at least 3 paragraphs
- Architectural design with a high level of both functional and aesthetic value
- High quality, in focus photographs

- At least 8 photographs of both the interior and exterior of the building
- Inclusion of architectural drawings and renderings
- Inclusion of construction photographs

There are 7 Projects of the Day each week and a further 31 Featured Projects. Each Project of the Day is published on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram Stories, while each Featured Project is published on Facebook. Each Project of the Day also features in Architizer's Weekly Projects Newsletter and shared with 170,000 subscribers.

We're constantly look for the world's best architects to join our community. If you would like to understand more about this ranking list and learn how your firm can achieve a presence on it, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at editorial@architizer.com.

Brand Sizzling New
SIZZLING SHRIMP

Author: Architizer Editors

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