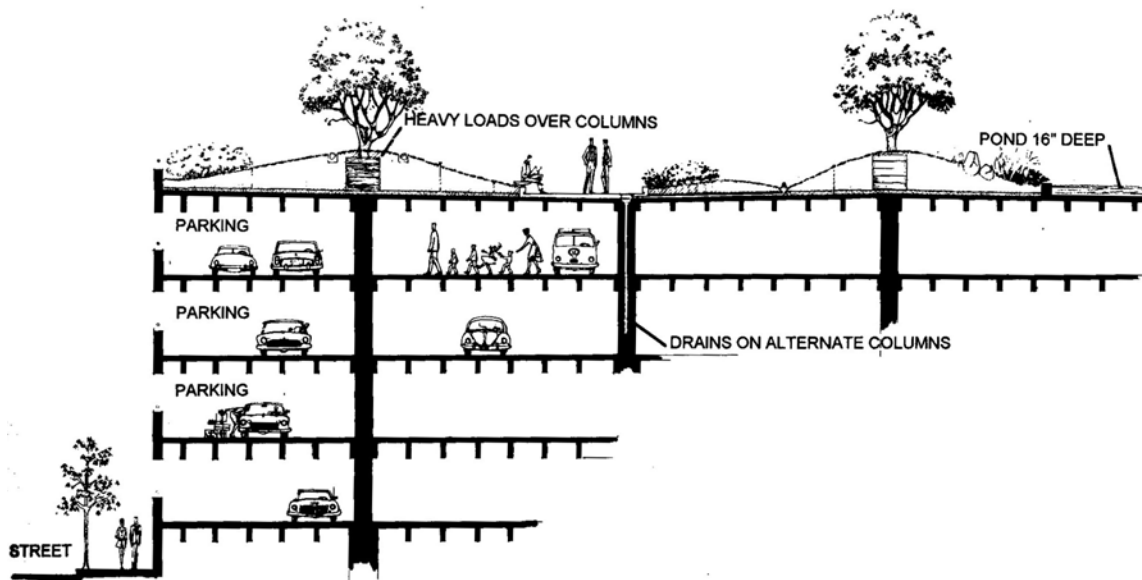


The Kaiser Center's 3-acre roof garden was the largest continuous roof garden in the world when it opened in 1960, and the first major privately-owned roof garden constructed after World War II. Conceived by Edgar Kaiser, Sr. (son of WWII ship building genius, Henry J. Kaiser), the highly acclaimed garden has inspired the creation of many public and private roof gardens.

Primary challenges in building the garden were drainage and weight. Drainage is provided by downspouts positioned at every other column to drain individual areas of the roof. Water flows down and across the gradual slope of the roof, as is the case with most large, flat roofs, and through a main downspout through five levels of the building to a storm sewer in the basement and to the city storm sewer system.

The weight between columns was limited to 135 pounds per square foot deadload, with 15,000 pounds over each column. This presented serious limitations on the type and amount of soil used. The lawn area, not exceeding a 6-inch depth, was built using standard topsoil. In areas where the soil mounds up and over the 30-inch high boxes containing the specimen trees, a lightweight soil mix of fine expanded shale, peat moss, and various fertilizers was used. The garden's sidewalks and structures are made of lightweight concrete and the large rocks and boulders are lightweight pumice stone. All forty-two trees (olive, holly oak, Japanese maple, and southern magnolia) have fibrous root systems and were placed over columns at carefully chosen locations in the design.



The large free-form pool has 8,800 square feet of water surface and includes three fountains which can be adjusted for a variety of water effects. Underwater jets, a filter system, and surface scum collectors maintain the water quality. The pool is 16 inches deep, with a black interior to give the impression of greater depth.

The garden is open to visitors during working hours Monday through Friday.