



The American Institute of Architects Announces the 2006 Top Ten Green Projects

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For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 20, 2006— In recognition of Earth Day 2006, The American Institute of Architects (AIA) and its Committee on the Environment (COTE) have selected the top ten examples of sustainable architecture and green design solutions that protect and enhance the environment. The projects will be honored on May 3 during a presentation at the National Building Museum in Washington and again in June at the AIA 2006 National Convention and Design Exposition in Los Angeles.

The 2006 COTE Top Ten Green Projects address environmental conservation and the notion of sustainable development with designs that integrate architecture, technology, and natural systems. They make a positive contribution to their community, improve comfort for building occupants, and reduce environmental impacts through strategies such as: reuse of existing structures, connection to transit systems, low-impact site development, energy and water conservation, use of sustainable or renewable construction materials, and design that improves indoor air quality.

The jury selected projects that cover a broad spectrum of project types. Recipients include civic, office, residential, academic, and institutional. The panel of jurors included: Kevin Burke, AIA, William McDonough + Partners, Charlottesville Va.; David Miller, FAIA, Miller Hull Architects, Seattle; Kath Williams, PhD, Kath Williams + Associates, Bozeman Mont.; Kevin Hydes, PE, Stantec Consulting Ltd., Montreal; RK Stewart, FAIA, Gensler, San Francisco; and Catriona Campbell Winter, The Clark Construction Group, Bethesda Md.

Jury members said that they wanted to pick a range of project and building types. The application forms gave them 10 metrics on each project for a quick reading on performance, however the jury was very focused on the architectural and design aspects of each project as well. According to Henry Siegel, FAIA, a member of the COTE national advisory group, “The projects chosen in the Top Ten for 2006 included striking examples of integrated thinking, design excellence, strong energy performance, and mindfulness of water, site, and community matters. The Top Ten Measures, the framework for this program, make up a robust definition of sustainable design, and we’re proud that this year’s winners again live up to those goals.”

The 2006 Top Ten Green Projects (listed in alphabetical order):

Ballard Library and Neighborhood Service Center in Seattle

Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, Seattle

This project, the first major building designed within the new Ballard Municipal Master Plan Zone, consists of the 15,000 square-foot Ballard Library, a 3,600 square-foot neighborhood service center and 18,000 square-feet of below grade parking. Ballard is evolving to be one of Seattle’s most popular neighborhoods. The district is rapidly becoming the civic core of the neighborhood, easily accessible for pedestrians, by bicycles, and public transit. A pedestrian zoning overlay was recently adopted to promote development of this nature. The site, located in an urban context, was redeveloped for this project. The challenge was to develop the site in a restorative manner. Formerly home to a bank and a parking lot, hardscape comprised 100% of the lot coverage. Today, combined with the green roof and planters at the building perimeter, the hardscape has been reduced to 20% of the lot coverage.

Jury Comments: “One of the things we were looking for was projects that are truly integrated. The roof is the real expression of this building: it vents, it’s a green roof, there are photovoltaics there; it’s a bit move

that does many things at once. Beautiful buildings will be preserved, and this is very much part of sustainability. This will be a 100-year building because people will want to save it. Everyone would want that library in their neighborhood. This is the kind of building that can be a catalyst for change—pushing individual buildings as well as neighborhoods to become more sustainable.”

Benjamin Franklin Elementary School in Kirkland, Wash.

Mahlum Architects, Seattle

Learning is about creating connections. That’s one reason why the new 56,000-square-foot Benjamin Franklin Elementary School was designed to connect students directly with the environment in which they live. The new public school replaces an existing facility on a narrow 10-acre site that has a rich natural setting. Inside, the school’s 450 students in grades K-6 are distributed within small learning communities formed by clusters of four naturally ventilated and day-lit classrooms around a multi-purpose activity area. Stacked within two-story wings that extend towards the woods, these communities are integrally linked with views and access to nature beyond.

***Jury Comments:** “We thought this building was beautifully sited. The plan and section seemed very coherent; there is an overall consistency here. There are a lot of teaching opportunities here for the kids, parents, and the public, which is important. This is a regional building. It uses the forest as a sun-shading device. Natural light is precious in the northwest and this building reaches up to the light. The trees protect the glazing, and those large windows allow a strong connection to the outdoors.”*

Corporate Headquarters for Alberici in Overland, Mo.

Mackey Mitchell Associates, St. Louis

This project is an adaptive reuse of an existing manufacturing plant into a corporate headquarters for one of St. Louis’ oldest and largest construction companies. Requirements included an open office environment, structured parking, training rooms, exercise facilities and dining facilities. When company growth led to the decision to move, the company CEO “wanted to be in a place that fosters teamwork and creativity.” The client wanted to lead by example, transform the design and construction market place and set a goal of Platinum level LEED certification, reminding all of “the future generations who will someday work in this building.”

***Jury Comments:** “This is a major transformation project; they reused a giant old warehouse. There seemed to be strong corporate commitment and the result is a project that really came at this from all directions (and it’s the highest rated LEED building in the world). You can see that this project will evolve over time. They inserted a new structure within the shell, adding only minimally where they needed it. This is a highly replicable solution. They installed an old wind generator on site and that alone provides 20 percent of the facility’s electrical needs annually.”*

Philadelphia Forensic Science Center in Philadelphia

Croxtan Collaborative Architects, New York City & Cecil Baker Associates, Philadelphia

The new Forensics Science Center for the Philadelphia Police Department is both a state-of-the-art forensics laboratory facility, as well as a demonstration project for environmental/sustainable design-intended as a model for future projects undertaken by the Capitol Program Office of Philadelphia. The rigorous program includes a firearms unit, with a shooting range for ballistics analysis; crime scene unit for 24 hours/day crime scene evidence gathering; chemistry laboratories for drug analysis; criminalistics and DNA laboratories for hair/fiber/blood analysis. The building is a 1929 concrete frame, brick infill building and the lab is in a former K-12 school building on a site of which had been abandoned for many years. Located in an under-served neighborhood of north Philadelphia with higher crime rates, lower income levels and fewer services, the new Forensic Science Center has helped to breathe new life and a better sense of security into an entire neighborhood.

***Jury Comments:** “This is an adaptive reuse project and lab building that found a way to get really outstanding metrics and performance and this was a low-bid public project with no extra money for green*

strategies. They did some simple, clever things: the tapered ceiling, putting all the mechanical systems in the middle of the building. This was one of the best building sections we saw, and we loved the hand drawn quality of it.”

Regional Animal Campus in Las Vegas

Tate Snyder Kimsey Architects, Henderson, Nev.

The Regional Animal Campus for the Las Vegas Valley is intended to serve the animal sheltering and adoption needs for the cities of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, and surrounding Clark County, Nevada. Driven by a need to expand its operations, The Animal Foundation plans to create a regional animal campus. The goals for the project’s first phase, the dog adoption park, are to create a memorable and dignified way of presenting animals to the adopting public and to use sustainable strategies in the design of this complex, with the intention of achieving LEED platinum certification. A healthy, pleasant and comfortable environment is important to visitor attitudes about adoption and the mood and health of sheltered animals. The costs of maintaining this environment, however, are exceptionally high and directly impact the scale of the Animal Foundation’s operations. The goal of the design team was to minimize facility costs without affecting the quality of the adoption experience. Given southern Nevada’s climate, reducing the dog bungalows’ cooling load and water use were identified as the two major areas of focus for facility efficiency.

***Jury Comments:** “This is in a tough climate and the project uses natural ventilation. The building type is dense and presents mechanic problems. They really simplified the building and did it really well. It’s a radically different solution, and that is what we love about it. This kind of program is usually relegated to strip mall site and status. They really elevated the project type and you can envision this place really attracting people.”*

Renovation of the Motherhouse in Monroe, Mich.

Susan Maxman & Partners, Philadelphia

When the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (SSIHM), recognized that their order was diminishing, they embarked on a collaborative, long-range planning process to determine the best way to achieve an ecologically sustainable 21st century community on their 280-acre site in southern Michigan. Many of the structures on their property were built in the 1930’s and are historically significant. The design team met the challenge by designing 380,000 square feet of construction that utilized the existing structures to best meet the very specific housing, long term care and spiritual needs, while achieving sustainable and preservation goals. The team also succeeded in making this austere former convent into a warm and friendly home, with a strong focus on nature and the surrounding site. The Sisters wanted to leave a legacy to future generations with this project. One of the missions of their order is to respect the Earth and promote eco-justice, so the hope was to create a community that would exemplify these ideals. Since the SSIHM congregation is known for its teaching excellence, the Sisters saw this project as an opportunity to teach the public about important environmental issues.

***Jury Comments:** “The sisters’ comment that sustainability is a moral mandate was compelling. And here they showed how to be smart with reuse. There is also a strong connection to the neighborhood and a reconstructed wetland, showing how the building engaged in its site and place. There’s a real sensitivity to aging occupants and how they would use the building.”*

School of Nursing & Student Community Center in Houston

BNIM Architects, Kansas City, Mo. & Lake/Flato Architects, San Antonio

The School of Nursing design team became stewards of the vision established by University leadership for a nursing school and student community center designed to be state-of-the-art for learning, research, student service and workplace. The resulting building reduces the use of energy, polluting chemicals, cleaning agents, potable water and other resources. The School of Nursing and Student Community Center at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston establishes benchmarks for healthy buildings; for daylight; for visual acuity and cognitive learning; and for flexibility, durability and reduced operating

costs. The design is straightforward and transparent. In plan and section, distinct zones organize building functions, to maximize exposure to the adjacent park, views and daylight.

Jury Comments: *“This was a programmatically complex project on a difficult and dense site. They had to combine a lot of human and high tech functions. I like that they set this building up to get greener; there is a framework for photovoltaics when they can afford it. I think we should all be thinking about designing buildings that can adapt over time.”*

Solar Umbrella House in Venice, Calif.

Pugh + Scarpa, Santa Monica, Calif.

Inspired by Paul Rudolph's Umbrella House of 1953, the Solar Umbrella provides a contemporary reinvention of the solar canopy. The new design reorganizes the residence towards the south, optimizing exposure to energy rich southern California sunlight. Conceived as a solar canopy, photovoltaic panels not only protect the body of the building from thermal heat gain, but also provide the residence with 95% of its electricity. Innovative materials and strategies throughout contribute to both the sustainability and livability of the home, which flows seamlessly from indoors to out. The Solar Umbrella Residence is a bold and sophisticated model for responsible living in the 21st century, characterized by its integration of sustainability with a striking yet refined avant-garde aesthetic.

Jury Comments: *“The form is elegant and beautiful and comes from an environmental solution. This is a billboard to the neighborhood that you can do photovoltaics in this way. They are an umbrella for outdoor living. And this project actually reused an existing cottage on a dense urban site.”*

Westcave Preserve Environmental Learning Center in Travis County, Texas

Jackson & McElhane Architects, Austin, Texas

A 30-acre nature preserve and canyon 28 miles northwest of Austin, Texas needed to expand its community programs by building a new “wilderness classroom” and provide a meeting place for walking tours to a nearby waterfall and “live” grotto cave. The goal of the two agencies who partnered for the project was to foster the respect and stewardship of the natural environment, provide environmental education, and preserve this sanctuary into the future. The design of the structure was conceived as a 3 dimensional textbook. The architecture and design elements work to mimic or model the surrounding natural systems.

Jury Comments: *“This project is truly of its place. They looked at building as a teaching tool. The east and west faces are the long faces of this building... the eaves are a regional vernacular. There is pocket parking and a wooded site. The glass is high and well protected. They were careful to preserve the vegetation. They paid close attention to issues of thermal mass.”*

World Birding Center, Mission, Texas

Lake/Flato Architects, San Antonio, Texas

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is one of the richest bird habitats in the world, however only 5% of the native habitat currently remains. On the major migratory pathway for most North American species, the area has become a major destination for nature enthusiasts. The new World Birding Center, built at the Bentsen–Rio Grande Valley State Park for Texas Parks & Wildlife, creates a gateway between the disturbed agricultural land and a 1700-acre native habitat preserve. The design approach was to do more with less. The architecture learned from the regional vernacular, responded to the harsh climate, and minimized disturbance of existing habitat.

Jury Comments: *“It caters carefully to the type of occupant, a place for quiet observation, it was a nice, delicate intervention on its site. They brought the programmed square footage down from 20,000 to 13,000. This is a good example of right-sizing, an approach that is often overlooked. This project also follows the big moves: reduce, reuse, recycle. Reducing square footage is the biggest move you can make.”*

About the AIA Committee on the Environment Top Ten Green Awards

The AIA's Committee on the Environment represents more than 7,600 AIA members committed to making sustainable or "green" design integral to the practice of architecture. The AIA/COTE Top Ten Green Project Awards initiative was developed by the AIA in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy and BuildingGreen.com, publishers of *Environmental Building News* magazine. In 2003 The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR[®] Program joined as an additional sponsor.

About The American Institute of Architects

Since 1857, the AIA has represented the professional interests of America's architects. As AIA members, more than 75,000 licensed architects, allied partners and emerging professionals express their commitment to excellence in design and livability in our nation's buildings and cities. Members adhere to a code of ethics and professional conduct that assures the client, the public, and colleagues of an AIA-member architect's dedication to the highest standards in professional practice.

Note to editors: For additional information or high-resolution images of the Top Ten Green Projects contact Cara Battaglini in the AIA's media relations office, (202) 626-7463, email: carab@aia.org. Additional project images, description and metrics, and data sets will be available at www.aiatopten.org, along with links to winners from previous years.