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McKAY ARCHIVES CENTER RECEIVES AIA DESIGN AWARD FOR INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Lakeland, Florida – July 1, 2009 - The American Institute of Architects, Tampa Bay Chapter announced the recipients of their 2009 Design Awards at an awards ceremony held Saturday, June 20th at NOVA 535 in St. Petersburg. Jurors Mauricio Mazo, AIA, Michael Le Boeuf, AIA and John Ehrig, FAIA from Orlando selected fourteen out of sixty-five total submissions to be recognized with awards of Merit and Honor for excellence in architectural design.

Straughn Trout Architects were recognized with a Merit Award for their design of the **McKay Archives Center** on the **Florida Southern College** campus in Lakeland. This project is the first new building on the **Frank Lloyd Wright**-designed, west portion of Lakeland's historic campus in twenty-five years. The new two-story facility, built by Folsom Construction, Inc. of Lakeland, FL, houses the College's Frank Lloyd Wright documents, drawings, photographs, and other memorabilia from Wright's time at the College. Other collections include the Center for Florida History and the Florida Citrus Archives. The building also contains the Florida United Methodist Heritage Center, which displays the archives of the Florida Methodist Conference, a major contributing partner of the facility.

"In the case of the McKay Archives Center, I think we really appreciated how the building was placed on the site, in such a way that it was subordinate to some of the existing campus buildings, but yet participated in the circulation [of the campus]" states LeBoeuf about the project. *"The great sweep on the massing of the building pulls you in to the center of the campus. Attention was given not to make the building override the existing buildings, but yet has its own sense of place and its own purpose in the campus setting."* Mazo also commented that the project *"draws from the Wrightian architecture of the campus, yet has its own personality. The configuration of the building is a great draw from the campus into the big pool (Water Dome)."*

In a location originally designated by Wright as a dense grove of citrus trees, the new facility's form takes inspiration from the natural topography and influence from the immediate architectural context, including several Frank Lloyd Wright-designed structures. The project was initially proposed as an addition or "wing" to the existing Roux Library, designed by architect Nils Schweizer in 1965. By designing the Center as a stand-alone structure, a courtyard was developed between the two buildings providing a valuable campus space. The cast-in-place concrete details that characterize the adjacent library were abstracted and integrated into the north and west elevations of the project. These details clearly portray the programmatic relationship shared by the two facilities. The building's curved form preserves one of Wright's trademark diagonal vistas from one of the College's primary entrances to several Wright structures, including the recently restored Water Dome and Annie Pfeiffer Chapel. This view is also framed for occupants of the interior by the south glass façade from the first floor classroom as well as the primary reading, research and exhibit space on the second floor. The ten-foot overhangs reflect those of Wright and Schweizer, fitting appropriately into a campus covered in esplanades and shade-making architecture. Two forty-foot high, cast-in-place concrete walls delaminate the layers of the southwest façade and operate as passive cooling devices shielding the afternoon sun. The ground floor rustication for this new building was accomplished with textile block concrete panels precast by a local master mason and based on Wright's original molds, borrowed from the College's collections. This "textile-like" pattern on the panels connects the building's module and material texture to the nearby Wright structures.

The AIA Tampa Bay Annual Design Awards Program recognizes excellence in architectural design by architects, intern architects and architecture students within the chapter's territory. [AIA Tampa Bay](#) is the regional chapter of [The American Institute of Architects \(AIA\)](#) - the professional association for architects and those in the architecture field. AIA Tampa Bay represents more than 600 members in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Polk, Hernando, Citrus, Sumter and Pasco Counties. In addition to the design awards, the chapter provides a variety of programs including educational, networking, social, competitions and more.

[Straughn Trout Architects](#), LLC, is a multi-disciplined firm located in Lakeland, Florida established in 1956, and has been in continual practice since its founding.

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McKay Archives Center Receives AIA Design Award

Full Architectural Description



Program & Purpose

Originally intended as an expansion to Nils Schweizer's Roux Library (Schweizer was Wright's student and campus architect for the 25 years following Wright's death), the Archives Center materializes the enduring collaboration between the Florida Southern College and the Florida Methodist Conference. This project signifies in a tangible way the bond between the two organizations and will allow the rich history of both to be preserved and shared for future generations. The new two-story facility houses the College's Frank Lloyd Wright documents, drawings, photographs, and other memorabilia from Wright's time at the College. Other collections that are tied closely with the history of the two groups will also find a home here, as well as Florida Southern College's Center for Florida History and the Florida Citrus Archives. The facility provides state-of-the-art archival space for invaluable College & Conference materials making them available to students and patrons through research and exhibits.

Orientation & Form

The owner initially proposed that the Center be built as an addition or "wing" to the existing library. By designing the Center as a stand-alone structure, a courtyard was developed between the two buildings. Flanked on the east by the library and the west by the Center, the existing library stair towers stand guard on the north and south ends of the courtyard enclosing this valuable outdoor public space. The cast-in-place concrete details that characterize the adjacent library were abstracted and integrated into the north and west elevations of the project. This was imperative to the owner in efforts to portray the programmatic relationship.

As an extension of the constructed landscape, the project continues the intrinsic trajectories of pedestrian circulation and trademark diagonal vistas across the historic campus. The building's curved form preserves such a vista from one of the College's primary entrances to several Wright structures, including the recently restored Water Dome and trademark Annie Pfeiffer Chapel. This view is also framed for occupants of the interior by the south glass façade from the first floor classroom as well as the primary reading, research and exhibit space on the second floor. The ten-foot overhangs reflect those of Wright and Schweizer, fitting appropriately into a campus covered in esplanades and shade-making architecture.

Module & Materiality

Materiality is paramount to the success of the project's design. Exterior finishes weave this new building into the existing campus fabric while the glass curtain walls and aluminum sun shades reveal the contemporary nature of the interior. Two forty-foot high, cast-in-place concrete walls delaminate the layers of the southwest façade and operate as passive cooling devices shielding the afternoon sun. These somewhat brutalist concrete "shields", free of ornament, stand juxtaposed with the scale and detail of Wright's administration buildings. The façade behind the curved concrete walls echoes the material part of the Wright buildings throughout the campus: textile block at the ground floor and cement stucco above. The ground floor rustication for this new building was accomplished with textile block concrete panels precast by a local master mason and based on Wright's original molds, borrowed from the College's collections. The panels will avoid the failures of the original student-cast coquina stone, sand and cement masonry units that are deteriorating due to water ingress that corroded the interior reinforcing bars. This "textile-like" pattern on the panels connects the building's module and material texture to the nearby Wright structures. The campus module established by Wright was derived from the spacing of the original citrus grove that flourished on the site until the 1950's.

Historical Context

The McKay Archives Center is the first new building on the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed, west portion of the historic Florida Southern campus in twenty-five years. In a location originally designated by Wright as a dense grove of citrus trees, the new facility's form takes inspiration from the natural topography and influence from the immediate architectural context, including several Frank Lloyd Wright-designed structures. One of the campus's most distinguishing characteristics is the 1.5 miles of covered walkways, or esplanades. The esplanades, abstracted from the campus site's original citrus groves, operate as a network of spines connecting the academic nodes of each unique campus structure.

The Florida Southern Campus received a Campus Heritage Grant from the Getty Foundation in 2006 to develop a Historic Preservation Master Plan for the buildings, structures, and landscapes designed by Wright. The campus was also recently included on the 2008 World Monument Fund's list of 100 most endangered sites in the world. The College has the world's largest single-site collection of Wright's buildings and is the only college campus designed by Wright. The campus is currently a part of a comprehensive Wright exhibit "From Within Outward" celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Guggenheim Museum in New York City.