VanDusen Botanical Garden Visitor Centre

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, British Columbia

Completion Date: August 2011
Square Footage: 19,000
LEED-NC Platinum Target
Living Building Challenge Target

Awards:
Awards for Environmental Excellence, Excellence in Urban Sustainability Finalist, 2013
GLOBE

Wood Innovation Award, 2013
2013 Wood WORKS! BC Wood Design Awards

Engineering Award Winner, 2012
World Architecture News

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia Merit Award, 2012
Architectural Institute of British Columbia

Inspired by organic forms and natural systems, the VanDusen Botanical Garden Visitor Centre seeks to create a harmonious balance between architecture and landscape, from a visual and an ecological perspective. The dynamic single-story structure includes an innovative prefabricated roof form that appears to float above the building's curved rammed earth and concrete walls. Metaphorically representing undulating petals, the building form flows seamlessly into a central oculus and the surrounding landscape.

Located on the Garden's prominent southeast corner, the 19,000 square foot Visitor Centre transforms the site's entrance to heighten public awareness of the Garden, its conservation mandate, and the importance of nature. The building houses a café, library, volunteer facilities, garden shop, offices, and flexible classroom/rental spaces.

Designed to exceed LEED Platinum status, the Visitor Centre is the first building in Canada to apply for the Living Building Challenge. The building uses on-site, renewable sources to achieve net-zero energy on an annual basis. Wood is the primary building material, storing carbon dioxide for the life of the building. Rainwater is filtered and used for the building's greywater requirements; 100% of blackwater is treated by an on-site bioreactor—the first of its kind in Vancouver—and released into a new percolation field located in the garden.

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