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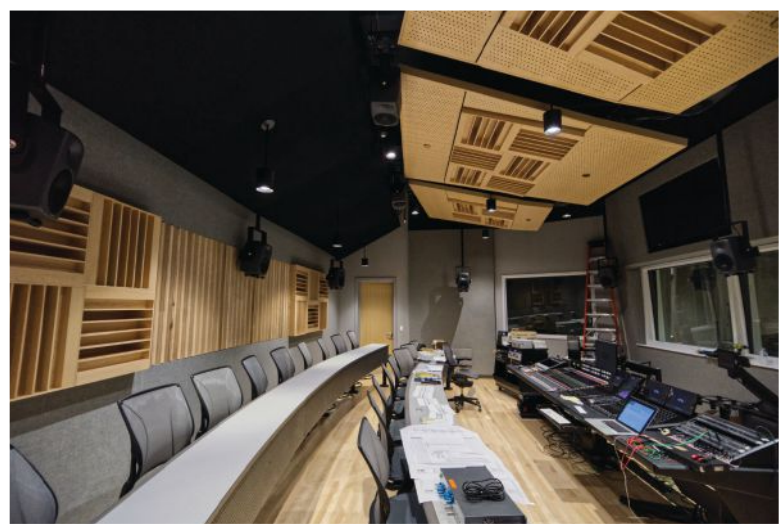
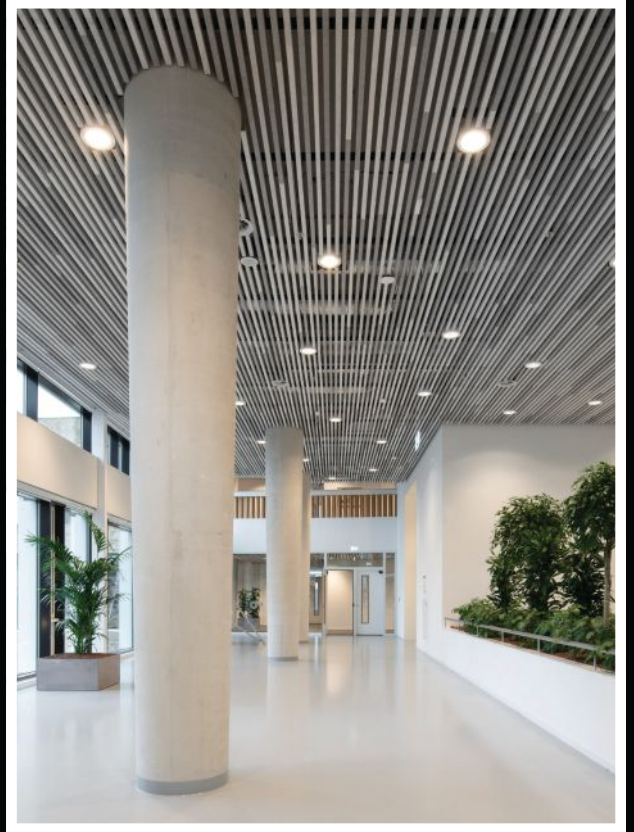
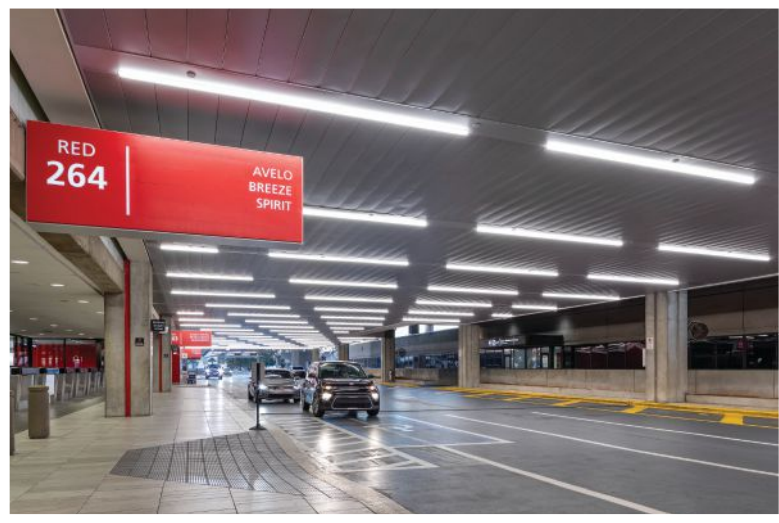


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Architects of the Featured Projects

Robert A. Bartlett, AIA, a registered architect in Florida and Georgia with 25 years of professional architectural design experience, was recently named architectural studio leader for BRPH's Melbourne, Florida, headquarters. Bartlett's portfolio includes management and design for a wide array of private and public sector projects.



Steven M. Langston, AIA, currently serves as vice president of design for RLF. With more than 35 years of experience, Langston has been widely acknowledged in the design field for his innovative achievements, and his work has garnered numerous national, state and local design awards.



Jeffrey Huber, FAIA, ASLA, is a principal for Brooks + Scarpa and manages the firm's south Florida office. He is also an associate professor for the School of Architecture at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Fort Lauderdale. A distinguished architect, landscape architect and urban designer, Huber specializes in public realm projects that combine ecological, landscape, urban and architectural designs.



Kobi Karp, AIA, is the founder and principal of Kobi Karp Architecture and Interior Design Inc. (KKAID), a full-service architectural and interior design firm. Karp began his career working on hospitality and resort projects throughout the United States and in the Caribbean. His restoration design techniques have contributed to a renaissance in one of the country's most cherished areas, Miami Beach's Art Deco District.



Curtis Reed, AIA, currently serves as the director of virtual design and construction for Bear General Contractors where he integrates technology used in architectural practice with the construction industry through real-world application. Since joining Bear General Contractors, Reed has helped the firm secure various prestigious accolades.



Miguel E. Calzada Agosto, AIA, is the founder of the award-winning architecture firm MCA Arquitectos. Calzada Agosto has more than 18 years of experience in the design and construction of diverse projects, including commercial, institutional, residential and interior architectural design projects.



Jason Jensen, AIA, is the president and CEO of Wannemacher Jensen Architects, an interdisciplinary architecture firm with five offices throughout Florida. He is a frequent guest lecturer for several universities and civic associations, and he also advocates for design and urban planning initiatives.



Functional, practical concepts can be transformed into creative expressions to be appreciated by diverse, multigenerational audiences. This issue features recreational projects where people play, as well as projects showcasing architects and their unique, creative ability to transform ordinary, mundane structures and spaces into aesthetically pleasing, sustainable works of art while simultaneously preserving function.



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On the cover: Leonard & Marjorie Williams Family YMCA | RLF | Photo credit: Chad Baumer Photography

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President's Perspective

Rhonda Hammond, AIA

I am extremely honored and humbled to address you as the 2024 president for our extraordinary association, AIA Florida. It is with immense gratitude and a profound sense of responsibility that I proudly step into this role.

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to all of you for entrusting me with this position and offering your support in my ability to serve AIA Florida. My foremost priority is to represent your interests and aspirations faithfully, and I am committed to working tirelessly and collaboratively with our members and our advocates to firmly uphold our values and our mission. We are the voice of architecture. This

"Indeed, our profession, our expertise, and our ideas breathe life into areas long forgotten while simultaneously expanding perceptions of what is possible."

year, I want to use that voice to emphasize why architecture matters.

Architects play a pivotal role in shaping the areas where we live, work and play. As I am sure you agree, architecture is more than constructing buildings. Indeed, our profession, our expertise and our ideas breathe life into areas long forgotten while simultaneously expanding perceptions of what is possible.

Simply put, architects transform lives. Our designs convert dreams and mold simple notions into conscious realities that have long-lasting, and in some cases, life-altering affects. This is evidenced most often in the areas where we conduct our professional lives, gather with our loved ones and open our minds and our bodies to creative exploration.

Our personal spaces, specifically the environments where we live, are often regarded as our sanctuaries. Architects, with our unique personal and professional perspectives, design the spaces that will ultimately be used to provide comfort and rest, while also serving as the backdrop for generations of memories.

As architects, we are also aware that workspaces may also have a dual purpose of being functional and inspiring. Through our designs we are able to influence all sectors of the workforce and combine practicality with productivity and inspire professionals at every stage of their careers to realize their potential and allow their ideas to flourish.

Recreational areas not only encourage physical and leisurely activities, but they also promote neighborly connections and provide beautiful areas for people to share

experiences. By engaging communities, architects are able to incorporate creativity and sustainability to meet unique needs.

Our input and ideas are also imperative to ensuring our professional standards are upheld and protected. As we begin a new year, we must continue to engage our advocates and supporters while also educating those who may not understand or be aware of our perspective and our concerns.

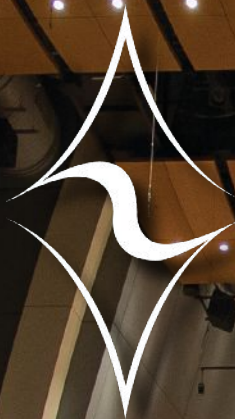
Many architects, emerging professionals and students recently spent the day in Tallahassee speaking with legislators about the impact we have on the built environment. As architects we protect the health, safety and welfare of Floridians in the places we live, work and play. We know how to design to mitigate the impacts of hurricanes enabling communities to be resilient against storms. AIA Florida will continue to use our voice to advocate for architecture.

I am optimistic about our future, I am excited to work together to further our mission, and I welcome your suggestions as we define our next steps. Our collective participation and engagement are vital to our success, and I encourage each of you to remain active in our professional community.

Make your plans to join me at the 2024 AIA Florida Convention July 17-20 at the Breakers in Palm Beach. Our Convention Committee has put together another enlightening slate of programming. Celebrating the places we live, work and play demonstrates why architecture matters.

Thank you, again, and may your work continue to be a positive influence.

Duke Ellington School of the Arts; Washington, DC
Architect: Lance Bailey & CGS



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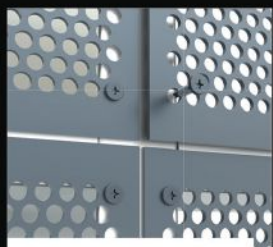


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Recreation-focused Architecture

Recreation architecture involves designing and building structures and spaces dedicated to leisure and entertainment, prioritizing

aesthetics, functionality and safety to enhance recreational experiences. These spaces, such as parks, stadiums and amusement parks

blend art, engineering and urban planning to create environments that encourage relaxation, social interaction and cultural enrichment.

Gateway: Deep Space Launch Complex®

Merritt Island, Florida
BRPH | Melbourne,
Florida

Gateway: Deep Space Launch Complex, the newest attraction at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, is teeming with fascinating artifacts, but the most impressive is surely the SpaceX Falcon 9 booster rocket. The 160-foot-long semi-reusable booster, which still bears scorch marks from its two missions to space and back, seems to hover effortlessly over the main exhibit hall thanks to a high-strength, yet remarkably delicate, cable system that suspends it from above. Dramatically lit and set against the dark backdrop of the ceiling, the rocket appears from below almost as if it were floating in outer space.

The typical visitor to the complex will never know the innovative planning, careful coordination and touch of luck that were necessary to get this enormous artifact safely into the building. In fact, despite nearly 60 years of experience working with Kennedy Space Center, the design team from BRPH, an architecture, engineering and construction company headquartered in Melbourne, Florida, faced unprecedented challenges in this project. The seamlessness of



Located near the entrance of the park, the 72-foot-tall building provides a fitting backdrop to the iconic stand of rockets known as the "Rocket Garden." Photo credit: Kennedy Space Center



Gateway's curving façade is covered in more than 400 custom-made iridescent metal tiles that transition from deep blue to fuchsia, evoking the look of celestial nebulae. LED ribbon lights provide a dramatic look for evening visitors. Photo credit: Todd Reed

the visitor experience at Gateway is a testament both to the firm's substantial accumulated knowledge and to its agility in responding to ever-changing expectations and opportunities.

BRPH owes its very existence to the U.S. space program. It was founded in 1964, when three engineers working at Cape Canaveral joined with one architect to create a firm specializing in facilities for space travel. Over the past six decades, while continuing to work with Kennedy Space Center and related clients on a regular basis, the firm has opened offices in nine other cities across the country and broadened its portfolio to include a variety of commercial and institutional projects.

Unlike most other attractions in Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, which are dedicated to historic programs such as Apollo or the Space Shuttle, Gateway focuses on the present and future of

space travel. The artifacts on display therefore are likely to change from time to time to keep up with new technologies and achievements. In other words, for the design team, the challenge was not merely to get one big booster rocket into the building, but to allow for other objects of unknown size to be brought in or removed without extraordinary measures.

"The program evolved quite a bit as we were designing," said Rob Bartlett, AIA, architectural studio leader and principal of BRPH. "It was a highly iterative project. Even the final size of the Falcon rocket [for the inaugural display] was something of an unknown until very late in the process."

The siting of Gateway amidst the existing visitor complex made perfect sense from the visitors' standpoint but posed one of the biggest difficulties for the design team. The 50,614-square-foot

building is nestled between an education center to the west, ponds to the north, an IMAX® theater to the east, and the "Rocket Garden" — an eye-catching display of upright spacecraft — to the south. Any large deliveries to the new building would have to wend their way through this dense setting. BRPH not only planned the access route but also worked out the specific maneuvers necessary to get the Falcon 9 into the building through a temporary opening in the façade (picture the painstaking back-and-forth of parking a car in a tight space, and then imagine the equivalent with a 160-foot rocket).

"The delivery of the rocket ended up happening at the peak of hurricane season," recalled Bartlett. "There was this very large opening in the building, which led to some anxious discussions in OAC [owner/architect/contractor] meetings. We made contingency plans for how to secure the building if a major

storm arrived before the hole was closed up.”

Going forward, two sets of 28-by-20-foot bay doors will accommodate delivery and removal of large artifacts. A 10-ton bridge crane is positioned between the bay doors to move heavy items, while an “air pallet” system around the perimeter of the exhibit hall creates a cushion of compressed air that facilitates the movement of objects within the space. A vehicle prep room at the rear of the building allows staff to maintain and prepare artifacts for display.

Visitors, by contrast, approach the building from a plaza adjacent to the Rocket Garden. The principal façade is sheathed in more than 400 custom-made, iridescent metal sandwich panels in shades of blue, silver and fuchsia, evoking the vivid colors of a celestial nebula. Once inside, visitors may explore the main exhibit hall before proceeding up a ramp to the second level, where they come “almost nose-to-nose” with some of the large artifacts suspended from the ceiling. Also, on this level are hands-on displays and four immersive “motion theaters” in which guests experience virtual space travel.

“The design recognizes how selfie-obsessed we have become,” explained Bartlett. “The mezzanine of the exhibit hall is intended to provide guests privileged views of the amazing historic artifacts that are just out of arm’s reach. The design of the railing of the ramp is a nod to the historic metal gantries that astronauts would use to walk from the tower to the spacecraft in the Apollo and Gemini days.”

A rooftop observation deck affords views along a roughly 90-degree arc from the northeast to the southeast, thus providing a spectacular vantage point for watching rocket launches.

“It was kind of a pipe dream of mine as a kid to be an astronaut,” said Bartlett, reflecting on the project. “It tickles me that I am able to tap into that childhood desire. What a great opportunity for an architect.”



Following a ride on one of the motion theaters, guests “return to Earth,” and disperse to the mezzanine with a greater appreciation for space exploration and vehicles like the Dream Chaser suspended from above. Photo credit: Michelle Salyer



The Gateway attraction was designed to inspire the next generation of deep space travelers by showcasing present and future space exploration innovations, including real space hardware being used today by NASA and its commercial space partners. Photo credit: Jack Cook



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Leonard & Marjorie Williams Family YMCA

Orlando, Florida
RLF | Orlando, Florida

The Leonard & Marjorie Williams Family YMCA, designed by RLF, is a cornerstone in the redevelopment of Orlando's historic Packing District. In the early to mid-20th century, this area northwest of downtown was the industrial heart of the citrus company run by Dr. Philip Phillips, a medical doctor who began buying land in Central Florida in the 1890s, eventually amassing some 18 square miles of citrus groves. After selling his holdings in 1954, Dr. Phillips devoted himself to philanthropic causes through his eponymous foundation, which has donated more than \$220 million to community groups.

In 2018, the Dr. Phillips Charities announced plans for the transformation of the 202-acre

Packing District and pledged funding for the new YMCA facility, which is sited at the northern end of a planned regional park. Both the YMCA and the park reflect the foundation's commitment to promoting community health and wellness. As built, the YMCA has just under 30,849 GSF square feet of space, not including outdoor covered areas, but was designed to allow for significant expansion as the area's redevelopment progresses and demand likely increases.

"We were involved in the project at the very beginning," said Steven Langston, AIA, vice president for design at RLF. "We helped develop the program and verified where the site would be. We wanted it to be very

visible. It's next to a depressed area, but with more affluent areas nearby. We are trying to bridge those communities and attract people from both."

The site is adjacent to a new roundabout at the intersection of Princeton Street and N. Texas Avenue, conceived as a means of slowing vehicular traffic and creating more of a neighborhood feel in what is now a nondescript suburban setting. In plan, the primary block of the YMCA is angled to address the roundabout. The main circulation spine extends from a pedestrian entrance facing the roundabout through the building to another entrance off of the parking lot to the rear. Y-shaped pedestal steel columns mark both entrances. While



Photo credit: Chad Baumer Photography

those columns are an obvious reference to the building's identity, Langston noted that they also allowed for smaller foundations than usual, thus reducing construction costs.

The main block of the building includes locker rooms and small multipurpose rooms on the ground level, plus a large, open gymnasium on the upper level. The subsidiary block to the west, which aligns with Princeton Street, contains spaces for healthcare partners on the first floor and a group exercise studio, flex space and offices on the second floor. In anticipation of a future expansion, the western face of the secondary block is covered in knock-out panels with only a simple metal egress stair that can be easily removed with little environmental impact.

"The developer had put together aesthetic guidelines," said Langston. "We thought that using exposed steel in a dark, iron-looking color fit well with the Packing District character. Given the industrial history of the site, we also wanted to bring in a lot of glass. Much of the structure is composed of tilt-up concrete panels, which are durable but also quiet, with great sound absorption qualities."

The design team wanted a wood look for the exposed undersides of the exterior

soffits but given the impracticality of real wood in that setting, opted for a synthetic alternative that looks quite believable from below. Similarly, what appears to be raw concrete on the floor of the gym is actually vinyl. Swaths of bright color enliven the principal interior spaces while "orange peel" light fixtures in the lobby add a whimsical reference to the site's citrus-related history.

The COVID-19 pandemic inevitably posed challenges for the building's construction. "We had to make a few changes to the design," said Maria Hockman, AIA, project manager at RLF, "because certain materials like rigid insulation were just unavailable. So, we adjusted the roofing system, using lightweight concrete instead of a rigid insulation board roof assembly." Langston added that materials were not the only issues. He voiced concern that there were also difficulties getting tradespeople back on the project.

When asked about changes in architectural practice in the post-pandemic era, Langston laughed. "It's becoming a common theme: You just have to design to the best of your knowledge and be prepared for the possibility that six to nine months down the road, things may be totally different."

This 30,849 GSF-square-foot facility emphasizes wellness, youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility, while providing a space that fosters community connections. The exterior design blends elements of industrial brick with prominent "Y" columns, expansive windows that offer clear views inside and out, and a contemporary blend of modern materials and textures. The building also serves as a gateway connecting the park and bike/running paths that link with neighboring areas.

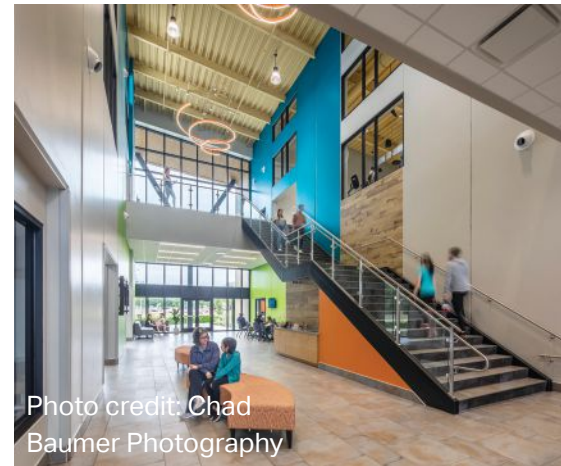


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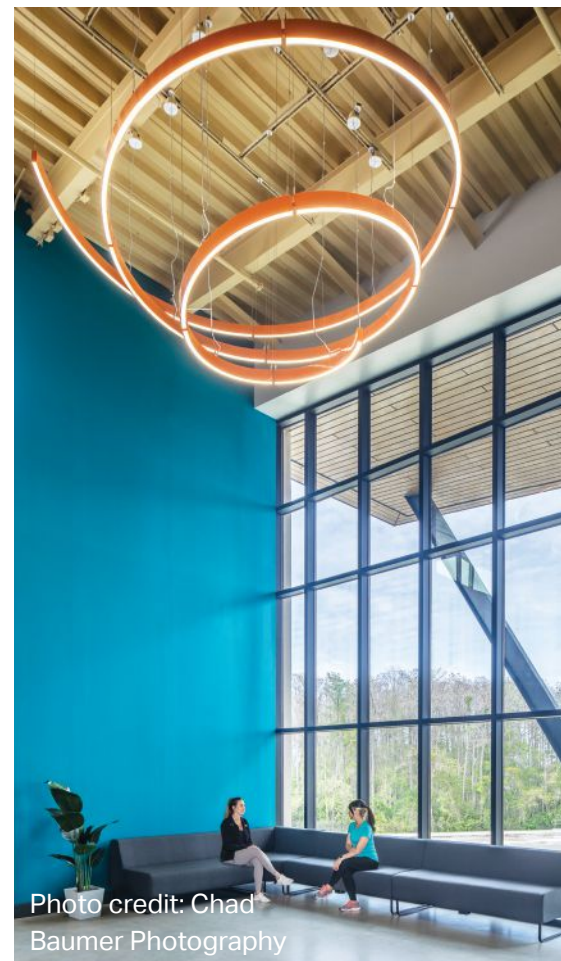
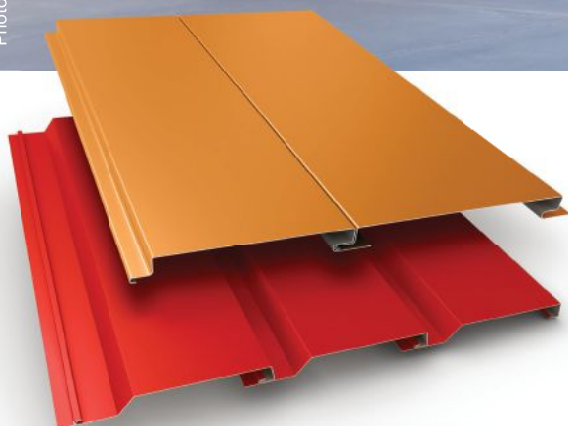


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Crisp Smooth Color

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Field House at the Youth Sports Complex Pompano Beach, Florida

Brooks + Scarpa | Fort Lauderdale, Florida

In their 1972 book “Learning from Las Vegas,” Robert Venturi, FAIA; Denise Scott Brown, Hon. FAIA; and Steven Izenour, FAIA, drew the distinction between a “duck” — a building whose iconic shape symbolizes its purpose — and a “decorated shed” — a more conventional building whose function is indicated by applied signage or ornament. Although the term “duck” is typically associated with kitschy roadside structures, “decorated sheds” are quite common in mainstream architecture — most commercial and civic buildings bear signage of some kind. Such signs, however, need not be blunt afterthoughts as shown in Venturi and Scott Brown’s famous sketch of a dull building with a huge billboard reading, “I am a monument.”

The new field house at the Youth Sports Complex (YSC) in Pompano Beach, Florida, designed by Brooks + Scarpa, is a case in point. An essay in contrasts, the pavilion advertises its function in layered ways, ranging from the restrained to the highlight abstract. Complementing that understated imagery are bold forms that have made the structure an instant landmark in a car-oriented suburban area, bringing a clear sense of identity to the 10-1/2-acre athletic park built on the site of a former Elks Club.

The field house, with 2,000 square feet of enclosed space, is strategically situated between a large parking lot to the west and four open sports fields — two full-size fields plus two smaller ones for younger children — to the east. The pavilion contains a concession stand, an office, restrooms and equipment storage. Its wraparound porch was conceived as an outdoor living room, providing a shady spot for socializing, resting or watching activities on the fields.

To drivers approaching the complex on the main road to the north of the site, the field house appears as a boxy structure of gray, board-formed concrete (when



Photo credit: Brooks + Scarpa



Photo credit: Brooks + Scarpa



Photo credit: Brooks + Scarpa

Youth Sports Complex, a six-acre park that includes a new 10,000 square foot field, utilizes materials and colors to make it an architecture of whimsy. The smooth yellow finishes bring stark contrast with the raw board-form concrete walls. Designed for extreme heat, the field house offers heat resilient infrastructure where large fans and swings allow for lounging and cooling.



Rendering courtesy of Brooks + Scarpa

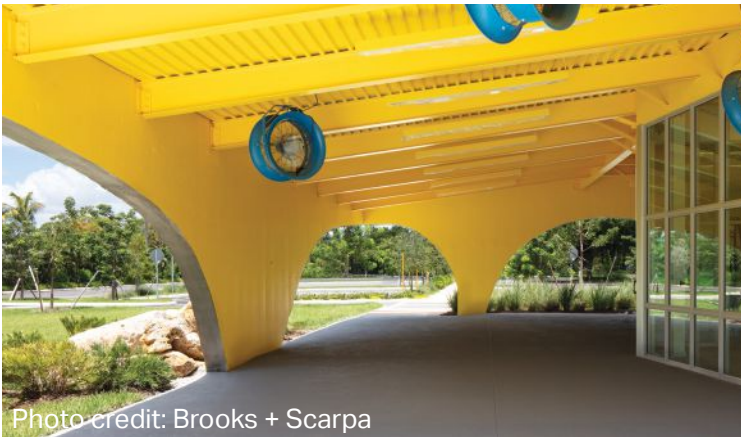


Photo credit: Brooks + Scarpa



Site plan courtesy of Brooks + Scarpa

actual wood formwork proved prohibitively expensive, form liners were used instead). Curved openings along the bottom of the box expose patches of bright yellow on the insides of the concrete walls as well as the storefront glazing that encloses the pavilion's conditioned spaces and defines the inner boundary of the porch. A row of yellow aluminum slats lines the section of the porch facing the main road. Only when standing directly in front of this façade will the visitor notice a series of fins affixed to some of the slats, forming the letters "YSC"—a literal sign, as expected on a "decorated shed," albeit an intriguingly subtle one (the full name of the complex is also spelled out in embedded letters on a bench in front of the yellow screen).

"I am very interested in the whimsy and fun of architecture," said Jeffrey Huber, FAIA, ASLA, principal for Brooks + Scarpa. That attitude is evident in the differing designs of the project's four façades. On the south side, the concrete perimeter wall meets the ground only in the middle, flaring upward to both sides. The west perimeter wall includes two curves: one full but asymmetrical arch

plus one half-arch at the southern end. On the east side, the perimeter wall swoops downward from the southern end, meeting the ground only at the northeast corner. The forms on these three façades are thus highly abstracted versions of the same three letters that appear more overtly on the north façade: Y, S and C.

The open southwest and southeast corners of the perimeter wall align with the main path from the parking lot to the sports fields, and thus invite visitors to pass under the porch and perhaps stop for refreshments or to speak with staff members. The open corners also allow for surveillance of the parking lot and sports fields from within the office. The angled glass walls of the concession stand, lobby and office similarly facilitate observation of the site.

Within the porch, a swarm of blue-painted electric fans, delicately hung from the ceiling at varied angles and heights, provides a jaunty contrast to the solidity and bright yellow surfaces of the concrete structure. Box-rib aluminum cladding, also painted yellow and sized to mimic a two-inch

board-and-batten system, lines the opaque portions of the building enclosure. "Eventually the porch will include swings," reported Huber, "like on a great southern house. Already, with the fans going, it can be 20 degrees cooler under there."

At the direction of the City of Pompano Beach, the building is designed to double as a resiliency hub. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the city offered vaccinations and related supplies at the site. The structure is, of course, engineered for resistance to extreme weather, and the landscape design, by KEITH, was planned for drought and flood tolerance. The pavilion's single-slope roof drains southward, over the leg of the "Y" in the perimeter wall, into a rain garden.

Huber, who is both an architect and a landscape architect, oversaw the plantings immediately surrounding the structure. "We included Fakahatchee [grass] and Coontie [a fernlike plant], which have attracted endangered butterflies and dragonflies," he said. "They eat mosquito larvae, which is good for everybody."

Four Seasons Hotel at the Surf Club

Surfside, Florida

Kobi Karp Architecture & Interior Design | Miami, Florida
Meier Partners | New York, New York



Photo credit: Golden Dusk Photography

When the Surf Club opened in 1930 in what is now the town of Surfside, members and their guests could easily forget the Great Depression was raging across the country. Extravagant luncheons and elegant balls at the club attracted the still rich and famous, inspiring breathless coverage in local newspapers' society pages. The inconvenience of Prohibition could also be ignored, as fine wine, beer and spirits somehow always managed to find their way into patrons' tasteful glassware.

Today, following an exquisite renovation, the once-private club is now a restaurant

and bar open to anyone who can afford the admittedly steep prices for food and beverages. The historic building's renewal was one component of the property's larger redevelopment into a Four Seasons complex designed by Meier Partners of New York in collaboration with Kobi Karp Architecture & Interior Design of Miami. The project includes a relatively small 77-key hotel, plus two residential towers spanning more than 800 feet of ocean front.

The original building, commissioned by tire magnate Harvey Firestone, was designed by Russell T. Pancoast in the Mediterranean

style that was popular in the Miami area before the Art Deco wave. The exterior as restored is covered in white stucco with dark-framed windows and a red tile roof. A single, stone-clad arch marks the main entrance, while rows of arches line the sides and rear of the building. Highlights of the interior include the Champagne Bar, with its fluted emerald-green bar, and the Lido Restaurant, distinctive for its intricately ornamented, vaulted wood-beamed ceiling.

"There were very detailed renderings available for the historic building, so we were able to remove unfortunate modifications

from the 1970s, '80s, and '90s," said Kobi Karp, AIA, founder and principal of his eponymous firm. "There was a dropped ceiling in the club, for instance, that had been added to lower air-conditioning costs for members. We removed those things and were able to expose a masonry fireplace and mural on the north face of the vaulted room that appeared in the original interior elevations by Pancoast."

While the new towers are much larger than the historic clubhouse, their siting and massing afford the older structure some breathing room. In plan, the south residential tower curves and angles away from Collins Avenue, allowing the southern wing of the Pancoast building to continue to be perceived as a distinct block. The north residential tower, meanwhile, engages the Pancoast building but is serrated in plan, reducing its apparent bulk when seen either from the avenue or from the beach.

The hotel is centered in the club's former main courtyard, which the architects transformed into a four-story, glass-enclosed atrium. The upper floors of the hotel needed to extend beyond the perimeter of the former courtyard and are cantilevered well above the roof of the historic building. Deep cantilevers also appear on one wing of the north residential tower and at the northern end of the south tower where it shades a portion of a pool terrace punctuated by a single angled column. Despite their great depth, the post-tensioned concrete cantilevers seem surprisingly light thanks to their unusual, stepped profiles.

The glass-and-white-metal vocabulary of the new towers is familiar to anyone who knows the work of Meier Partners. Here, in lieu of the porcelain enamel-coated steel cladding for which founder Richard Meier became famous, the design team specified Alucobond composite-aluminum panels, which are more durable in salt-air environments. The glazing system, which was designed to meet the highest wind and impact standards, is unique to the building and is patented. Continuous glass-railed balconies line the residential towers, while the hotel is distinguished by a staccato rhythm of individual balconies corresponding to the separate guestrooms within. At the roof level, glass parapets soften the juncture between the building and sky. Behind the two residential towers



This 1929, historically private club, is being fully renovated to include a restoration of the design by original architect, Russell Pancoast, as well as a design for three new residential and hotel condos. Known for its highly ornate and authentically detailed and proportioned Mediterranean style, the Surf Club features unique, high-beamed and vaulted ceilings, majestic colonnades and massive fireplaces.

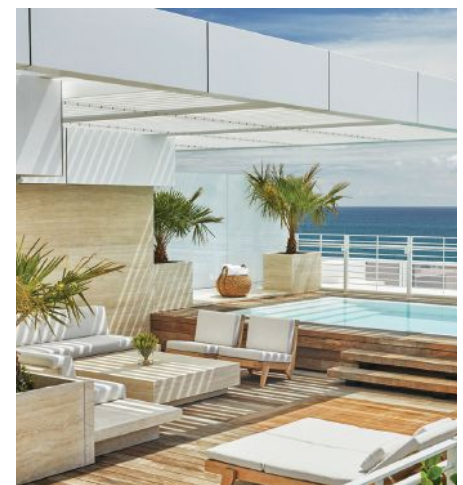


Photo credit: Golden Dusk Photography

are rows of cabanas arranged in gentle arcs. These recall the two horseshoe-shaped cabana structures that originally bracketed the main clubhouse. "When the club was built," Karp noted, "the ocean was much closer—there wasn't a row of dunes and a beach walk like there is now. When the beach was deepened, the curved cabanas were disengaged from the water."

Indeed, whereas in the 1930s ocean waves virtually lapped at the edges of Pancoast's clubhouse, now, thanks to area-wide beach extension and resilience efforts, oceanfront buildings in Surfside are set well back from the water line. At the Four Seasons, the landscape design by Fernando Wong modulates between the buildings and the water, creating a series of linear zones that include a swath of lawns surrounded by lush foliage, providing privacy for residents and guests. The surf that was the *raison d'être* for the original club may now be a

bit further away, but thanks to the lavish restoration of the historic building, the sensitive incorporation of new towers, and the complementary relationship between buildings and landscape, the Four Seasons complex has brought new life to one of Miami's early architectural landmarks.



Canopies in Architecture

Rule No. 1 for designing in hot, humid climates: provide shade. Direct sunshine can increase the apparent ambient temperature by as much as 10 to 15 degrees, and when the heat index is considered, the difference can be even more dramatic. Permanent or temporary shade structures

can turn sun-blasted outdoor areas into surprisingly comfortable places. This issue includes five projects that are either fully or mostly unenclosed, but which incorporate substantial canopies for shading purposes. Two of the projects are amenities in public parks, one is a pavilion for special

events and one is a grandstand for an athletic facility. In the final example, an existing elevated roadway was cleverly appropriated as a de facto canopy over a new skatepark. These projects demonstrate that excellence in architecture comes in many forms, some of which don't require full enclosure.

Blake Doyle Skatepark

Pensacola, Florida

Bear General Contractors | Pensacola, Florida



Skateboarders are the epitome of cool, but they are not immune to the heat of the Florida sun. In Pensacola, a creative team saw an opportunity to use an existing urban stretch of Interstate 110 as a canopy to shade a new skatepark. The first completed component of an ambitious greenway intended to reconnect neighborhoods long separated by the elevated thoroughfare, the skatepark covers over 23,000 square feet and incorporates a variety of landscape forms such as bowls, stair sets and handrails along with a stage for performances and events.

Named for Blake Doyle, a local skateboarder who was killed by a train in 2015, the skatepark was the brainchild of a non-profit organization called Upward Intuition, which was formed by Jon Shell

expressly to raise funds and advocate for such an amenity in downtown Pensacola. The project team included Bear General Contractors, Evergreen Skateparks, HDR and the American Ramp Company. The lead designer was Tito Porrata, a founder of the skatepark design companies Pivot Custom and Platform Group. Construction documents were prepared by Joey O'Mahoney, Associate ASLA, a landscape designer with Kimley-Horn and Associates who has since joined the firm California Skateparks.

"For me, as an architect working under the umbrella of a general contractor, it was good estimating and luck that brought the project into my court," said Curtis Reed, AIA, director of virtual design and construction at Bear General Contractors. "The project was hard-bid by the city after

design and we happened to be the low bidder, but it truly felt more like a design-build project than any hard-bid work I'd done before. The Evergreen Skateparks team would have recommendations for little field changes here and there, we'd illustrate those proposals and pass along to the design team. We'd tell them ways to make the park flow better, make an element harder or reduce chances of skaters colliding and that it wouldn't cost a dollar to make those small changes happen."

Porrata, who has also worked on skateparks in Miami, Lakeland and St. Petersburg, noted that no two parks are the same. "Skateparks are unique, like golf courses," he explained. "You want diversity. You want each one to have its own style to get people to travel



Photo Credit: Curtis Reed, AIA

and check out other parks.” In that spirit, the design team for the Blake Doyle Skatepark made the most of the site’s unusual constraints, including the surprisingly irregular array of columns supporting the highway above. Although at first glance the curvilinear park appears to be geometrically independent, it engages the existing infrastructure in ways that enhance the skating experience while creating a sense of cohesion between the highway and the landscape below.

Durability is obviously a major concern in skateparks given the constant wear of wheels and boards on skating surfaces — especially along exposed edges that inevitably inspire skaters to try tricky maneuvers. For the rims of some of the bowls at Blake Doyle, the designers specified a steel angle placed so that the vertical is anchored in the ground at the back, yielding a knife-like edge. In lieu of poured-in-place concrete, they opted for pool block edging — a super-hardened, abrasion-resistant material — which can be replaced relatively easily as needed.

Sustainability and resilience were also priorities. Instead of traditional steel reinforcing bars in the concrete, the project used basalt rebar, which consists of fibers of volcanic rock bonded with epoxy resin. Basalt rebar is lighter than steel, has a much lower carbon footprint and doesn’t oxidize, making it ideal for coastal environments where moisture infiltration can be devastating. “You can carry four pieces of #4 [basalt] rebar in your left hand,” said Porrata, “and with the price of steel going up, it was pretty affordable. We reduced the amount of steel we’d normally use by about 90 percent.” Even the sealant used on the skating surfaces is environment-friendly: “You can drink it,” claimed Porrata.

The broader greenway project, known as the Hollice T. Williams Park, will eventually span 1.3 miles and will include a walking trail, a fitness loop, youth sports fields, rain gardens, a dog park and an open-air market in addition to an existing swimming pool, community garden and police station. Much of the money for the greenway came from the Gulf Coast

Restoration Trust Fund, which funnels financial penalties stemming from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico into economic and environmental redevelopment. The park is being built under the auspices of Escambia County.

“The big goals for this project include recreational opportunities, improving water quality, community resiliency, public art, reflecting on the area’s history and supporting urban connectivity,” said Allen Vinson, PE, a project manager at HDR. “At the northern end, there will be a series of gardens showing the old parcel boundaries — what was taken out to build the interstate. On another block that’s currently a blank slate, there’s a downhill grade, so we imagine an amphitheater and a picnic area under the highway. Then there will be an overlook area next to a multilevel stormwater pond, which will help with stormwater treatment and storage. On the last plot at the southern end is the market plaza. There used to be a railroad depot there that was a prime place. The market plaza might contain



A highly anticipated project for the City of Pensacola, this project consists of over 23,000 square feet of skateable surfaces, and brings together elements that will entertain anyone from amateurs to veterans. Skating features are integrated into the surrounding landscape beneath the I-110 overpass and include elements such as bowls, stair sets, handrails, and a stage for performances and events Photo Credit: Curtis Reed, AIA

railroad cars taking advantage of the shade from the interstate."

The skatepark's opening in June 2023 attracted substantial community attention. "The opening day event had over 3,000 people," said Shell, of Upward Intuition. "We had skate celebrities there. Next year we plan to book headliner-type bands. Meanwhile, we are working on doing more skateparks, including one at Pensacola Beach."

"The skatepark is only a couple blocks from our office but not necessarily on my travel route," said Reed, the architect at Bear General Contractors, "but I'll tell you that I take the detour to drive past every chance I get, and it's always busy. The skateboarding community has shown so much support for this project, and they're out there from dawn to dusk (or later), rain or shine, seven days a week. Our work on the project might be over, but it's great to see that it's in good hands with the local community that cares just as much about what has been built here."

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View from underside framing Sample-McDougald House. Photo credit: Brooks + Scarpa

Centennial Park Events Pavilion

Pompano Beach, Florida

Brooks + Scarpa | Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Directly across the street from the Youth Sports Complex in Pompano Beach (see pages 18-19) is Centennial Park, so designated in 2008 to mark the 100th anniversary of the city's incorporation. The focal attraction of the five-acre park is the Sample-McDougald House, originally built on a different site in 1916 by Albert Neal Sample, a prominent citizen and farmer. It later belonged to the McDougald family, who eventually donated it to a non-profit group in order to ensure its preservation. It was moved to the current site in 2001, and following a decade-long renovation, opened to the public as a house museum and venue for weddings and other special events.

Brooks + Scarpa was hired to design a freestanding pavilion on the grounds to

accommodate larger functions. Sited to the east of the historic house, the open-air pavilion is nestled amid a hammock of trees adjacent to an existing gazebo. The structure can accommodate up to about 180 people for informal "jelly jar" weddings, concerts, school programs and civic events, while a flat lawn between the house and the pavilion provides overflow space for still-bigger groups.

"Initially, the Sample-McDougald [House Preservation] Society was very adamant that the new structure should mimic the house," said Jeffrey Huber, FAIA, ASLA, principal in the Fort Lauderdale office of Brooks + Scarpa. "We told them that was the wrong idea. We didn't want it to be bold; we wanted it to dissolve or recede — to tuck it into the site."

In that spirit, the new pavilion was conceived as a modern version of a barn or similar accessory building that might have existed on such an estate a century ago (Huber cites the work of the Rural Studio, a design-build program at Auburn University known for its modernized vernacular projects, as an inspiration). Viewed from the narrow end closest to the house, the pavilion's structural system is clearly legible. Steel columns support steeply pitched steel rafters. Resting on these rafters are wood purlins, which in turn support a wood roof covered in crimp metal on top. The sides of the roof have deep overhangs that maximize shade while a continuous drip edge carries rainwater well away from the concrete slab below. The acutely tapered ends of the rafters

not only add an architectural flourish, but also help to define a perimeter zone that Huber likens to an ambulatory in a medieval church.

"We went back and forth on whether to use steel or heavy timber," said Huber. "We were worried about durability — people carving their names into wood columns, for instance. We went with steel, but we wanted it to look light, so we minimized the structural connections. There are bolts only at the top ridge."

The open-air pavilion is designed to take maximum advantage of prevailing breezes. Necessity, however, dictated the inclusion of a small, enclosed area, containing air-conditioned restrooms, a catering kitchen and storage. This enclosure, clad in a fiber-cement board-and-batten system, is off-center along the main axis of the pavilion, leaving room for a porch-like space at the eastern end that can be used for smaller events.

At first, after receiving the two separate commissions across the street from each other — the Centennial Park Pavilion and the field house at the Youth Sports Complex — the design team at Brooks + Scarpa assumed that the projects would have a shared architectural language. Soon, however, the team realized that the programs and sites were so divergent that they required unique solutions. "They are almost opposites," said Huber. "The Youth Sports Complex is iconic, while Centennial Park is laconic."

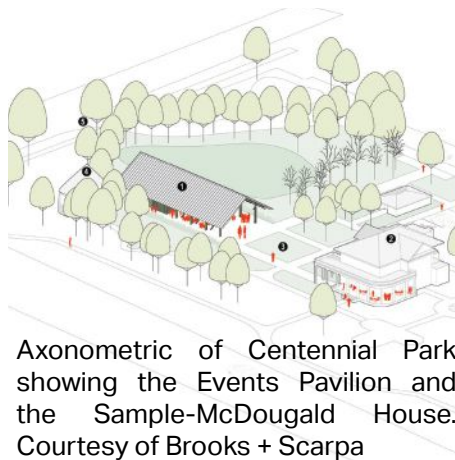
The City of Pompano Beach Centennial Park is home to the Sample-McDougal House Museum, a 100-year-old home built by the first settlers to the area and serves as an historic pioneer museum and event space. The three-acre site contains a hammock of trees and open fields that are used by the community for large events and weddings. A pavilion is strategically located within the existing hammock of trees and is designed to look like a contemporary outbuilding to the main house. Intended to blend with the historic character of the home and feel like an accessory building, the new open-air pavilion provides an event space for up to 180 people.



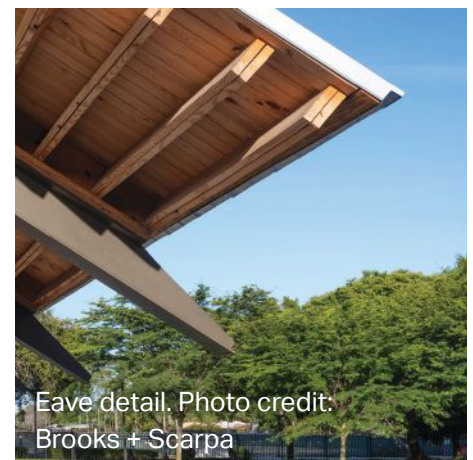
Southeast view from park entry. Photo credit: Brooks + Scarpa



West elevation looking east. Photo credit: Brooks + Scarpa



Axonometric of Centennial Park showing the Events Pavilion and the Sample-McDougal House. Courtesy of Brooks + Scarpa



Eave detail. Photo credit: Brooks + Scarpa

Nuevo Centro de Atletismo y Pista Raúl Rodríguez Berríos

Villalba, Puerto Rico

MCA Arquitectos | San Juan, Puerto Rico



To Miguel E. Calzada Agosto, AIA, principal of MCA Arquitectos, the winglike, white steel canopy over the stands at the new Centro de Atletismo y Pista (Athletic Center and Running Track) in Villalba, Puerto Rico, symbolizes a bird of hope.

Villalba, which lies in a valley in south central Puerto Rico, was devastated in 2017 by Hurricane Maria, the most destructive storm ever to hit the island. A popular athletic complex southwest of the town center was among the many public facilities that were damaged. The municipal government commissioned MCA to design a new sports complex on the same site, including an Olympic-standard athletic track, an open sports field, shaded viewing stands and an enclosed structure containing locker rooms, a gym, a martial arts studio and support functions.

The lightweight steel canopy over the viewing stands is the signature architectural element of the campus. Supported by slender, angled columns, the canopy itself has a subtle, asymmetrical chevron shape in elevation, which accounts for its birdlike quality. Seen from across the track, the sleek white structure stands out against the lush, green mountains beyond.

"In Villalba," said Calzada, "you really understand the sun. Our structure is like a baseball hat, shading people from the sun and heat." The architects sensibly placed the grandstand along the west side of the track so that it casts welcome shadows across the field in the afternoon when temperatures tend to be highest. The enclosed athletic facilities are beneath the stands and have large windows that afford excellent views of the surrounding mountains.

On the opposite side of the track from the grandstand building is a series of upright concrete slabs bearing stylized letters that spell out the name of the town. The letters are finished in the same bright green used on the upper-level pavilion beneath the steel canopy. The architects opted for a custom shade to match the foliage on the mountains, rather than using the official green on the town's flag and coat of arms. "We did it without asking the mayor," recalled Carlos Camacho, AIT, CAAPPR, a senior architect at MCA. "The city called and asked us where we got that green. We thought they were mad, but then they said, 'We love the green! We are going to change our logo!'"

Calzada proudly reported that, during Hurricane Fiona, a Category 4 storm that struck Puerto Rico in 2022, the canopy and the rest of the facilities in the complex performed very well.



Grandstand & Olympic Track. Photo credit: Isaías Rubert

In 2017, the town of Villalba, located in the central region of the island, was devastated by Hurricane Maria. Due to this, the sports facilities, recreational areas and kids' playground located on Albizu Campos street in the municipality were affected, causing very few people to use these spaces. Phase I of the project consisted of remodeling the existing athletics track to create eight, 48-inch-wide lanes. Phase II included construction of a two-story, 6,396 square feet, two-story building with covered grandstands.

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Plaza Antonio R. Barceló

San Juan, Puerto Rico

MCA Arquitectos | San Juan, Puerto Rico

Barrio Obrero, a subsection of the Santurce district in San Juan, is one of the most densely populated areas in Puerto Rico. The name means “worker neighborhood” in English, and it was first developed in the 1920s and '30s to house laborers coming from other towns on the island. Today, the barrio's population is heavily Dominican.

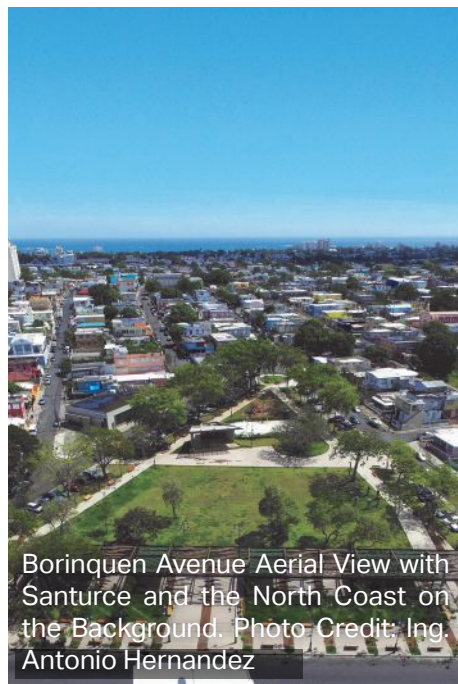
One of the most important gathering spots for the community is the Plaza Antonio R. Barceló, an open space named for Antonio Rafael Barceló y Martínez (1868-1938), the first president of the Senate of Puerto Rico. By 2018, the plaza had fallen into disrepair, leading to calls for demolition of its existing structures and a reconsideration of its programming. The local firm of MCA Arquitectos was hired to design the new park.

“When we first visited the site, we noticed that the plaza had a lot of people at all times, but just in the southern part—the only place with open space,” noted Miguel E. Calzada Agosto, AIA, principal for MCA Arquitectos. “People were playing dominoes; kids were there with bikes.” The design team saw an opportunity to accommodate those activities more comfortably while animating the entire site.

The program for the reconstructed plaza has three main components, which roughly relate to the three different streets bordering the triangular site. The southern edge is defined by Avenida Borinquen, one of Santurce's major thoroughfares. Along this side and across the street from a line of retail shops, MCA placed the park's principal architectural feature: a linear pergola, parallel to the avenue, dubbed the Barceló Promenade. This open-web structure of dark steel partially shades the paved area below. Several



Open Air Amphitheater and Antilles Map. Photo Credit: Paola Quevedo



Borinquen Avenue Aerial View with Santurce and the North Coast on the Background. Photo Credit: Ing. Antonio Hernandez



Playground and Water-Play Area. Photo Credit: Paola Quevedo

Designed as a space to give back to the community, Plaza Barceló is divided into three main areas, including pergolas and an open-air amphitheater, to respond to the various neighborhood activities. Children, young adults and elders leverage the space for play, social gatherings and entertainment.

opaque roofs suspended beneath the open canopy provide full shade over designated seating areas, two of which include custom tables for dominoes, a popular pastime among neighborhood residents. The pergola also serves as the principal gateway to the park.

The second key element is a concrete bandstand located roughly in the middle of the triangular site, but closer to the street along the northwestern edge. The bandstand faces an open lawn where people may sit to watch performances. Immediately in front of the bandstand is a paved area in which a map of the Antilles by artist Nestor Paoli has been embedded in the concrete — stars in the map call out the locations of national capitals. Opposite the bandstand is a large tree that was carefully preserved and whose roots are protected by a semicircular cutout in the concrete paving.

The third component of the park is the children's play area, which occupies the acute corner of the site toward the north. A water organ just beyond the bandstand provides cooling relief in hot weather. To its north is a playground for small children, the constrained location of which lends itself to easy surveillance by parents and other caregivers.

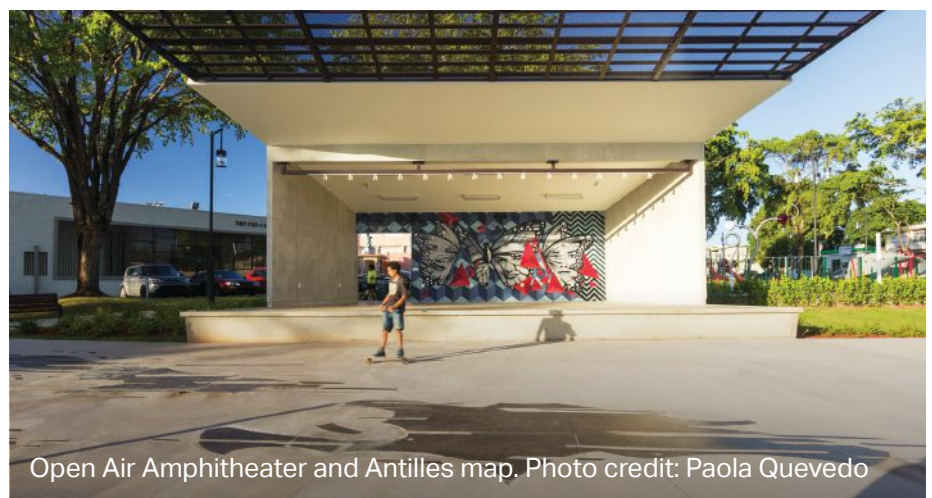
MCA Arquitectos removed the parking spaces that previously lined Avenida Borinquen and extended the sidewalk to the street edge, adding new benches, street trees and bus shelters. Parking spaces along the other two streets are partially shielded from views within the park by additional benches, trees and light poles. Circular landscaped elements at the corners soften the site's angular geometry and subtly encourage movement of pedestrians into the park, which once again serves as a center of neighborhood social life.



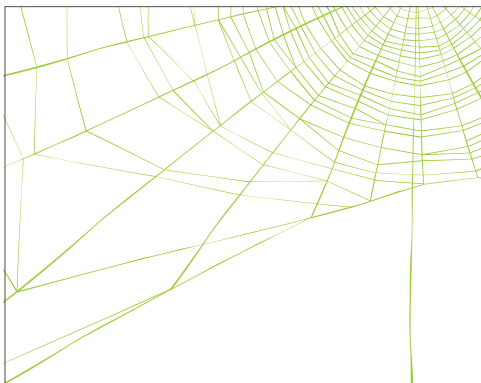
Barceló Promenade at Night (Pérgola). Photo credit: Paola Quevedo



Barceló Promenade in use. Photo credit: Carlos Camacho



Open Air Amphitheater and Antilles map. Photo credit: Paola Quevedo



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St. Pete Pier Approach and Park

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For more than a century, the waterfront adjacent to downtown St. Petersburg has been the site of various municipal piers, initially built for practical commercial purposes but later as recreational amenities. Generations of residents and tourists remember the Inverted Pyramid Pier, named for the strikingly shaped five-story public pavilion that stood at the end of the main pleasure pier from 1973 to 2015. That unusual landmark won the affection of many locals, but it's safe to say that few were fond of the barren, sunbaked approach to the pavilion, which favored cars over pedestrians.

The new St. Pete Pier, erected on the same site as the demolished Inverted Pavilion Pier, is about the journey as

much as the destination. While the sleekly modern multistory pavilion at the end, with its food service establishments and viewing platform, would certainly draw pedestrians on its own, the approach path is now an attraction itself. What was once a stretch of cracked asphalt roads and parking lots has been transformed into a welcoming promenade featuring an outdoor marketplace, ample green space, a playground and large-scale public artworks.

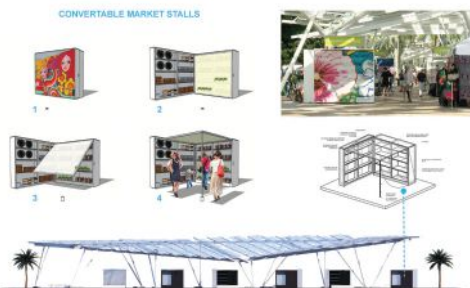
The St. Pete Pier Approach Park was designed by the local firm of WJ Architects in collaboration with New York-based W Architecture & Landscape Architecture and the national engineering and planning firm Kimley-Horn. Although the Approach

Park was technically a separate project, the design team coordinated its efforts with those of the team for the destination pavilion, which included Rogers Partners, ASD|SKY and Ken Smith Workshop. Conceived as a versatile transitional zone between downtown and the pierhead, Approach and Park has created, in effect, an entirely new public open space in the heart of the city.

"We envisioned the park as a series of urban rooms," said Jason Jensen, AIA, president and CEO of WJ Architects and the principal-in-charge for the project. "Why are you willing to walk farther in a city than in a suburban area? It's because of the density of experiences. A city is a collection of different neighborhoods,

which make it attractive to visit over and over."

The Pier Approach and Park are organized around a central spine that aligns with 2nd Avenue NE. Notably, however, the main vehicular access to the pier diverges from the axis of the avenue, allowing the pedestrian path to take precedence. Less than 150 feet from the shoreline, that path passes under a linear canopy that defines the marketplace, which is the park's civic core. The canopy is partially covered with photovoltaic panels that shade the pedestrian path and market stalls while harvesting solar energy that is fed back into the municipal power grid. The canopy's structural grid is oriented diagonally, adding a dynamic counterpoint to the linearity of the primary path while animating the ground plane with angular shadows and patches of sunlight passing between the PV panels. The individual market stalls include smaller pop-up canopies that provide additional shade while modulating the scale of the open-air space. Bay breezes pass freely between the stalls and the main canopy, helping to keep the marketplace comfortable even on hot days.



At its core, this project sought to repurpose vehicle space for highly programmed, flexible public space that serves as a culture connection, creating a civic and ecological park experience, from the city's density to the water's edge. To do so, the strongest elements of Florida ecology — sun, wind and water — were taken into consideration. Each zone of the park was programmed at various scales allowing a variety of activities to energize the park. The design also includes moments of connection between nature and landscape allowing people to experience these pockets of serenity.



Pier Market spine. Aerial view of solar structure.
Photo credit: Randy van Duinen



Market stalls during market hours. Photo credit: Randy van Duinen

AFTER - PEDESTRIAN CENTRIC



BEFORE - VEHICULAR CENTRIC



Photo credit: Randy van Duinen





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