

AIA GULF STATES PRESS RELEASE

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Sheila Leggett / 615.254.1233 / sheila@aiatn.org

GULF STATES ARCHITECTS CELEBRATE DESIGN EXCELLENCE

Architects from the Gulf States Region of the American Institute of Architects gathered in Denver to celebrate the 2013 Honor Awards program. Renowned members of the Charleston, SC jury noted that architects practicing in the Gulf States have similar sensibilities about culture and place which they see as exciting and challenging opportunities to explore that culture and sense of place. “Dignity in social housing”, “seductive corporate image”, and “design elements that transcend a certain period of time with the timelessness and nobleness of the whole” were some of the common themes running through the jury comments when discussing the merits of these design projects. This Honors program identifies built works of distinction, and sixteen projects were recognized as exemplary design solutions.

An accomplished group of design professionals from the Charleston area of South Carolina juried the projects. Belinda Stewart, AIA, of Eupora, MS acted as Program Chair. The jury members were Ray Huff (Huff + Gooden Architects, LLC); Thompson Penney, FAIA (LS3P and former President of the American Institute of Architects); Ms. Whitney Powers (Studio A Architecture); Jim Thomas (Thomas & Denzinger Architects / Jim Thomas Studio); and Jay White (liollo architecture).

Together, they awarded sixteen projects from the 120 submittals from architects in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

HONOR AWARDS

Oak Ridge House; Duvall Decker Architects, PA – Jackson, MS

Program Statement:

The scope of this project is a new 3,750 sf single family infill house in Jackson, Mississippi.

Jury’s Comments:

A home of dignity and grace that is achieved in an understated way without a sense of struggling.

The balance of solid, nice shingled walls with beautifully crafted openings and bays are a successful, functional juxtaposition – providing privacy and cross ventilation.

The cave-like kitchen as “hearth” is a strong feature that will compel guests to gather at the *fire*. The cave is a nice counterpoint to the transparent living/dining space.

The interiors are spacious and simply have a delightful “Southern-air” about them. This could only be in a southern climate.

Rosa F. Keller Library & Community Center; Eskew+Dumez+Ripple – New Orleans, LA

Program Statement:

10,000 sf contemporary library addition and restoration of a historic house for community use.

Jury's Comments:

A masterfully executed raising and restoration of the historic house and a beautifully conceived addition that humbly defers to the visual exuberance and detail of its elder.

The unexpected constantly sloping helical roof form effectively transitions to the height and massing of the house while creating a strong continuity of ever-changing spaces within.

Clean, warm and humble interiors.

The Bridge Building; Hastings Architecture Associates - Nashville, TN

Program Statement:

The LEED Platinum restoration and addition to the former NABRICO building serves as a beacon for revitalization of the Cumberland River's East Bank in downtown Nashville.

Jury's Comments:

A wonderful project! ... and LEED Platinum to boot!

This is an ambitious project that take no prisoners; conceited and rightfully so.

The Architect brought this historic structure into the twentieth century by skillfully paying homage to its past through bold allegorical references to barges and industrial past with nice sculptural qualities. The core placement and materiality were effectively applied and very successful.

The Architects were clearly not inhibited in their approach to the challenge of adding to and restoring an historic structure.

I might add that the presentation was most successful in imparting the Architects' vision.

Quite expertly handled throughout. Very strong project.

HONOR CITATIONS

Bennie G. Thompson Academic & Civil Rights Research Center; Duvall Decker Architects, PA – Jackson, MS

Program Statement:

As the first new academic building on Tougaloo College's campus since 1959, this 27,000 sf facility accommodates diverse functions and progresses a unique mission.

Jury's Comments:

This Civil Rights Research Center is a noble building that is well integrated with the campus as a whole, as well as functioning as a link to other parts of the campus.

Very effective site strategy that reinforces the campus form and structure.

It is well integrated into the landscape and the transitions from one space to another through a type of compression. The colonnaded element makes a strong connection to the adjacent structure and is delightful to enjoy the green space beyond.

A work with the exception of the “flat mansard waterfall cornice” feature (a design element, I should add, was prevalent through many of the submissions) that transcends a certain period of time with the timelessness and nobleness of the whole.

MATA Airways Transit Center, brg3s / TRO Jung Brannen - Memphis, TN

Program Statement:

Combined pedestrian, bike, public vehicular, bus travel, and future light rail; this building's main function serves as a shared waiting room for multiple, transit-oriented tenants.

Jury's Comments:

The Jury applauds this multi-modal facility for the region.

Whereas most buildings usually have canopies that take away from the overall design, the architect created bus canopies that actually take the spotlight of design and made this project into one that caught the jury's attention.

The canopies are a strong element that looks to the future of intermodal transportation.

Site strategy is strong with the flow of the buses determining the slight canting of the building which then drives the angularity and sense of “freedom” that travel embodies.

Cape Russell Retreat; Sanders Pace Architects – Knoxville, TN

Program Statement:

An off-the-grid lakeside pavilion for a couple located in the rural hills of East Tennessee.

Jury's Comments:

This is a sweet little project – a beautiful, functional folly ... a folly that is a jewel in the woods – one that Thoreau would have loved.

It situates itself well between a highly refined aesthetic and that of a rugged retreat.

The exquisitely detailed screen walls belies the simple program and use and provide both a solidness of form and veiled transparency that is memorable.

West Jackson Workshops; Sanders Pace Architecture – Knoxville, TN

Program Statement:

An adaptive reuse of a historic warehouse.

Jury's Comments:

The Jury was taken by its simple, clean renovation.

It shows considerable restraint and optimism, as well as judicious detailing.

Very nice reuse of a mid-century commercial building.

The exploitation of the spatial volume is noteworthy.

Development of a walled court is a good programmatic addition to the gallery.

Baton Rouge Magnet High School Renovation and Addition; Remson|Haley|Herpin Architects, APAC and Chenevert Architects, LLC - Baton Rouge, LA

Program Statement:

After a successful effort to save this obsolete high school building from certain demolition, architects were served a set of incompatible mandates from which rose this unforgettable design.

Jury's Comments:

K-12 schools can be quite challenging design opportunities but this beautiful example of a classic school topology is very successful in creating a strong design that balances the new and the old.

Wonderful unapologetic modern addition to a classic academy building.

The careful massing and articulation, placing large expanses of glass to create transparency and interest, as well as allow the introduction of ample daylighting, was particularly successful.

Leadership Memphis; archimania – Memphis, TN

Program Statement:

An organization that builds leaders through education and collaboration sought a new street-level location that was both open and highly visible.

Jury's Comments:

This interior renovation introduced new energies and vibrancy into the leadership program – both figuratively and literally.

The simple and elegant organization of elements created a graphic plan that works both in 2 dimensions, as well as 3.

The bold yellow divider and extension is exciting and creative.

MERIT AWARDS

Village de Jardin Senior Housing; Holly and Smith Architects, APAC - Hammond, LA

Program Statement:

A housing community developed for individuals 55 years or older. The total development is 11.4 acres in size with a total of 224 living units.

Jury's Comments:

The single family cottages are the strongest part of this development resulting in wonderfully scaled units with the porch elements providing both identity and a contextual connection to place.

With the wonderful porches, nicely detailed sun screens, and vibrant colors; the cottages create homes with life and energy.

The site is highly regulated and public space between units could have been more highly developed

Overall, the architects are to be credited with bringing a level of dignity and identification to this often neglected building type – social housing.

Scissor house; Dave Baird, +one design & construction – Baton Rouge, LA

Program Statement:

The Scissor House joins two long, metal clad forms that bisect a wooded lot, mimicking the cutting action of a pair of scissors.

Jury's Comments:

This modest home provides a freshness of approach, clarity of purpose, and striking contrast to the organic natural magnificent mature trees.

The front screen wall will provide separation and, in many ways, acts as a porch – creating a zone of privacy facing the street, but a larger, softer space for entertaining. Nice details.

A simple strategy that engages the site effectively and creates a series of garden rooms.

James M. Singleton Head Start Center; Trapolin-Peer Architects, A.P.C. – New Orleans, LA

Program Statement:

James M. Singleton Head Start Center is a 13,000 sf facility designed to support the low income children and community of Littlewoods in New Orleans.

Jury's Comments:

The clarity of organization is expressed beautifully in the UVA- reminiscent, pavilion-like porches which define the whole as a strong singular element.

The section suggests a wonderful “outpouring” of the room (classroom) to the garden (play area). The most successful element by far is the classroom connections to the outdoors via the protected porch, and it proposes a compelling educational model especially for younger children.

The porch as intermediary space is effective and it is assumed this is used also as a teaching space.

The relationship of the porch/promenade to the garden is very strong.

BLHI International Group Headquarters; Giattina Aycock Architecture Studio – Birmingham, AL

Program Statement:

Headquarters and warehouse for a construction company building U.S. embassies around the world.

Jury’s Comments:

A corporate image elegantly executed with wonderful transparency of spaces, crisp detailing and a straightforward, no nonsense approach.

Great attention to exterior space and the relationship between the interior and exterior realms.

The “porch-like” break room exemplifies this wonderful ambiguity between what’s inside and what is outside.

Although not a favorite of one juror, the juror described it as “a very seductive building that compels my fellow jurors to fawn... as a strategy of seduction, it is therefore successful.

Arabella Street Residential Renovation; Eskew+Dumez+Ripple – New Orleans, LA

Program Statement:

Renovation and addition to an existing circa 1920 residence

Jury’s Comments:

Wonderful re-fabrication of a classic local building typology.

This project with a very modest addition and reconfiguring of space transforms a typology that has served the locale well for generations into a modern home where spaces flow together to create a home for living,

Masterfully configured and detailed, it is a contemporary home that would be comfortable to live in...a feat not consistently accomplished.

The Jury particularly liked the wonderful continuation of siding to create the slatted shading on the new porch.

Mercer Capital; archimania – Memphis, TN

Program Statement:

To redefine the outdated image of a 25 year old investment banking firm located in the 26th floor of a mid-century building.

Jury's Comments:

Understated, yet refined detailing and use of minimal color palette results in a strong crisp interior.

The Architect showed a good balance of restraint and refinement with just the right moves to bring it all together.

It is very effective in its challenge to connote a different sensibility for its client with a new, yet classical and timeless motif.

Ste. Marie Restaurant & Bar; Eskew+Dumez+Ripple – New Orleans, LA

Program Statement:

A new 3500 SF fine dining restaurant on the ground floor of a high rise apartment building

Jury's Comments:

The restaurant is successful in its intended design statement of “linking the restaurant to the historic and interesting neighborhood of the late 1800’s”!

The wood dividers and champagne tower are successful in paying homage to shipping palates, while creating warm and inviting atypical elements.

Robustly textured and highly thoughtful solution to create an eatery that is just waiting for the bustle of happy diners.

The Honor Awards were presented at the AIA Gulf States Region reception in Denver, Colorado in conjunction with AIA's National Convention.

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For More Information, contact: **Sheila Leggett /AIA Gulf States Region/615-254-1233/sheila@aiatn.org**