



Leading the Pack: Winners at Los Angeles Architectural Awards Put City's Thriving Design Culture and World-Renowned Talent on Display

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Underscoring the city's stature as a global center for innovation and excellence in architectural design, 29 project teams are being honored today at the 39th annual Los Angeles Architectural Awards. Hosted by the Los Angeles Business Council (LABC), the awards recognize a wide array of project types, all completed or designed in Los Angeles in 2007 or 2008.

Selected by a jury of notable design and building professionals, the award winners cut across a wide range, from Grand Prize Winner Vista Hermosa Park to the LAPD Fallen Officers Memorial, the Los Angeles Community College District's Sustainable Building Program and others. Together the awardees typify many significant features of Los Angeles architecture: commitment to sustainability, innovative contemporary design and partnership between the public and private sectors to create projects with a civic purpose.

"Today's event illustrates how architects in Los Angeles continue to set trends that the rest of the world follows," said Mary Leslie, President of the LABC. "These winning projects are at the cutting edge of architecture" whether it is by bringing to life the next phase in sustainable design, pioneering a novel approach to revitalizing low-income urban communities or putting forward a bold new aesthetic for a contemporary building."

The grand prize was awarded to Vista Hermosa Park, an innovative model for sustainable design in an urban setting. The project's design team transformed a steeply sloped and terraced 9.5-acre site, with almost 100 feet of vertical elevation change, into an urban watershed park with community and school recreational programs, a network of trails, natural features and ecosystems.

Vista Hermosa is the first new park built in downtown Los Angeles since 1895, addressing the region's lack of adequate public park space. After decades of debate about what to do with the long-vacant site, the \$15 million project was created through a combination of public and private efforts and funding sources, substantially shifting the balance of open space and population density for residents of the surrounding neighborhood, one of the most impoverished in the United States.

Another major awardee is the Los Angeles Community College District, which received the Community Impact Award in recognition of its \$6 billion Sustainable Building Program. One of the largest green building efforts in the United States, this program includes a total of 90 new buildings at the district's nine college campuses.

"Unprecedented public investments, such as the Los Angeles Community College District's green building program, have helped to take sustainable development in Los Angeles to the next level," said Frances Anderton, the Architectural Awards emcee and host of the KCRW radio show, DnA: Design and Architecture. "Local architects have been able to fully embrace the ethos of sustainability, developing innovative green features and incorporating them into a much wider range of projects than is typical in other cities."

Among other distinctive award-winners, 26th Street Low-Income Housing won in the affordable housing category.

Offering a new approach to affordable urban housing, the project combines modernist design with advanced sustainable features, such the use of drywall beneath the structure to collect and disperse stormwater runoff that would otherwise flow into the city's sewer system, and the installation of energy-efficient windows and appliances.

The TreePeople Center for Community Forestry, an award winner in the sustainability category, presented another innovative green-building concept. Certified LEED platinum by the U.S. Green Building Council, the conference center is constructed with local, natural and recycled building materials; makes use of energy- and water-saving appliances and design features; and houses a 216,000-gallon cistern that captures rainwater from the building's roof and filters runoff from the parking lot. The water from this cistern is used for local irrigation and serves as a fire-fighting resource for a nearby fire station.

In addition to highlighting the latest developments in local design, a number of award winners display a clear civic goal. The LAPD Fallen Officers Memorial, a winner in the design concept category, will employ a wall of brass and light to represent both the LAPD as a collective entity and the individual officers who have given their lives to protect the public. Another winning civic project is Green Dot's East 27th Street Charter High Schools, which received an award in the education category. The project team developing this site used skylights and an innovative redesign of the property's limited space to transform two manufacturing warehouses located in South Los Angeles into two warm and inviting charter high schools.

"The design community in Los Angeles continues to demonstrate that great architecture has a unique power to inspire, improve lives and enhance communities," said Brad Cox, Chairman of the LABC. "I am looking forward to seeing the work of our winners in the years to come, as they push the boundaries of contemporary design, address vital needs in our local neighborhoods and lead the global effort to create green buildings that will anchor the fight against climate change."

A full list of award winners with descriptions can be obtained by email from nate@sugermangroup.com.

An array of photographs from all 29 winning projects is viewable at: www.whirlwindclient.com/LABC/arch_winners_09.html.

Please visit www.labusinesscouncil.org for more information about the awards.

About the LA Business Council

The Los Angeles Business Council is an advocacy and educational organization dedicated to serving local businesses while informing and impacting positive change on multiple levels of city government. For over 70 years, the Council has been an influential link between business and city government and has had a major impact on education, housing and sustainable development policy.

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