

Queens Botanical Garden Visitor Center

Location: Flushing, NY

Architect: BKSK Architects

Overview

The Queens Botanical Garden is located on 39 acres of land owned by New York City, the legacy of the 1939 and 1964 World's Fairs. It is open to the public, and admission is free.

The Visitor and Administration Center includes a reception area, an auditorium, a garden store, gallery space, meeting rooms, administrative offices, and a mechanical room. The project is made up of three interconnected spaces: a forecourt and roof canopy, a linear central reception and administration building clad in wood and glass, and an auditorium space tucked into the landscape, sheltered by a sloping green roof.

SUSTAINABILITY SNAPSHOT

- Percent of total building area that is daylight: **84**
- Percent of building that can be ventilated or cooled with operable windows: **95**
- Precipitation managed on site: **100**
- EPA Energy Reduction:
- Percent total energy savings: **40**
- Lighting Load after Controls (W/sf):

Jury Comments:

"This is about reinventing a building type. Pavilions in parks are often clearly 'architecture in landscape' and this one really seemed to blur the distinction. They cleverly reduced the profile and scale by making it appear more landscape than architecture." – **Susan Rodriguez**

"This was a really elegant solution effectively rendered."
– **Marvin Malecha**

"This project seemed to be about urban shelter that still emphasized an experiential connection to the natural landscape. I especially appreciated the focus on water—which is a critical and often overlooked aspect of sustainable design. In addition to the project's significant attention to stormwater management, rainwater collection, and a graywater system, water was also used as a strong design element to unify the building and landscape, and raise people's awareness of the water cycle at the site and building scale." – **Gail Brager**



Sustainable Design Intent & Innovation



The Visitor and Administration Center was designed to celebrate the relationship between diverse cultures and the environment and to showcase water management, landscape integration, and energy conservation and generation. The Garden is accessible by public transportation, and showers and changing areas encourage employees to bike or walk.

Reusing graywater for flushing toilets reduces the project's potable water consumption by 55%. The building also features waterless urinals and composting toilets. Thanks to extensive bioswales and a green roof on the auditorium, the project manages all stormwater on site. A water channel, fed by rainwater that cascades off the roof canopy, weaves around the building and through the gardens.

The reception building's long, narrow shape is oriented along an east-west axis, allowing daylight to penetrate all interior spaces. An efficient lighting system, daylight dimming, and occupancy sensors reduce energy consumption. Glass doors and windows in temperate weather, providing natural ventilation. The building uses photovoltaic panels and a ground-source heat-pump system to harvest energy on site.

More than 33% of the materials in the building, by cost, were harvested or manufactured within 500 miles of the project site. The project team also preferred materials with high durability, low maintenance requirements, recycled content, low chemical emissions, and Forest Stewardship Council certification.

Primary Design Team Members

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Jennifer Ward-Souder
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Full project profile:

www.aiatopten.org/hpb/overview.cfm?ProjectID=1018

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