



VISITOR CENTER + SCULPTURE GARDEN

OVERLAND PARK ARBORETUM & BOTANICAL GARDENS

JUNE 2016 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



VISITOR CENTER + SCULPTURE GARDEN: AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Executive Summary

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Cover Image: Pedestrian approach to Main Entry of Visitor Center





Image: Pedestrian approach to Main Entry of Visitor Center





Image: View of Visitor Center across Margaret's Pond



The Arts & Recreation Foundation of Overland Park (ARFOP) is embarking on an exciting new era for the organization and the Overland Park Arboretum & Botanical Gardens (OPABG). As the first major step to implementing the City of Overland Park's Master Plans for the Arboretum and the adjacent Sculpture Garden, ARFOP engaged the design team of Momenta and Confluence to develop a program and conceptual design for a new Visitor Center at the Arboretum.

The Visitor Center will provide greater guest amenities and house expanded programming to meet the demands of increasing visitor and community growth.

The programming process demonstrated a need for approximately 20,500 sf of building area with spaces falling into four general programmatic areas:

Public Programs and Activities
(81% of Building Area)

Partners and Stakeholders
(2% of Building Area)

Administration
(12% of Building Area)

Facility Support
(5% of Building Area)

Public Programs / Activities areas include:

Lobby/Reception, Ticketing, Café, Gift Shop, Gallery, Multi-purpose Room, Two Classrooms, Library, Conference Center, Toilets and Storage.

The Multi-purpose Room will accommodate 200 guests, Classrooms will accommodate 20 adults and the Conference Center will accommodate 60 participants.

Partners and Stakeholders areas include:

Offices, Meeting Space and Storage.
Administration areas include: Offices, Conference Room, Workroom, Storage and Toilets.

Facility Support areas include:

Central Receiving, Building Storage and Recycling, House Keeping and Mechanical Rooms.

Additionally, parking for approximately 200 vehicles, entry gardens, reflecting pools, the pond promenade, event terraces and greens, the great lawn, the first phase of the Sculpture Garden, including an amphitheater, and connecting pathways and gardens will be installed.

Left: Interior view of Central Spline, looking South

The Visitor Center exterior will be constructed with a combination heavy steel and timber frame, metal roof, limestone, stucco and glass façade.

Interior finish materials will feature polished concrete and carpeted floors; limestone, plaster, glass and wood walls; and wood and acoustical ceilings.

Glass will be utilized throughout the building to facilitate daylighting, enhance views and strengthen the relationships between interior and exterior spaces.

The new Visitor Center will become part of the overall natural setting of the Arboretum. To help integrate the building into its natural setting there are opportunities for several sustainable strategies to be incorporated into the conceptual design for the Visitor Center.

The building has been designed to take advantage of natural daylighting to relate to the natural setting of the Arboretum. The use of high performance glazing and large overhangs help to control the solar gain and openings have been minimized on the west elevation to help eliminate the effects of harsh afternoon sun.

The conceptual design also proposes the use of sustainable materials. The use of wood, concrete, and plaster allow for the opportunity to source sustainably harvested and manufactured materials. Interior finishes will be selected to improve indoor air quality.

The mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems have been designed to incorporate passive and active sustainable systems as follows:

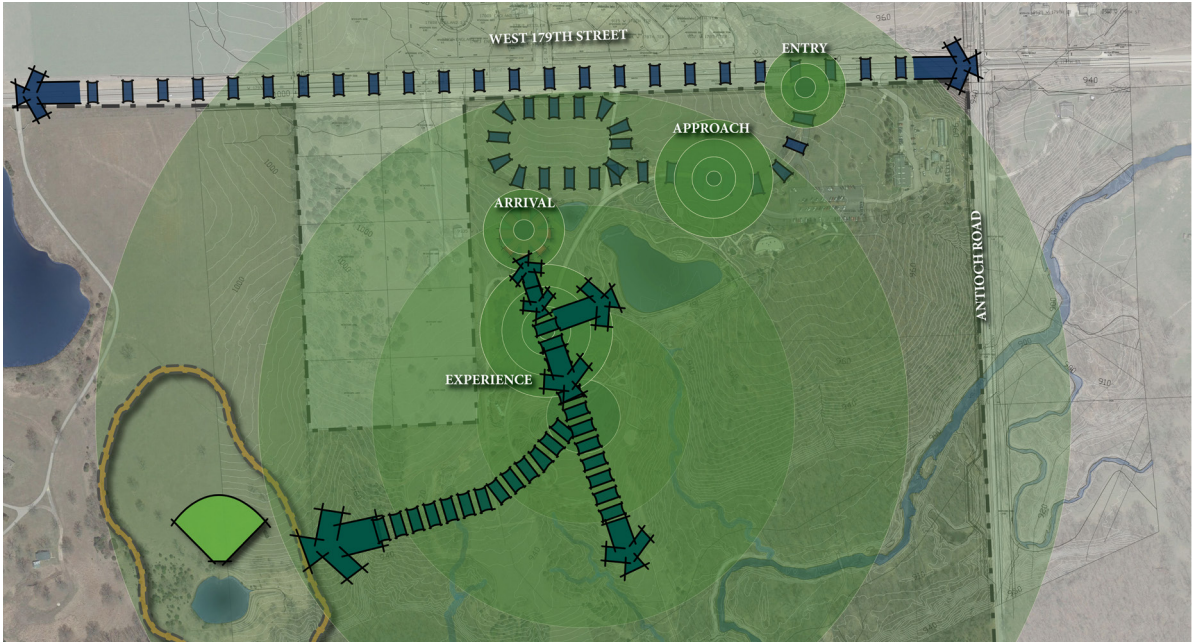
- **Opportunities for Natural Ventilation**
- **LED Lighting**
- **Daylight Harvesting / Occupancy Sensors – fully programmable**
- **Automatic plug-load switching**
- **Renewables – solar PV. Possible microgrid w/ storage. TBD**
- **Rainwater Harvesting for irrigation**
- **Low Flow fixtures – auto sensors**
- **Potentially a building dashboard which would collect data from sub-meters and display graphically at flat screens/kiosks**
- **High Efficiency/High Performance Mechanical System – Ground Source or VRF w/ decoupled outside air/demand control ventilation**

A number of site strategy considerations were also identified and are listed below;

- **Permeable paving**
- **Recycled materials in paving mix**
- **Raingardens in the parking lot**
- **Rainwater harvesting**
- **Water recirculation in the ponds**
- **Wind power**



Images Top, Bottom: View from Celebration Terrace, View across New Pond to Visitor Center



Images Top Left Clockwise: Site Diagram, Enlarged Site Plan, Master Plan







Image: View of Reflecting Pools from South Entrance





Image: Reflecting Pools and Gardens South of Visitor Center



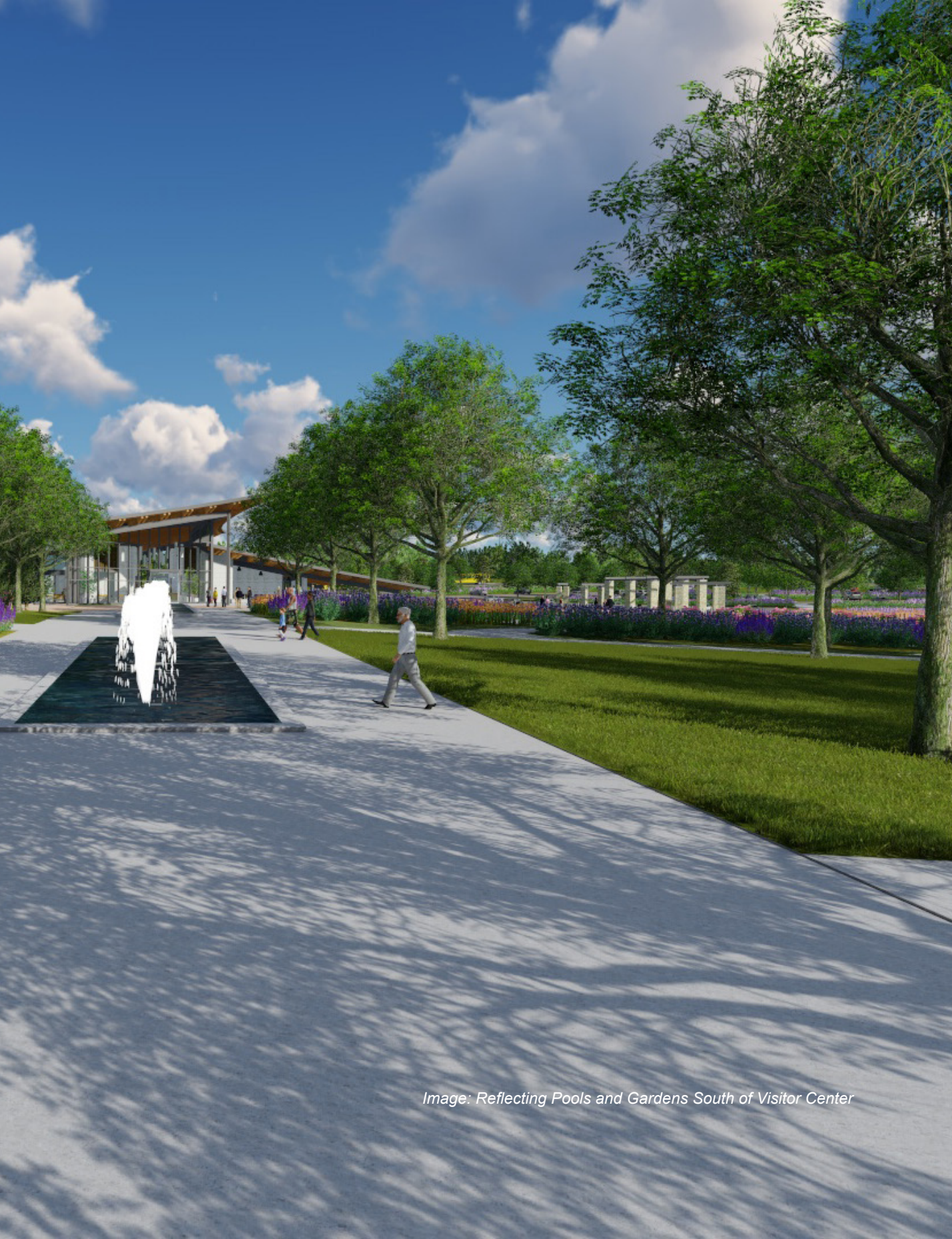
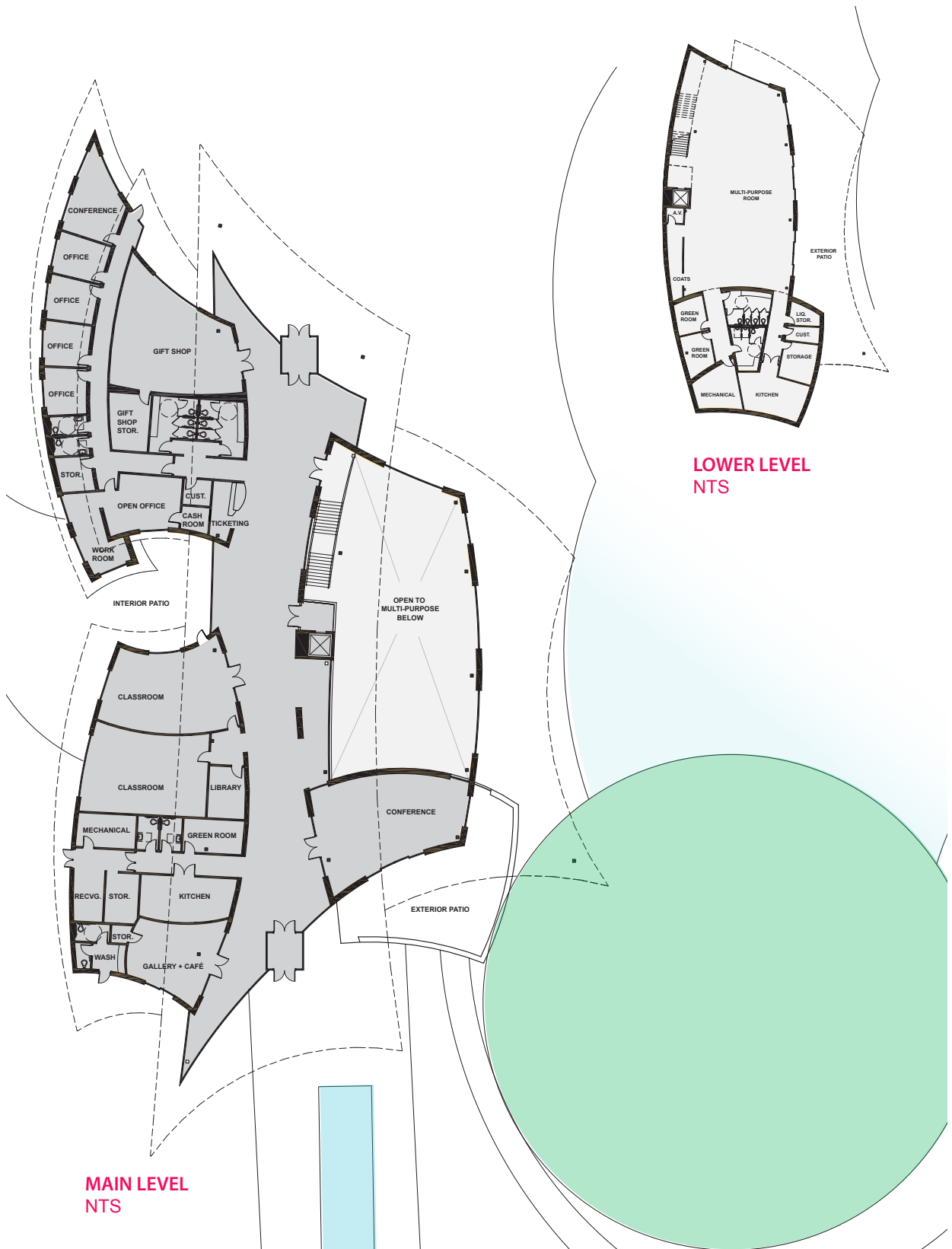
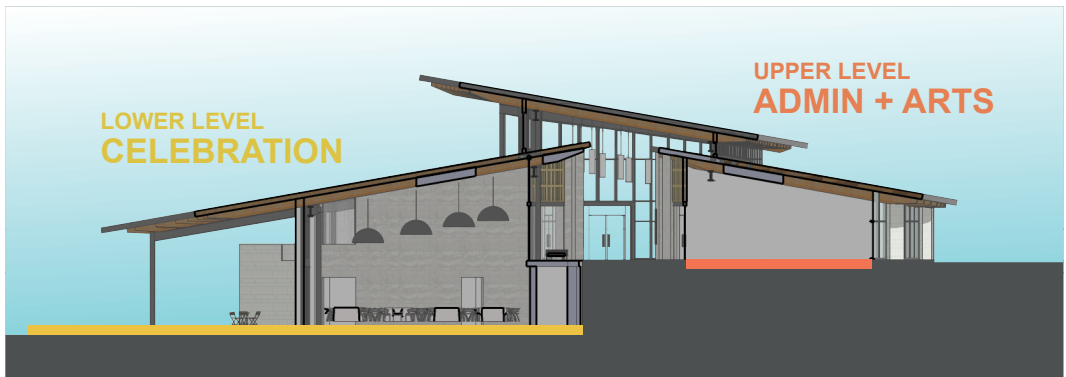
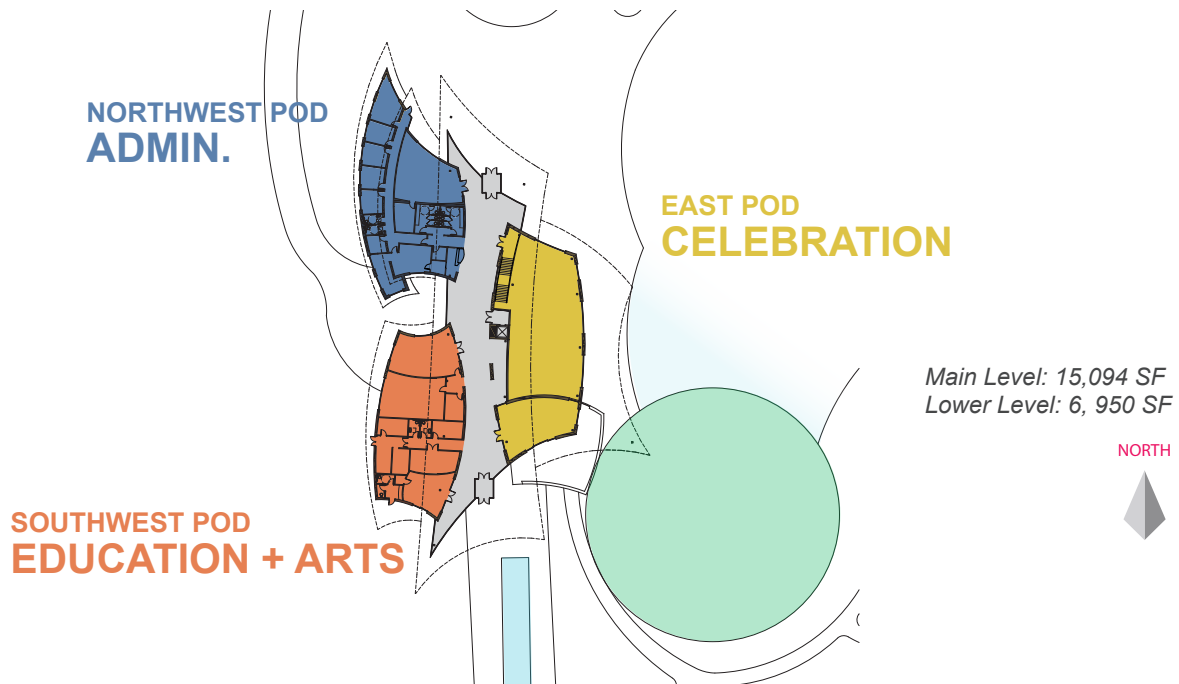


Image: Reflecting Pools and Gardens South of Visitor Center





the building

Programmatically and formally, the Visitor Center is divided into three units, one unit dedicated to Administration, another to Education and the Arts, and the third to Celebration. The three formal units are connected and enclosed by a common volume, a central spine that joins and unifies the separate volumes.

The building is strategically designed on two levels so as to accommodate the sloping site and to provide two access points for multiple events. The Administration and Education and Arts units are on the upper level and Celebration is on the lower level. This orientation allows the large Event Space in the Celebration area to open out to an exterior patio adjacent to the pond.





Left: Interior view of Central Spline, looking North



MAIN LEVEL
NTS

Image: View to Gift Shop
from Central Spline

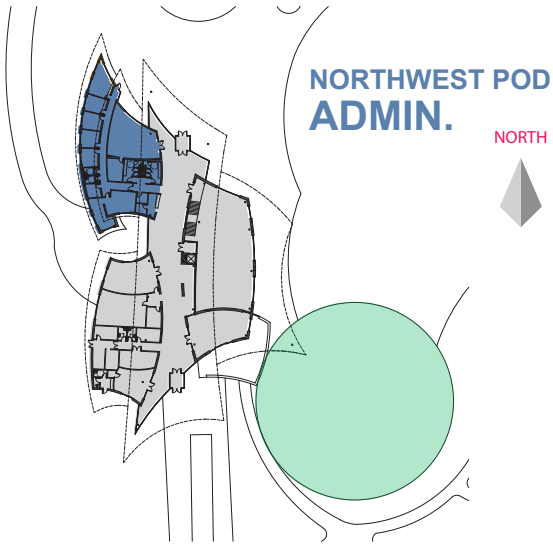
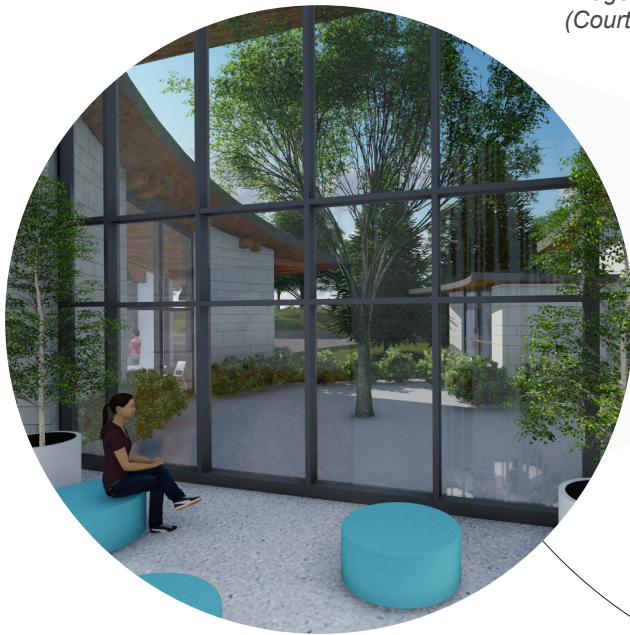
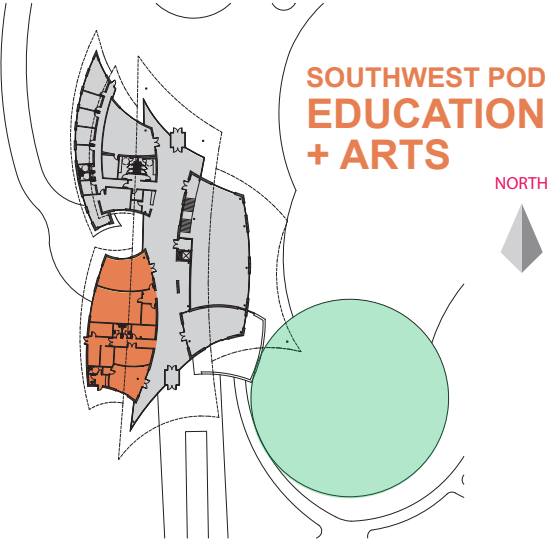
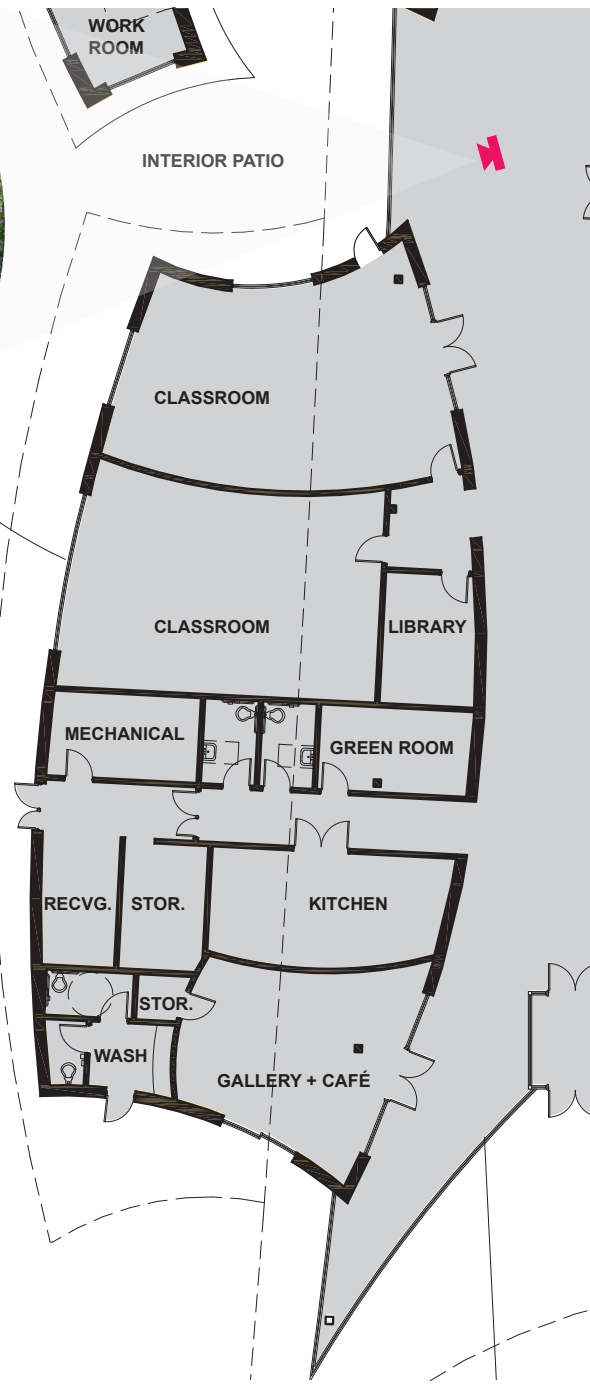
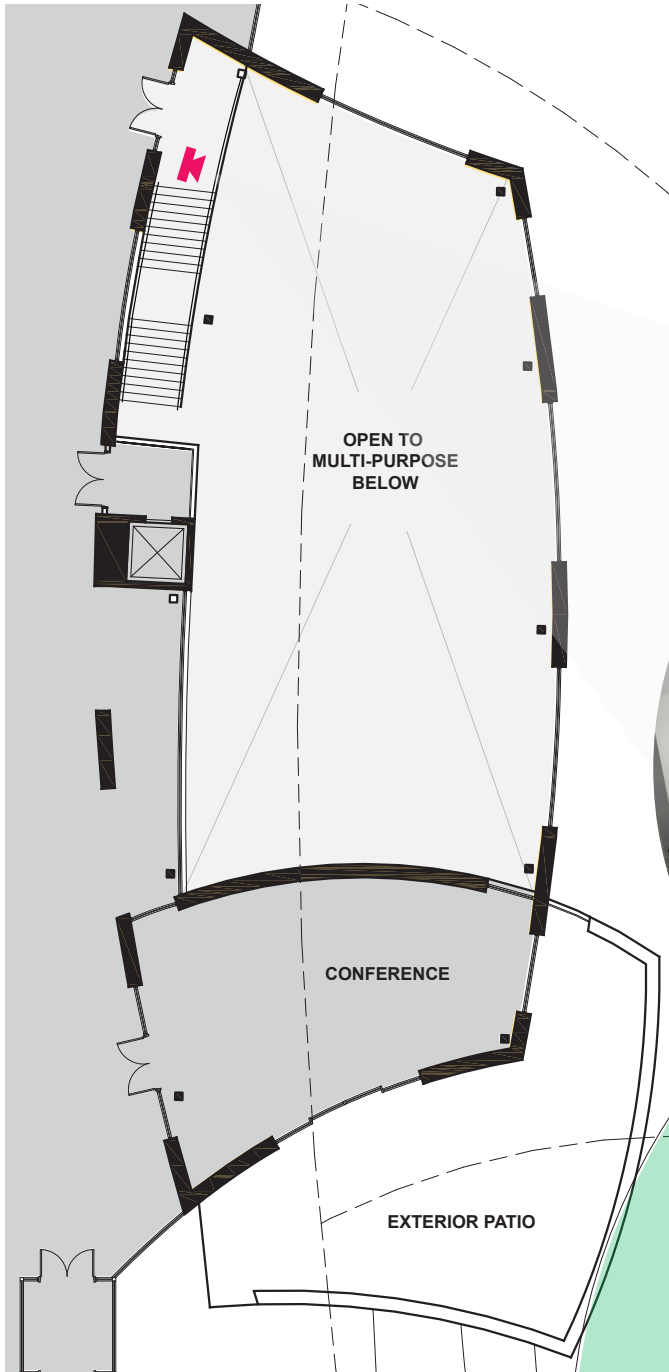


Image: View to Central Courtyard from Central Spline
(Courtyard accessible from Classroom)



MAIN LEVEL
NTS





**MAIN LEVEL
NTS**

*Image: View looking down to
Event Space from upper level*



*Image: View looking North in
Event Space on lower level*

LOWER LEVEL NTS

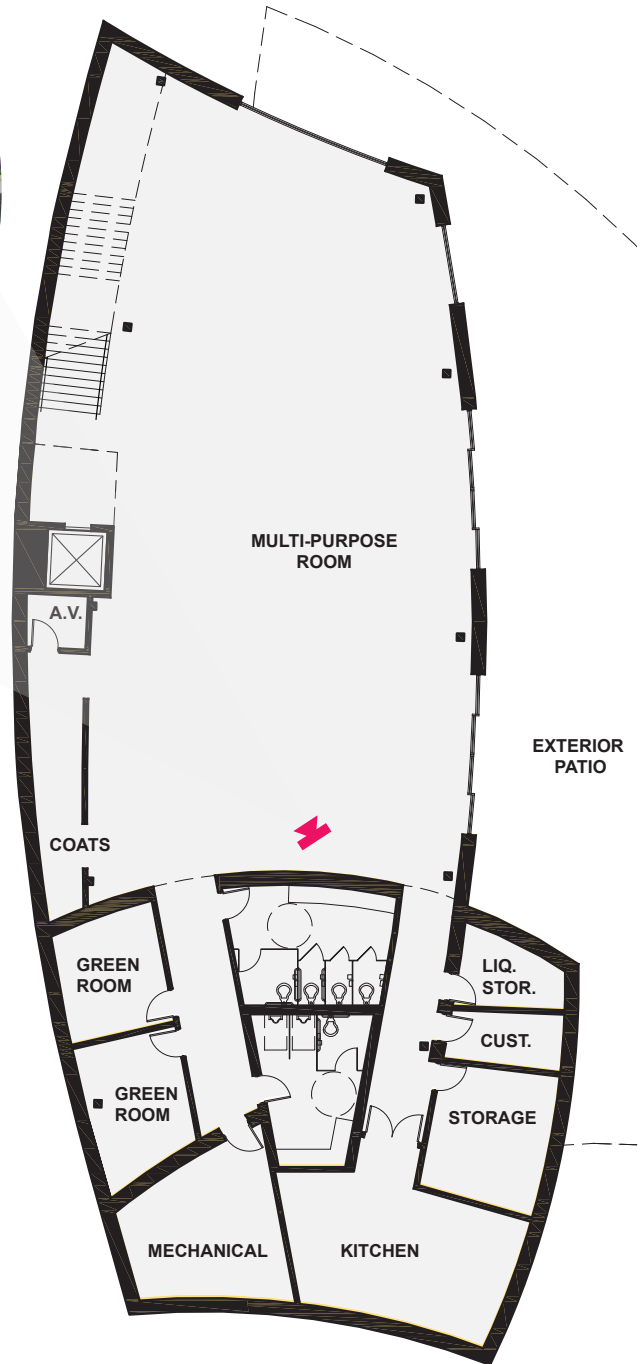






Image: Event Space



the vision

The design team worked with ARFOP and OPABG leadership to build a process that engaged stakeholders in the development of an architectural program for the new Visitor Center.

Working with leadership a vision statement was developed for the project to provide focus for the building's purpose and intended use.

That vision, "Bridging nature, art and science to enhance the Arboretum experience," emphasizes the strong relationship between the gardens and the activities that will occur in the building.



**Bridging nature, art and
science to enhance the
Arboretum experience.**

Image: View across Celebration Lawn to Visitor Center





Image: View from Wedding Terrace looking Southeast



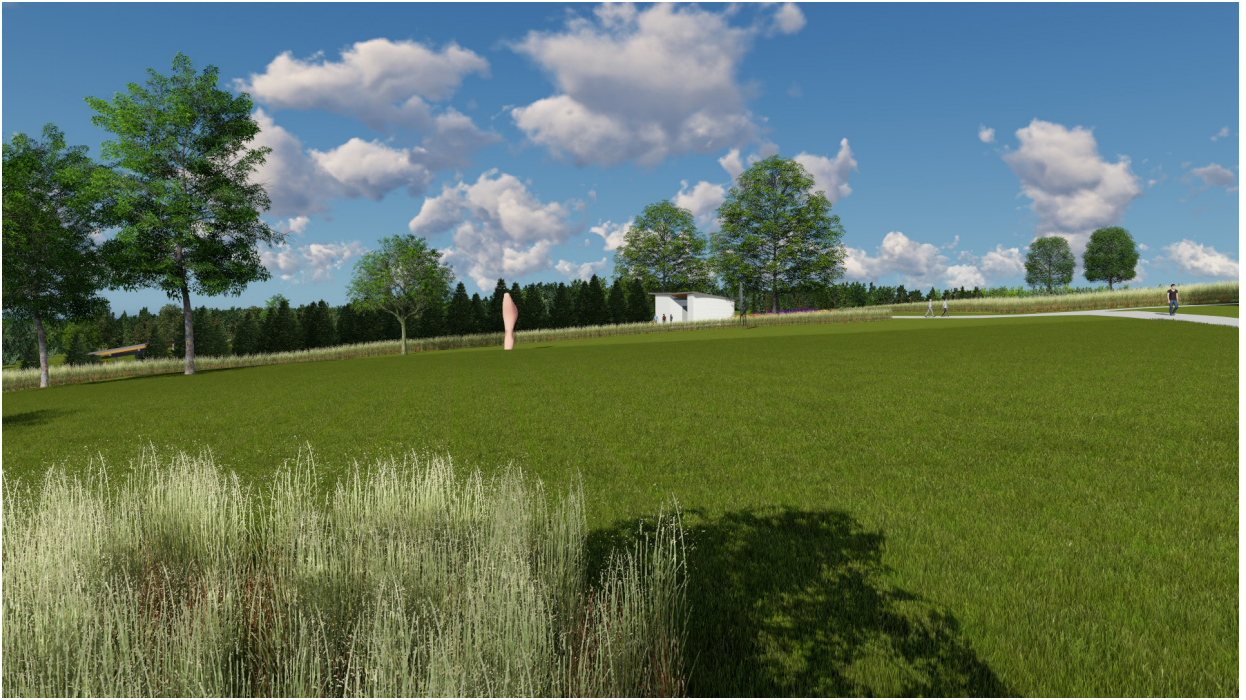


Image: View of Hidden Garden

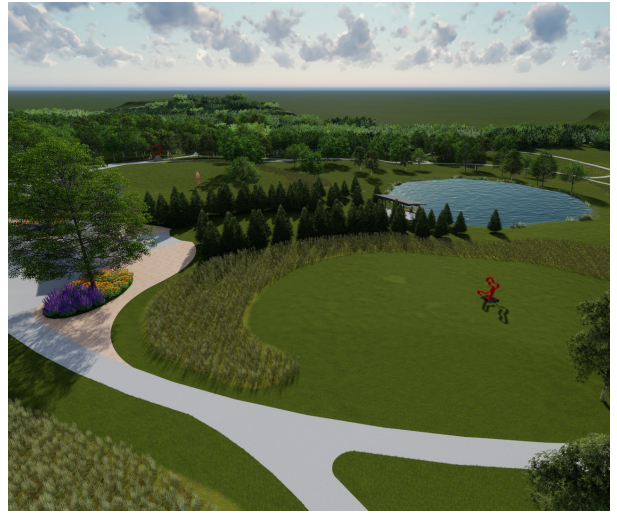




Image: View up the Grand Lawn

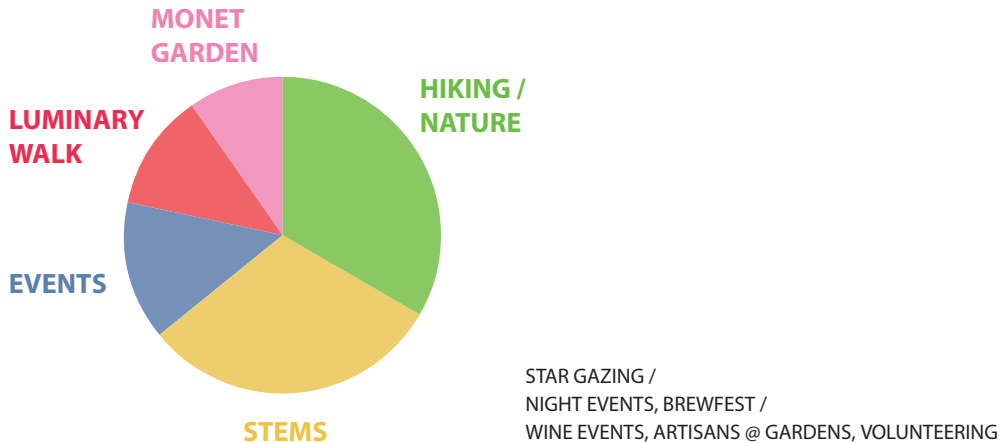


Images Top Left Clockwise: International Sculpture Garden Amphitheater Pavilion, International Sculpture Garden Amphitheater Pavilion, International Sculpture Garden View of Pond, International Sculpture Garden Amphitheater Pavilion, International Sculpture Garden Entry Pavilion

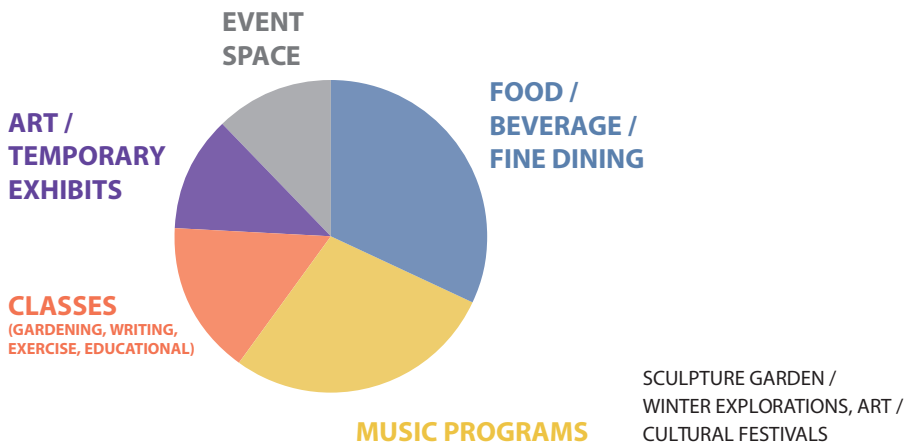


Visitors Center DESIGN PROCESS

- 1** List one or two of your favorite experiences at the current Arboretum.



- 2** What new experience do you want to have at the Arboretum?



Stakeholders were led through two workshops to study the overall character of the facility and its relationship to the gardens.

The first focusing on experiences that the group envisioned in the new Visitor Center and the spaces required to facilitate those experiences.

The second workshop focused on the qualities that those spaces might have with regards to volume, materials, daylighting and technology.

Through the small group sessions, the design team found that the desired experiences and environments related to four key categories, Education and Conference, Celebration, Arts, Common, plus Support areas. Group feedback to support exterior adjacency and connection to these spaces was strong. The diagram below represents the division of space as devised from small group feedback. The green, in different opacities, represents the desire for connection to the outside, as related to the adjacent space.

EDUCATION + CONFERENCE

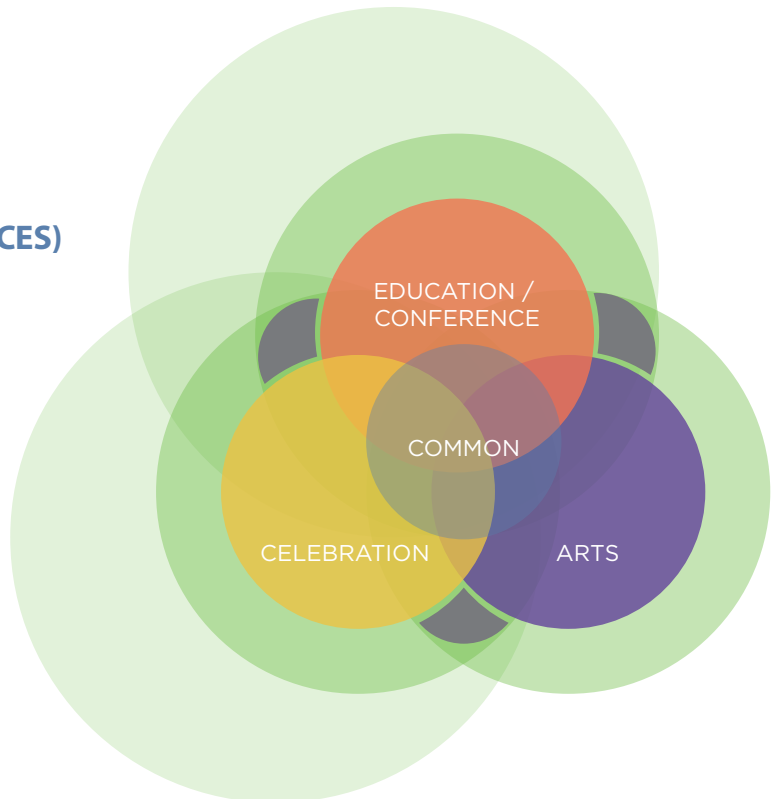
CELEBRATION

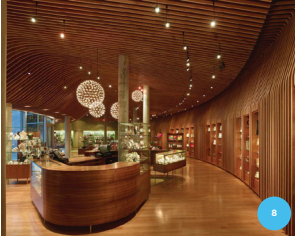
ARTS

COMMON (OVERLAPPING SPACES)

SUPPORT

Images: Diagrams summarizing feedback from small group sessions with project stakeholders and community members





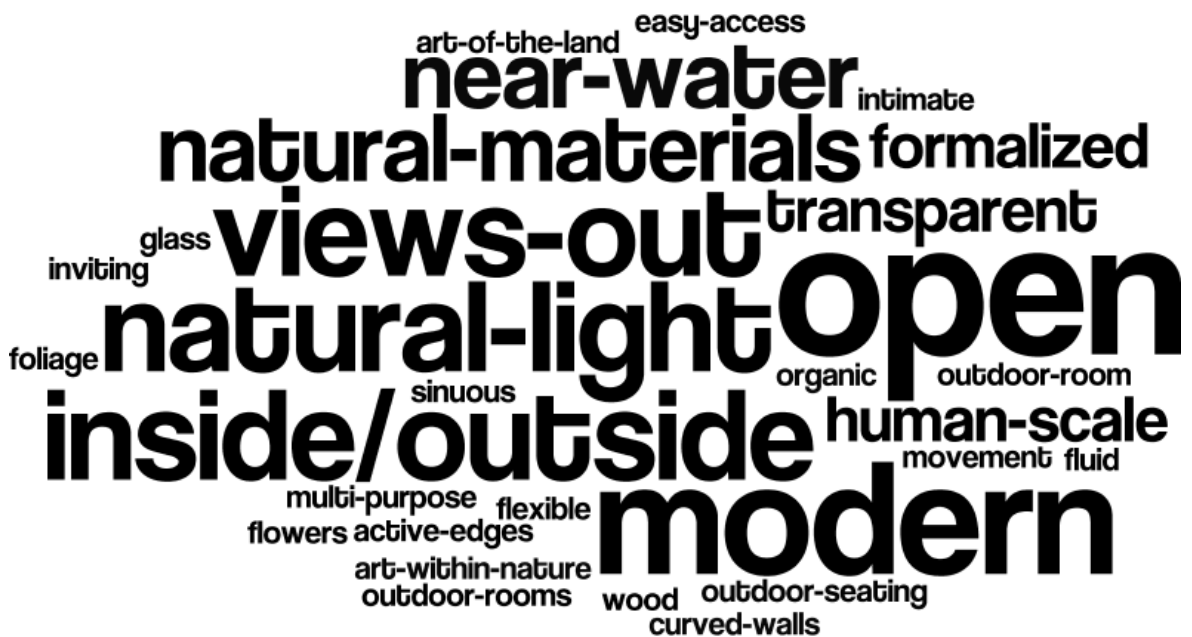


Image Left: Sampling of Visual Listening images

Image Top: Wordle summarizing desired qualities for the new Visitor Center

After reviewing a broad selection of images and selecting their favorites as they related to the new Visitor Center, stakeholders discovered qualities about the built environment, both visually and verbally that were unanimously desired. The wordle above includes the key words noted as positive descriptors of the new Visitor Center.

The desired qualities were summarized as follows:

- Water
- Building as Beacon
- Special Event / Wedding Space
- *Art of the Land, Not on the Land*
- A bridge Between Nature, Art, + Science

Conceptual design for the new Visitor Center was guided by three leading principles:

1. **Site Cues**
2. **Organic Form / Structure in Nature**
3. **The User Experience**

1. Site Cues

Frederick Law Olmsted, notably the Father of Landscape Architecture, argued that we must respect 'the genius of a place.' Olmsted wanted his designs to stay true to the character of their natural surroundings. He referred to 'the genius of a place,' a belief that every site has ecologically and spiritually unique qualities. In his work, the goal was to 'access this genius' and let it infuse all design decisions.

In the development of the Visitor Center, the design team worked carefully to capture and respect the genius of the Arboretum. The use of natural materials and the two level design are strategic choices that take advantage of the existing beauty and magic of the site.

The organic, curvilinear formal strategies acknowledge and respect the existing EEVC facility, creating a harmony between new and old on the site.

Images: Conceptual imagery used in the development of the building form and structure

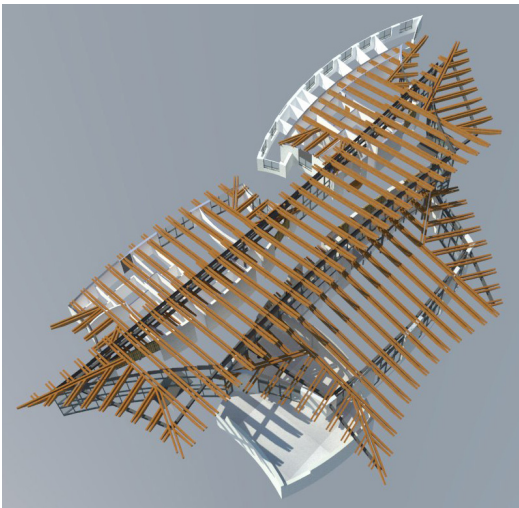
2. Organic Form / Structure in Nature

The combination heavy steel and timber frame of the Visitor Center was inspired by and modeled after structure in nature, specifically the midrib structure in leaves. A central structural element supports secondary structures and free form intersections--much like how the spline supports the three programmatic units of the Visitor Center.

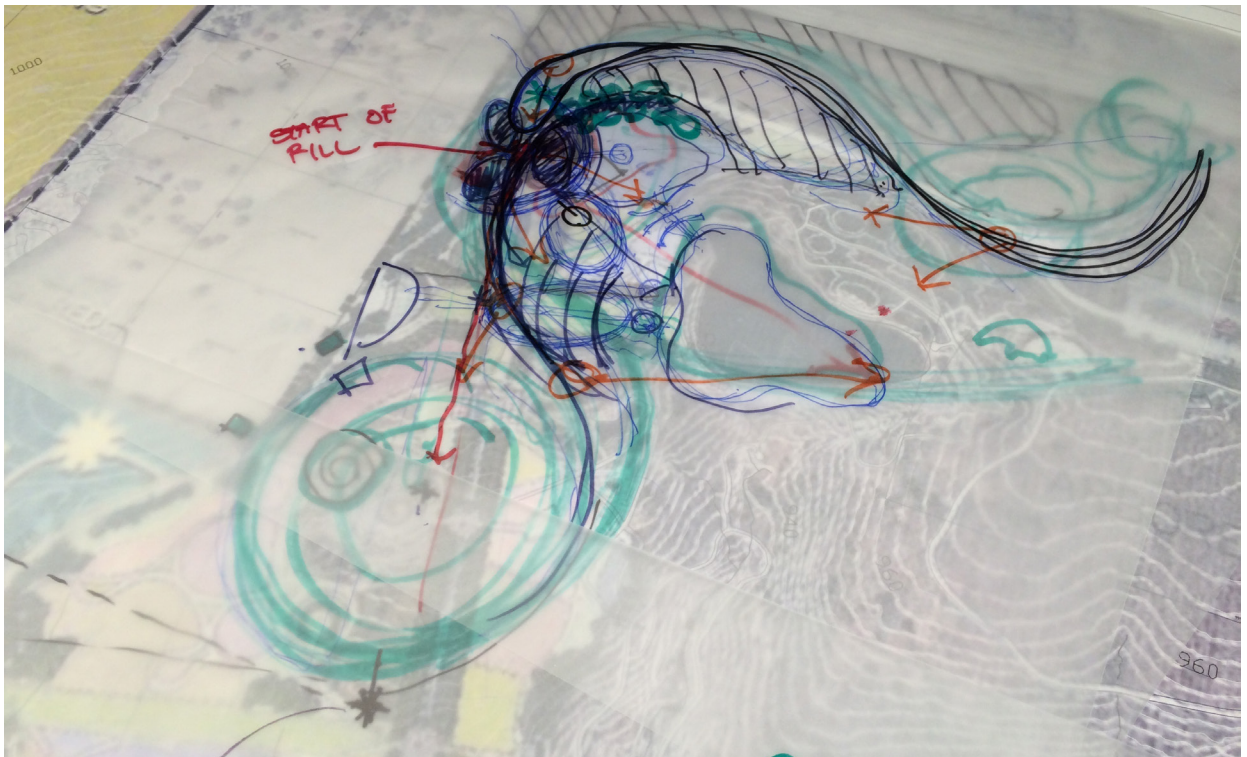
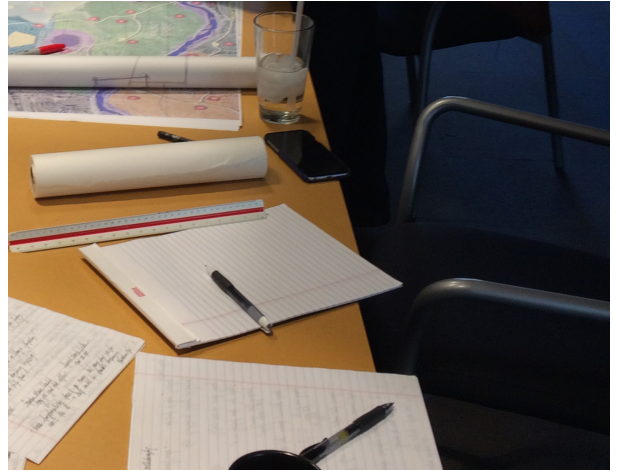
3. The User Experience

The user experience in the Arboretum is designed to reflect the canopied layer of a forest and the meandering path that lays beneath it. High ceilings and extended overhangs filter the light as it enters the building, leading visitors along the gentle curve of the spline. The Visitor Center is designed to provide a Canopy Experience on a Path that Moves You. The central circulation spline of the building is the beginning of the inviting pathway that leads one through the gardens. Views from the building attract visitors to the gardens and views into the building invite visitors to the activities they see inside.





Images: Early conceptual sketches exploring building and site design for the new Visitor Center



The concept design provides for the following considerations, developed through the programming process, as follows:

● **EDUCATION + CONFERENCE**

Spaces + Programs

● **ART**

ISG: Strategically placed art will help guide the visitor along journey to ISG

● **CELEBRATION**

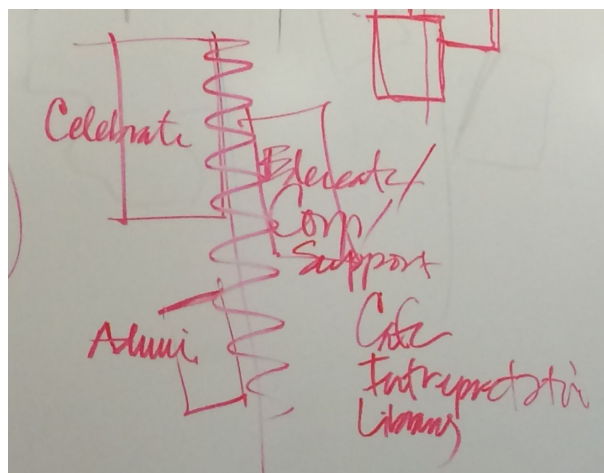
Development of specific spaces of various scales designed to accommodate different uses with a flexible approach

● **ADMINISTRATION**

Provided for within the building structure

● **VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

Starts when one first enters the site and continues throughout their visit



Construction Cost: \$11,845,652

Soft Cost: \$1,875,000

Incorporate as many ideas that were given to be the best building for the community - biggest bang for the buck with an eye for multi staging future (plans) to carry out over many more years.

Stakeholder in Workshop 01
Speaking to a Vision for the Visitor Center



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