



AIA LA '25 Conference on Architecture Awards Program

Honor Awards

Trapolin-Peer Architects, APC

Tulane University Richardson Memorial Hall
New Orleans

Program Statement:

Originally constructed in 1909, the landmark building is located on the University's academic quad. The renovation and expansion of the facility reimagines it as a contemporary home for the School of Architecture, preserving its historic significance while preparing it to serve future. The project addressed two primary challenges: lack of programmable space and noncompliance with modern life safety codes. A new addition was carefully sited at the rear of the building, respecting the building's historic quad-facing façade while increasing the school's usable area through a clear, deferential massing strategy. The addition includes off seminar rooms, gallery space and an interstitial level housing faculty offices. Internally, the project reorganized decades of disjointed programming into a clear and legible plan. Key programmatic moves included expanding fabrication labs, relocating administrative offices to define a true entry sequence, and restoring the historic stair to connect new and old program zones. Material and detail choices express a language of contrast, making clear what is new while reinforcing the character of the original structure. This thoughtful balance of preservation and progress reinforces the university's identity and offers a dynamic, high-performing academic environment for the next



Jury Comments:

Well-considered and beautiful expansion of / addition to a school of design, one that reveals architectural aspects of both the original building and the addition's relationship to it. A nice teaching tool as well as a terrific new design statement on campus!

An elegant dialogue between new and

century.

existing.

The addition acknowledges the classical building's order, extending its language through its proportions, alignment of lines, and material palette that keeps the historic fabric intact while making space for a contemporary design to be expressed.

This design team masterfully embraced the complexity of revitalizing a historic building while integrating the dynamic needs of a cutting-edge university facility. Throughout the process, they remained true to a clear and compelling design vision. The result is a striking interplay between old and new—where every space reflects thoughtful contrast and cohesion. The original structure has been reimagined with a fresh identity that honors its past while introducing innovative elements that speak to contemporary use and design excellence.

[View Project Summary here](#)

ARCH335 Design|Build Louisiana Tech University

Captain's Launch Choudrant, LA

Program Statement:

The Captains' Launch transforms a shaded cove into an accessible waterfront haven for campers facing the greatest barriers to boating. Custom-designed floating ramps and slip bumpers let wheelchair users gently roll aboard pedal boats outfitted with remote-controlled trolling motors—empowering participants to enjoy open water without ever leaving the safety of their own wheelchairs. By repurposing reclaimed houseboat floats, jet dock modules, and 55-gallon drums, the floating deck adapts to changing water levels and revives a once-inactive portion of the lake. Additionally, an adjacent amphitheater was restored, and a new fishing jetty expands on-site programs.

Drawing inspiration from the humble tugboat, this simple, inviting form features a pointed bow in the floor plan, sloping guardrails that echo a hull's profile, and a gear-storage "bridge" for paddles, life jackets, and supplies. A sturdy steel roof crafted from donated drill stem and rod offers shelter and supports a 1.2 kW solar



Jury Comments:

A very simple but superbly executed project, where every small detail was thought through carefully and elegantly. A new fully accessible paddle boat launch for a summer camp for children with special needs.

The project carries an industrial elegance with a clear commitment to craft. It

array that powers evening lighting and recharges boat batteries. Every detail underscores safety and dignity: an expanded-metal ribbon in the deck, paired with a matching linear skylight overhead, marks the moment campers become captains of their own vessels.

Named for the final stanza of William Ernest Henley's "Invictus," The Captains' Launch lives its motto: "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul." By offering universal access to the water and celebrating each participant's journey, it invites admiration for both its humble materials and its profound impact.

integrates where it should, yet maintains a distinct design identity that affirms it as architecture done with rigor and care.

The details of this project were exemplary at every level. From the main structure to the imprints in the handrails, the attention to detail was impressive. It is a small project, but makes a huge mark on its community, supporting a function that is deserving of this type of care and quality.

[View Project Summary here](#)

Members' Choice Award

RHH Architects, APAC

The Retreat at Quarters Lake Road Baton Rouge

Program Statement:

The facility was purposefully designed to support both traditional and holistic approaches to grief and bereavement care. It offers a range of services, including individual counseling and grief support groups, while also embracing flexible, alternative therapies such as art and music therapy, pet therapy, guided spiritual practices, grief yoga, and meditative movement. These diverse offerings recognize that healing is deeply personal and often extends beyond clinical models. Creating a peaceful, reflective environment was central to the mission—a challenge given the site's location directly adjacent to a major interstate overpass. In response, the architects employed a thoughtful design strategy, arranging the buildings in a protective inward-facing configuration that "circles the wagons." This orientation turns the backs of the buildings to the highway, shielding interior spaces from noise and distraction. Pitched roofs help deflect sound while also drawing natural light into the interiors, enhancing their sense of openness and calm. Landscaping and parking zones act as additional buffers, reinforcing the sense of tranquility. At the heart of the campus lies a central fountain and butterfly garden—a symbolic and spiritual anchor. In nearly every culture, the butterfly represents transformation, hope, and the lasting presence of those we have lost. Just as the butterfly evolves, so too will this campus. Designed with adaptability in mind, the facility allows for future expansion and evolving programming, ensuring that it remains a place of healing, growth, and transformation for generations to come.



[View Project Summary Here](#)

SO Studio

Carencro Welcome Center and Museum Carencro

Program Statement:

This cottage was found enveloped in a pink Victorian house near the city center. The city council and a former mayor saved the cottage, purchased it, and had it moved one block from its original location. The design team led the restoration of the cottage to its former glory to what will soon open as a new, innovative cultural landmark for its city.

Preservation work included carpenter marks, peg construction and bousillage. A new freestanding restroom facility, added to the rear of the historic cottage to serve the welcome center, evokes the traditional massing of the cottage with modern details and materials.

The design team worked with the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to preserve original elements, including the front porch with its steep stair (garçonnière), reconstruction of the small chamber at the left side of the porch that was removed during the house's Victorian phase, mud (bousillage) walls, and wood peg construction, ensuring that the cottage's historical integrity remains intact.

Prior to this project, the city had little in the way of organized documentation of its own history. The design team benefited from the work of committed volunteers who aided the curation of the museum exhibits in what may be the oldest structure in its community.



Jury Comments:

A very sweet, small but powerful project that juxtaposed a thoughtful restoration / interpretation component with a very well-scaled, modest, and well-designed addition.

This is a small but mighty projects on many levels! The original cottage was revealed and beautifully restored; the contemporary addition is a perfect younger sibling to the historic building; the exhibition on the interior beautifully informs about the historic nature of the cottage. All members of the award committee were delighted by this gem of a project.

This is the definition of a small project with a big impact. The architectural solution is delicate and subtle and successfully harnesses the essence of the original house while telling a story that reaches far beyond it's walls.

AQ Studios

34 Restaurant & Bar

New Orleans

Program Statement:

Rooted in New Orleans, this distinctive restaurant celebrates Portuguese culinary traditions, with a design that sets the table for a renowned family of chefs to share their craft in a truly memorable way. Guests are welcomed through a one-of-a-kind wooden cocoon and guided along a winding, ramped tunnel to the big reveal: a glowing, backlit quartzite jamon bar at the heart of the space. Here, the artistry of cured meats is on full display, framed by a dramatic live-fire grill that radiates warmth and fills the restaurant with enticing aromas. Transparent glass dissolves the boundary between kitchen and dining, fostering a dynamic atmosphere that elevates both guest and chef experiences. The design strikes a balance between moody elegance and modern sophistication—layering natural wood, dark painted wall paneling, brass accents, and curated artwork in a rich palette inspired by the Portuguese landscape. Acoustic-engineered, microperforated linear wood slat ceilings provide both aesthetic refinement and sound control, seamlessly integrated throughout the dining areas. Varied seating arrangements offer diverse dining experiences, while a hidden speakeasy invites discovery. Every detail—from handcrafted mosaic tile banquettes to state-of-the-art kitchen equipment—is meticulously coordinated to create a setting where both the familiar and extraordinary can be savored.



Jury Comments:

Portuguese restaurant. / a lot going on!

A beautifully designed restaurant, with a mix of materials and colors, gives each area its own identity and feels authentic to the way Portuguese design embraces texture, textiles, and color; layered with Brazilian, Asian, and African elements. The restaurant, much like Portugal itself, presents an aesthetic that reads as simultaneously historical and contemporary

Describing this project as complex is an understatement. A demanding program combined with a variety a space uses comes to life in an intense material palette that masterfully brings it all together.

[View Project Summary here](#)

Trahan Architects

Luther George Park Performance Pavilion

Springdale, AR

Program Statement:

The re-imagination of Luther George Park is the inaugural piece of Downtown Springdale Alliance's masterplan to create vibrant public spaces and plazas



throughout the town. Working collaboratively with the landscape architect, the Performance Pavilion serves as a complementary element to the overall park design – inspired by the gentle rolling hills of the Ozarks surrounding Springdale, Arkansas.

With support from the Walton Family Foundation's Northwest Arkansas Design Excellence Program, the revitalized park serves as a vital link connecting downtown Springdale to the Razorback Greenway, a regional trail system spanning over 40 miles across Northwest Arkansas. This popular greenway, attracting over 100,000 annual cyclists and pedestrians, now has a bucolic entry and more direct access to downtown Springdale's vivacious community.

Throughout the 14-acre park, sculpted earth berms carve out dynamic spaces of discovery for play, performance, community gatherings, and quiet contemplation. The addition of over 200 native trees and select perennial grasses offer a tapestry of shade and color while creating more ideal conditions for pollinators and local wildlife to thrive. The design also amplifies the park's connection along Spring Creek with expanded plantings, seating areas, and pathways to quietly observe and extend its wetland habitats.



Jury Comments:

A bold, sculptural centerpiece for a new park, well-integrated with the landscape--physically, spatially, functionally.

Unique in its design and innovative in its construction, this sculptural element created its own definition of space making within the landscape. The form in the landscape and the views to and through the element activated a space broad beyond its physical reach.

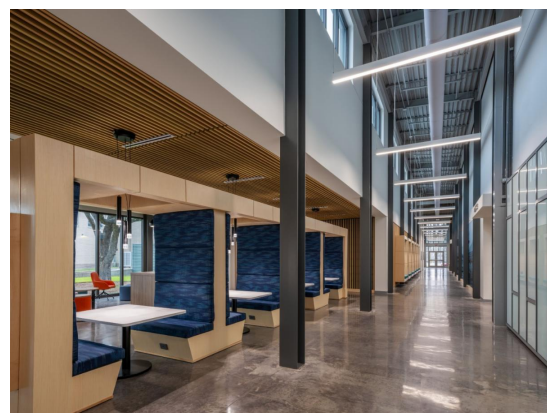
[View Project Summary here](#)

Holly & Smith Architects, APAC

Nunez Community College Student Testing and Career Counseling Center Chalmette

Program Statement:

A Community and Technical College seeking a bold new identity and a student-centered welcoming facility developed a building program including career counseling, testing services, flexible meeting and training rooms, and a welcoming café. Site constraints, including a live oak tree grove, existing structures, a drive-thru café, and flood elevation requirements, all drove the design elements. The exterior use of brick and metal relates to the existing campus vernacular. The interior design and finishes have an industrial aesthetic with added wood elements in intimate spaces. Industrial training, a core curriculum of the college, was a guiding design concept. The career counseling area offers expansive views into the live oak grove and interfaces with the main circulation



spine, featuring booths open on both sides. This concept combines intimacy and transparency while adding the warmth of wood to the industrial aesthetics. The planning parti places the café and multipurpose meeting room on the community façade, while the counseling and other student activities face the campus façade. The high-volume circulation spine, with clerestory windows, floods the interior with natural light. Perforated and corrugated metal creates a veil of transparency over the outdoor café lounge and student entry. The extensive use of metal reflects the industrial training curriculum. Site planning connects the facility to the administration building, protects the live oak grove, and accommodates the drive-thru café.

Jury Comments:

Progressive new community college campus, very handsome. This project shows how thoughtful choices can elevate a simple volume with basic material palette to become refined and high-quality design. The clear massing employs a few simple moves effectively to achieve a harmonious composition with pleasant indoor and outdoor spaces. The metal panels on the exterior have restrained and elegant colors and patterns that work well as a backdrop to the beautiful live oaks on site. On the interior the simple but well thought-out design is apparent in the central corridor, which becomes an interesting space activated through the organized structure, effective use of daylight, and varied levels of openness to adjacent rooms.

The design problem that this project presented was compact and complex. The design solution utilized multiple different materials composed in a way to address the site's varied adjacencies. Green space and transparency in the exterior facade combined natural light and views with a demanding program.

[View Project Summary here](#)

Bell Butler Design and Architecture

Birkdale Concierge

Huntersville, NC

Program Statement:

This modern community hub relied on a collection of three small-scale building types to create an invigorated atmosphere within a large neutral ground with mature oak trees in an existing mixed-use development. The development was originally built in 2003 and needed a transformation to activate the outdoor spaces and encourage social interaction. The central focus of the project was a “concierge” building that acts as the information desk of the outdoor retail area, houses public restrooms, and provides a backdrop to the Plaza, or community lawn, that is regularly programmed with events. A request for an outdoor mounted screen quickly evolved in early planning efforts into the need for a stage to support anticipated programming. We saw a unique opportunity to engage the beloved oaks that were slated to be removed into the architectural expression, capping the



Jury Comments:

A thoughtful, small-scale project, subtle in its difference from the surrounding context, and well executed. The surrounding open

building with a pronounced roof line that extends beyond the enclosed space to cover the stage. Two existing trees puncture the roof plane and become a prominent feature of the design.

spaces are programmed for multiple uses, and the design responds to daily and seasonal events, ensuring that the spaces remain active year-round.

Thoughtful little jewel pavilion.

Sometimes, less is truly more. This minimal pavilion was envisioned as an integral part of a design that impacted spaces beyond it's physical reach. It's form allowed the community to engage from all sides of this compact insertion into the landscape.

Sometimes, less is truly more. This minimal pavilion was envisioned as an integral part of a design that impacted spaces beyond it's physical reach. It's form allowed the community to engage from all sides of this compact insertion into the landscape.

[View Project Summary here](#)

NANO LLC

Octavia Books + Scrambled Cafe New Orleans

Program Statement:

The expansion of Octavia Books + Scrambled Café required the unification of two distinct buildings: an iconic post-modern structure and a historic corner store.

Initially, separate expansions were planned for each business, but recognizing their shared clientele led to a decision to unite them. Three pivoting bookcases now function as gateways between the two, creating a circular economy of movement and interaction.

A look into the original building plans revealed that the bookstore's angled design represented true North, a detail that was extended throughout the lower floor. Inspired by traditional bookbinding, a new acoustic wood ceiling stitches together the old and new spaces, while still allowing for future removability. Exposed masonry walls and wood ceilings are preserved, with new elements designed to be reversible.

Octavia's sales highlighted the need for more space in the children's section. The expanded area, now nearly double in size, creates a vibrant environment for young readers. The store also includes a built-in stage for author talks and community gatherings.



Jury Comments:

Octavia Books Cafe / cute, simple, clean adaptive reuse.

The pivoting shelves bring playfulness while linking the bookstore and café in a way that is both functional and symbolic. The children's space and gathering areas open the project to the street, giving the interior light, movement, and a stronger connection to the public.

Sustainability features include 60 solar panels, energy-efficient systems, and a permeable paver driveway with geotextile filtration and rerouted drainage to mitigate flooding.

Nice little bookstore and café.

This project took advantage of an historic building with hidden character by exposing it and integrating a modern aesthetic. The natural materials that the designers selected worked to unify the design and create a fresh look that brought an old space back to life.

[View Project Summary here](#)

LAF Louisiana Patron of Architecture Award

La. Tech School of Design receives LAF Louisiana Patron of Architecture Award



In a unique twist, the Louisiana Architecture Foundation awarded its prestigious Patron of Architecture Award to the La. Tech University School of Design ARCH335 Design/Build Studio instead of to an individual this year. The award was given at the AIA Louisiana Awards Celebration on September 26 in Lake Charles. The Awards Celebration is part of the AIA Louisiana 2025 Conference on Architecture.

The award is given in recognition of an individual or group that has shown significant leadership in promoting the merits and quality of architecture in Louisiana. The ARCH 335 Design/Build Studio has partnered with MedCamps of Louisiana Camp Alabama for over a decade to bring creative design projects to its camp for children with chronic illnesses and disabilities. During this time, the students contributed 11 built projects representing over 100,000 hours of student engagement and in-kind contributions exceeding \$500,000.

Always dealing with modest budgets, the Studio students have designed and built numerous projects at the camp in impressive style – including the Gibbs Memorial Pavilion & Gardens, the Hero's Launch, the Chiasmus Archery & Paintball Range, the Pices Bridge, the Stroud Store, the Peregrine zip line and tree house, the Mosaic Art Cabin, the fieldhouse, the Imago Amphitheater and the Captain's Launch.

The Studio has earned national praise and write-ups from the American Institute of Architects, Architect Magazine, ArchiSpeak and others for both the dramatic impact of the students' projects to the quality of life impact it has had on kids attending the camp. In addition, the students learned not only new skills, but also listening to the needs of clients, teamwork, service and using the power of architecture to create community.

Bill Sanderson, Mayor of the Village of Choudrant where Camp Alabama is located, noted, "What stands out for us is how their designs honor the vernacular language of our region – drawing from barns, sheds, silos and even oil wells – while offering a fresh, playful twist... It fits."

AIA Louisiana Associates Professional Achievement Award

Garfield receives AIA Louisiana Associates Professional Achievement Award

New Orleans designer Caroline Garfield, Associate AIA, has received the Louisiana Associates Professional Achievement Award from the American Institute of Architects Louisiana at its annual Awards Celebration on September 26 in Lake Charles. The celebration is part of the AIA Louisiana 2025



Conference on Architecture.

The Associates Professional Achievement Award is the highest award given to individual Associate AIA members who exemplifies leadership and an unparalleled commitment to their component or region's membership, in the community, in professional organizations, and/or in the design and construction industries.

Garfield, an intern with the EskewDumezRipple firm in New Orleans, has actively promoted sustainability initiatives as co-chair of the AIA New Orleans Committee on the Environment. She has organized

symposiums and multiple active groups on sustainability issues, such as healthy materials, energy efficiency, stormwater management and affordable housing. Garfield has tracked and tapped AIA voices for action in local policy matters regarding sustainability. She also has educated both emerging and practicing architects on sustainable practices, and, of course, has made sustainability an integral part of the wide variety of architectural projects she's involved with.

AIA Louisiana Associates Professional Achievement Award



Heck receives AIA LA Emerging Professional Award

New Orleans architect Mark Heck, AIA, has received the Louisiana Emerging Professional Award from the American Institute of Architects Louisiana at its annual Awards Celebration on September 26 in Lake Charles. The celebration is part of the AIA Louisiana 2025 Conference on Architecture.

The Emerging Professional Award is given to individuals who have shown exceptional leadership and made significant contributions to the profession in an early stage of their architectural career.

Heck is principal in the New Orleans architectural firm Studio^RISE. He has served on the AIA Louisiana Board of Directors since 2022, and was the 2024 board president. His leadership as president was an instrumental part in passage of legislation that limits civil engineers from practicing architecture in Louisiana. He previously served on the Louisiana Architecture Foundation Board, the AIA New Orleans Board of Directors, and on a variety of architectural committees. Additionally, he has been actively involved in other New Orleans civic and community organizations.

Elite Sponsors



