

Hilltop Arboretum

Louisiana State University

Hilltop Arboretum won an Honor Award in Wood Design & Building Magazine's 2006 Wood Design Award competition. Winners in the program push the boundaries of conventional wood building practices and highlight the qualities, versatility and beauty of wood as a building material. Visit www.wooddesignandbuilding.com/awards/ for more information.

The Hilltop Arboretum, affiliated with Louisiana State University, is located at the convergence of three ecosystems indigenous to the Baton Rouge area of Louisiana; boggy wetlands, scrubby highlands, and open meadows. The site connects the three systems through a series of small but dramatic ravines. Historically seasonal heavy rains have flooded the site, washed out the ravines and destroyed the vegetation and habitat within the ravines. The building has been sited and designed to frame the narrow natural site, and preserve and highlight the existing ecosystems.

The program components: administration offices and gift shop, exhibit areas, storage and meeting space, are all housed in discreet architectural volumes and are captured under one long roof protecting the open walkways which connect the enclosed spaces.

The long simple building takes cues from both the local agricultural pole barns as well as the formal historical raised plantation homes. The building isolates the parking and cars from the natural areas and creates a sense of arrival or entry to the natural grounds. The structure is raised

off the ground to allow the natural drainage patterns of the site and surrounding areas to be maintained. The retention pond mitigates the destructive effects of the seasonal rains by capturing the site run off before entering the ravines and slowly releasing the water to nourish the fragile habitat.

The open-air assembly pavilion extends out over the pond on piers and is used for Arboretum programs as well as cooking classes, weddings and community meetings. An enclosed pavilion has also been designed for future construction to house more formal events. In combination with the open-air section, the future enclosed area has been sited to include an Activities Lawn to compliment both pavilions. ■

Open Assembly Pavilion extends out over Wetland Pond

Project Team

Architects

Lake/Flato Architects, San Antonio, TX

Structural Engineer

Thomas A. Stephens, Stephens Engineering, Baton Rouge, LA

Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing

AST Engineering, Baton Rouge, LA

Landscape Architect

Reich Associates, Baton Rouge, LA

Construction Administration Architects

Noland & Wong, Baton Rouge, LA

General Contractor

MBD, Baton Rouge, LA

Basic Construction Materials

Foundations: Concrete drilled shafts

Primary Floor Framing: Glue Laminated wood beams and girders attached with galvanized steel brackets.

Roof Support Columns: Pressure treated wood piles, galvanized "x" bracing with turnbuckles.

Roof Structure: Pre-assembled roof trusses fabricated from dimensional lumber.

Roofing: Corrugated aluminized steel and translucent polycarbonate panels.

Gutters and Downspouts: Galvanized iron.

Exterior Siding and Trim: Tidewater Cypress with galvanized iron sheets at special locations.

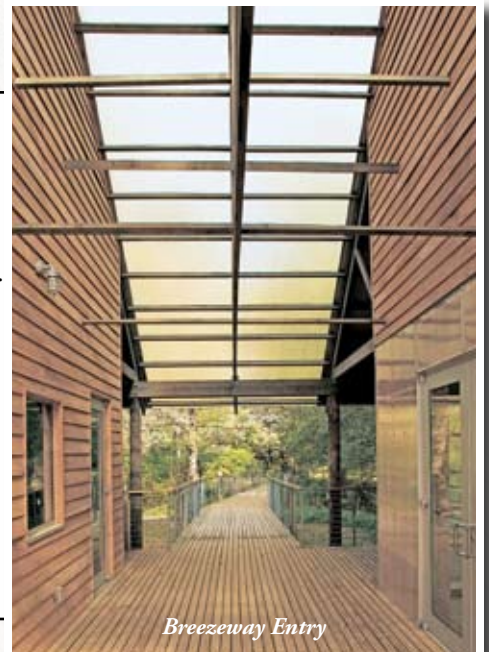
Exterior Decking: Pressure treated wood over pressure treated wood joists.

Plastic Wall Panels: 3/8-inch thick polycarbonate honeycomb sheets.

Guard Rails: Stainless steel marine cables between galvanized steel posts.

Built-ins: Custom built cabinets made from MDF (medium density fiberboard).

Aluminum Windows: A combination of projecting and sliding aluminum windows, glazing nominally 1 inch thick, clear insulating glass.



Breezeway Entry

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