



ab

ArchitectureBoston

YEAR IN REVIEW

2007

JANUARY • FEBRUARY 2008



K-12 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES DESIGN



JURY

Umberto Dindo AIA
Dindo Architect
New York City

Stuart Lesser AIA
Joslin, Lesser + Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Jennifer Marsh AIA
Mowery Marsh Architects
Hoboken, New Jersey

Jennifer Pinck
Pinck & Co.
Boston

JURY COMMENTS

The work we viewed this year included both public and private projects that were all competent examples of educational facility design. We found similarities in finish and materials that may indicate that architects and builders have reached an interpretive plateau in the quest to provide well-designed places for teachers and children. This plateau may reflect a relative stasis in current educational theory, where ideas about how to teach — alongside cost and the need for efficiencies expressed by hard, easy-to-clean surfaces requiring minimal maintenance — drive design.

We were pleased to see universal design and sustainable systems and materials referenced throughout the body of work, though we found few post-occupancy mechanisms in place for measuring their effectiveness. We appreciated the provisions made for plentiful natural light and thoughtful site orientation, and were pleased to find that many buildings provided an atrium.

One juror noted the tremendous challenges involved in making huge, sometimes inelegant, spaces feel intimate enough to support programs for children. We were intrigued by the peculiar absence in the submitted portfolios of photographs featuring children or adults. There was a shortage of photographs depicting fun “child-spaces” too, and we wondered why the designers chose to illustrate the facilities with barren rooms that looked sterile.

Together with past juries, we wanted better narratives to help us understand the context for these schools, the problems that each design team was asked to solve, the constraints under which they worked and how they strove to enliven their communities. Also lacking in many cases were conceptual diagrams that could have been useful in quickly understanding underlying design influences, theories, and strategies. We agreed that every building tells a story that is as much a part of its identity as the structure itself and hope that future designers become as adept at telling those tales as they do at commissioning beautiful photographs and renderings.

Editor's note: The full text of jury comments, including responses to individual projects and advice on preparing submissions, may be found at www.architects.org/awards.

HONOR AWARDS

63 Rogers Marvel Architects
Stephen Gaynor School and Ballet Hispanico
New York City

64 Maryann Thompson Architects
The Atrium School
Watertown, Massachusetts

AWARDS

65 Flansburgh Architects
Auburn High School
Auburn, Massachusetts

65 Newport Collaborative Architects
Center for Marine and Nautical Sciences
Tabor Academy
Marion, Massachusetts

66 Platt Byard Dovell White Architects
The Reece School
New York City

K-12 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES DESIGN



HONOR AWARD
The Atrium School
Watertown, Massachusetts

Client:
The Atrium School

Architect:
Maryann Thompson Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts
www.maryannthompson.com

Project team:
Maryann Thompson AIA (principal-in-charge); Bill Pevear AIA (project architect)

Contractor:
Bowdoin Construction Corporation

Consultants:
Landworks Studio (landscape);
Richmond So Engineers (structural);
Wozny/Barbar Associates (mechanical/electrical/plumbing/fire protection);
Gala Simon Associates (civil); The Green Engineer (green engineering); Schirmer Engineering (code)

Photographer:
Anton Grassl/Esto



Designer's statement:
This project called for the adaptive reuse of a brick warehouse, on a limited site in a mixed industrial/residential neighborhood, into a functional schoolhouse for The Atrium School's expanding program. The transformation required rethinking the building's orientation relative to site and creating a playful interior sequence that breaks down the long and narrow building volume.