

Program Summary:

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Program Statement:

This new Welcome Center will serve visitors to the adjacent Botanic Gardens, Rural Life Museum, LSU Agcenter and various other community and cultural destinations.

Intended to provide visitors with a clear prelude to the many destinations dispersed throughout the 440-acre property in the heart of Louisiana's capital city, the Center will similarly supply an overview of the rich history of the namesake family and the namesake property, one of the largest donations ever made to LSU and the surrounding community.

In honoring this conception of the Center as a contemplative retreat to nature, the design team looked to create a liminal space that would provoke curiosity and excitement for the surrounding scenery while simultaneously providing a legible point of arrival and orientation. As such, the design of the center unfolds from the landscape—a welcome center not so much as sitting on the land but embedded in it.

A showcase for environmental education and a layered destination for events, art, recreation and renewal, the sustainably rich center will feature 3,000 SF of multi-purpose space, 1,000 SF of gallery space, an occupiable green roof, a small dining area and café, gift shop, visitor restrooms, and offices for botanic gardens administrative staff.

UP-385.01

Building Area: (sf)
9,320

Cost per Square Foot:
N/A

Construction Cost
N/A

Date of Completion:
N/A- unbuilt

UP-385.02

Landscape Lens

The project lives in deference to the landscape, where the building punctuates but the landscape dominates.

It acts as a lens to more clearly see the surrounding flora and fauna of Louisiana, unique in its swamps and bogs, windswept prairies, and forests of pine and hardwood.



UP-385.03

Response to Context

As a liminal space between various places dispersed across campus grounds, the new visitor's center looked to acknowledge its surrounding context.

The team looked at ways in which architectural expression might pay deference to the natural landscape, or reinterpret aspects of vernacular architecture in a modern context.



Green House Structures



Rural Life Outbuildings



Rural Life Museum



Orangerie

UP-385.04

Architectural Character

The architectural character of the Welcome Center builds on the planning principles of the inspirational namesake, and sequences of movement, thresholds, and framed views.

The character of the original property and architecture is rural in nature and, although there are formal design devices at work, the dominant language is one of informality and the picturesque.



UP-385.05

Immersive Experience

The building itself is meant to be experienced from within, the user ensconced within a courtyard at its center.

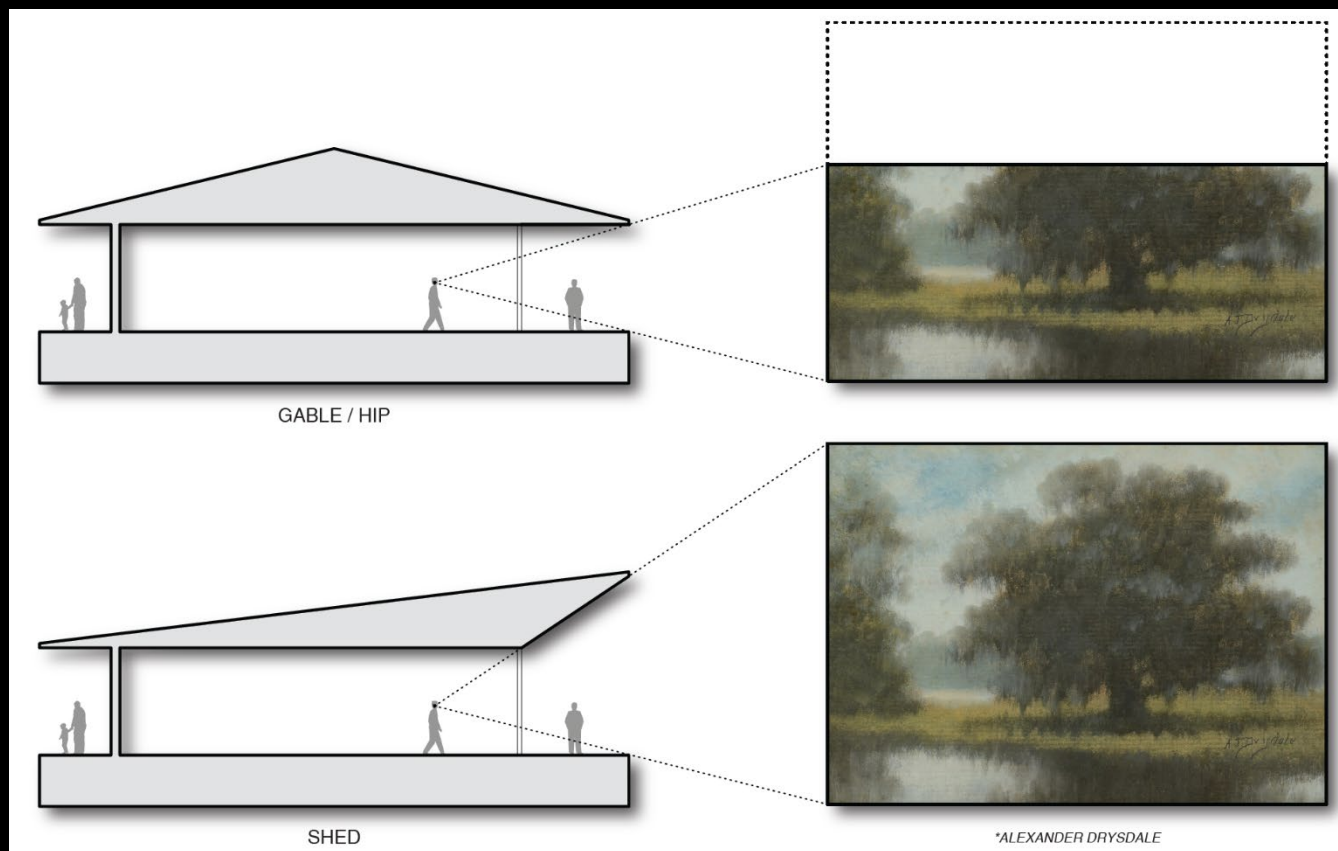
Openings in the exterior envelope create picturesque vistas on all four sides, forming welcome portals from which to embark on one's exploration of the property.



UP-385.06

Immersive Experience

Centering the experience of the landscape was a conscious decision in developing the massing and form of the building, and a shed roof employed to maximize views out along the perimeter of the structure.

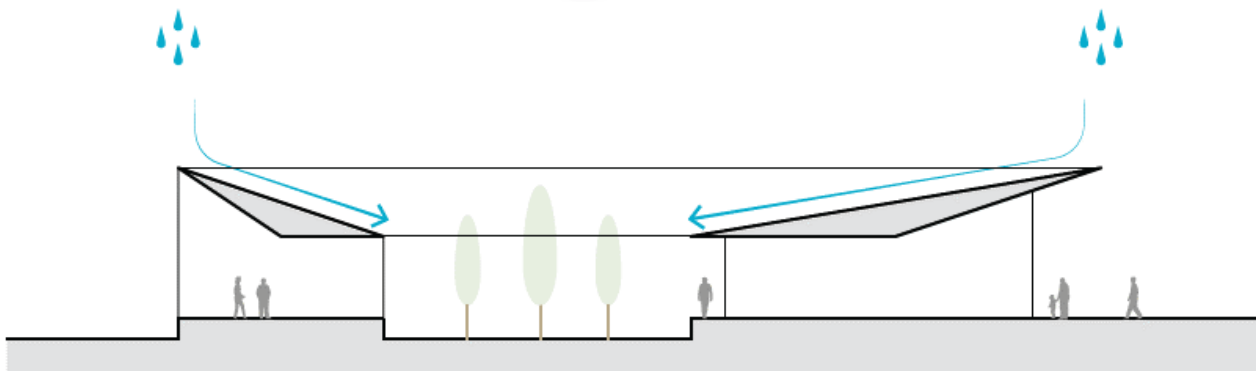
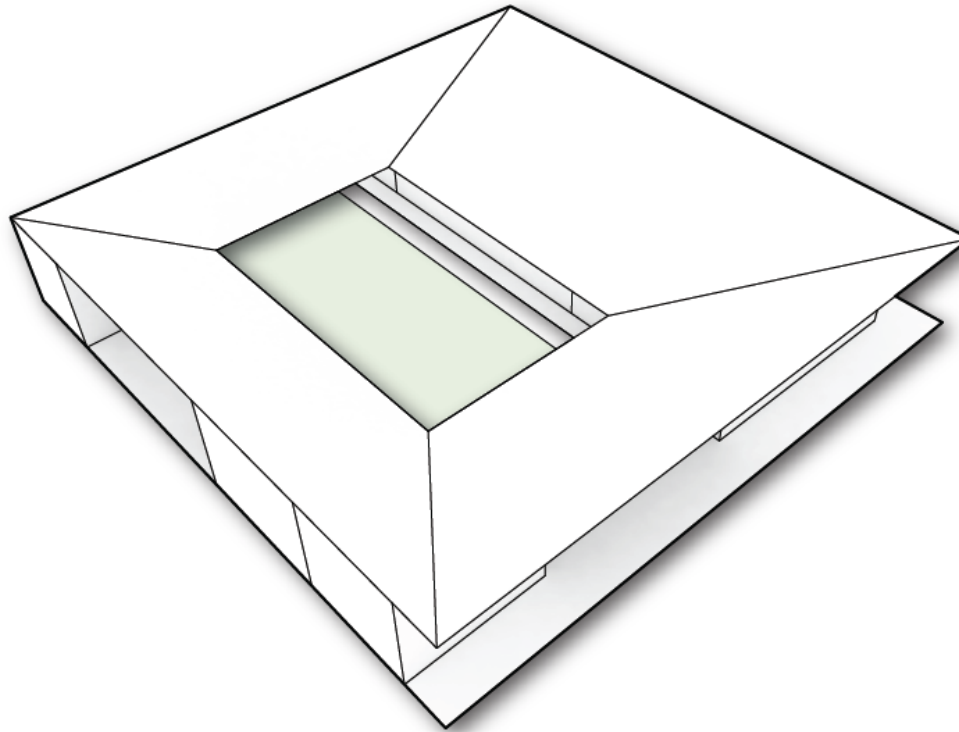


UP-385.07

Stormwater Management

The shed roof of the interior courtyard pulls double-duty, providing shade and a frame through which to view the surrounding landscape, and serving as a critical link in the campus stormwater management plan.

Utilizing the descending angle of the roofline, the structure directs the flow of water into the interior courtyard, where it irrigates plants, before moving through a "runnel" to the main entry and out to a bioswale.



UP-385.08

Intertwined with Nature

The overall concept of the building, its gentle insertion into the landscape, and its efforts to minimize the impact of storm water on local infrastructure all represent a way of harmoniously coexisting with the natural world.





UP-385.09

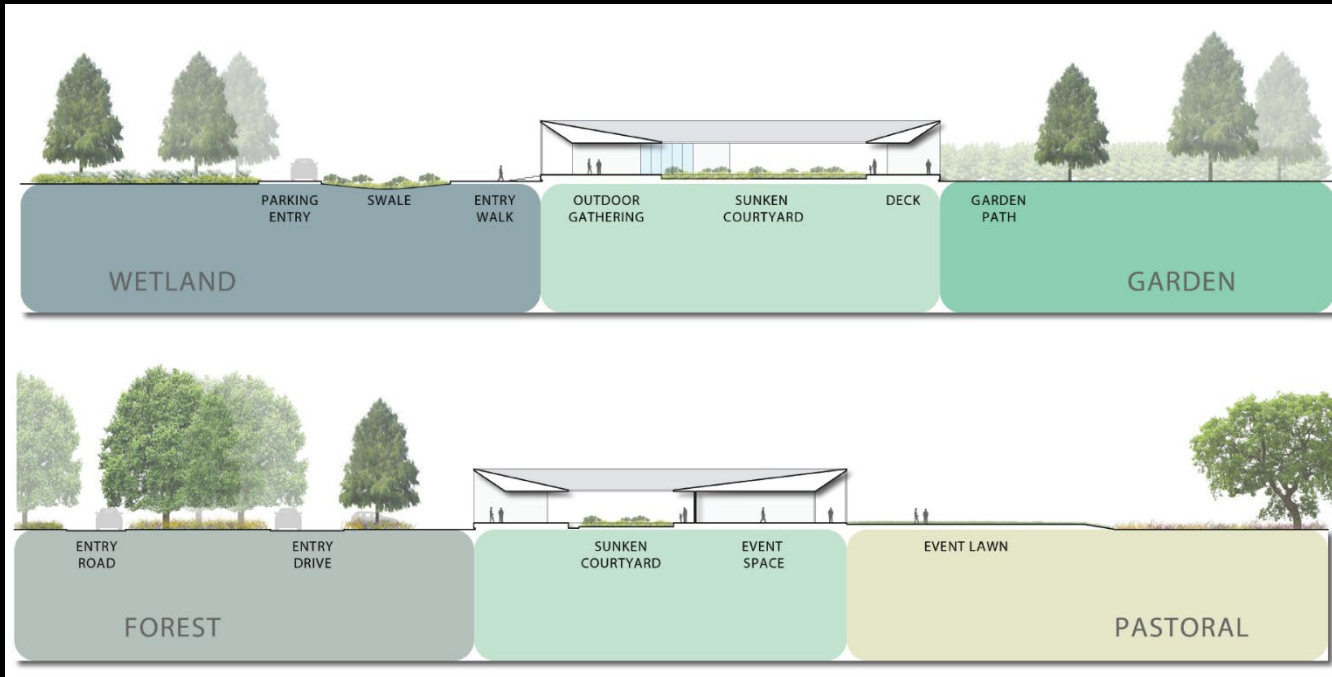
Thresholds and Light

Intended to provoke curiosity and exploration of the natural world, the visitor's center is a threshold, an interface between botanical garden, culture, and civilization—a seamless extension of the landscape surrounded by light.

UP-385.10

Section

A section showcases how different faces of the project frame varying landscape typologies.



UP-385.11

Floor Plan

