



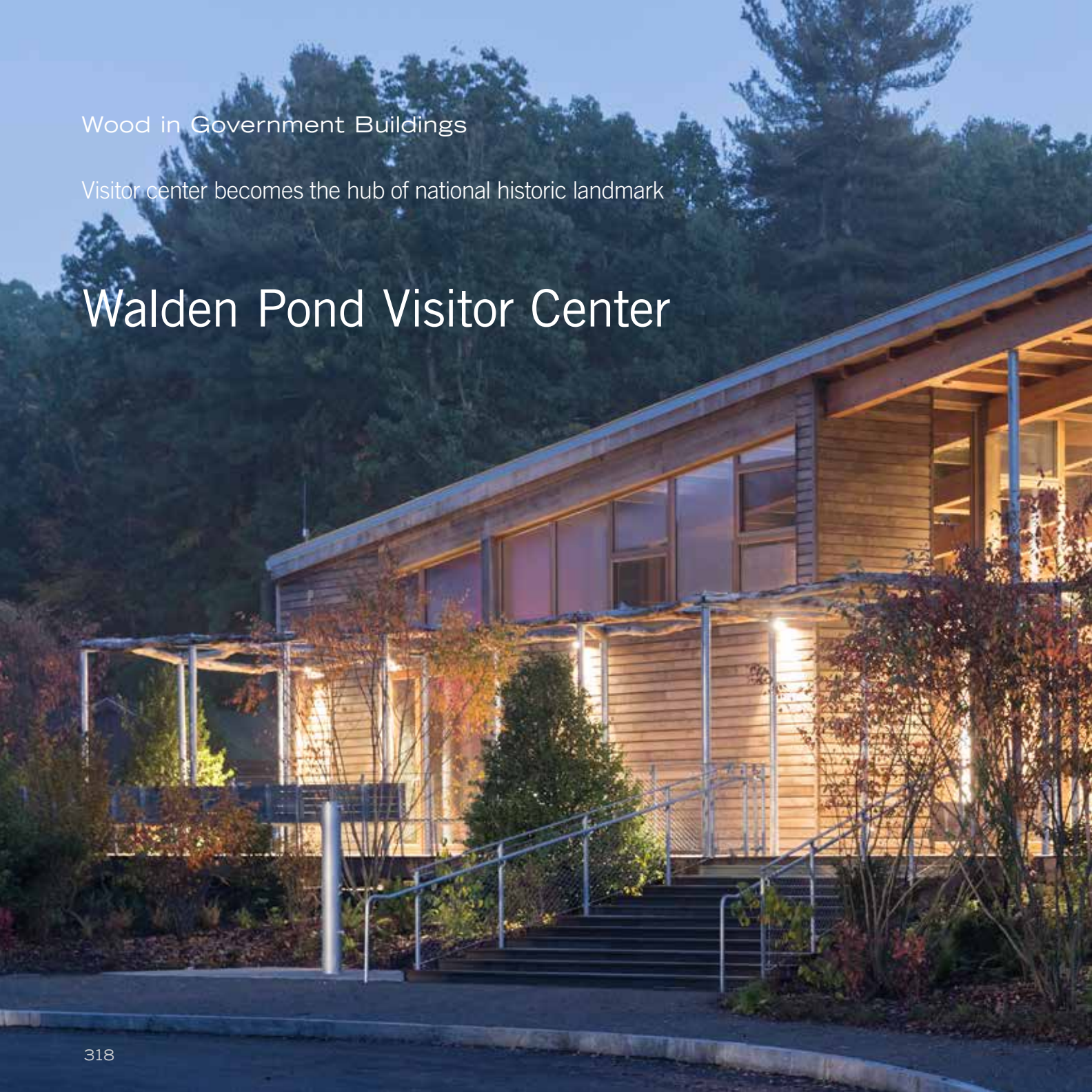
**CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE
IN WOOD ARCHITECTURE**

2017-18 WOOD DESIGN AWARD WINNERS

Wood in Government Buildings

Visitor center becomes the hub of national historic landmark

Walden Pond Visitor Center



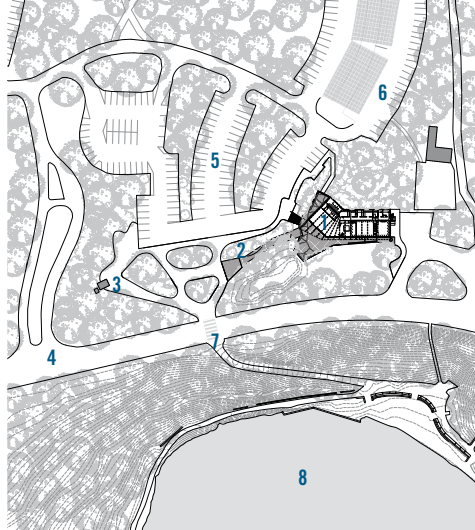






Walden Pond State Reservation is an internationally acclaimed National Historic Landmark and protected open space that sees more than 500,000 visitors a year due to its great beauty and status as the famed retreat of author and naturalist Henry David Thoreau. The new Walden Pond Visitor Center is the result of a decades-long planning and implementation process, and the fruition of much collaboration between Massachusetts' Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the design team and stakeholders, including the Walden Woods Project and The Thoreau Society.

The new, 6,000-sq. ft. center interweaves with the landscape to emphasize Walden Pond and the site. The design team held the building off the central axis from the pond to the parking lot so the center takes a secondary position to the view of the pond. A meandering and accessible ramp draws the public up and onto the trellised deck, which leads to the exhibition space and public facilities. Nestled within existing trees and new plantings, the project gives a sense of unfolding sequence and exploration. Together with a community meeting room and staff offices, exhibition spaces dedicated to Walden's impact on the world create a new hub.



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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. visitor's center | 5. existing parking lot |
| 2. handicap accessible ramp | 6. solar panel array |
| 3. replica of Thoreau's cabin | 7. main axis of entry to pond |
| 4. existing entry to parking lot | 8. Walden Pond |



SITE PLAN



Local context and site conditions informed the design strategy and implementation at all levels. The deck with black locust trellis members is clad with locally sourced, heat-treated ash. Heat-treated wood is excellent for outdoor applications and an alternative to the use of rainforest woods. The project also used a portion of the former visitor center's foundation, in line with the site's conservationist ethos. The office millwork was done in Massachusetts red oak and harvested by DCR's forestry team specifically for the center.

The building is net-zero energy, with no reliance on fossil fuels for its operation. A photovoltaic solar array doubles as a shade structure

over the parking lot and supplies all of the center's energy needs. In winter, triple-pane windows and super insulation keep the spaces at a comfortable temperature with little reliance on the energy-efficient electric heat pump system. In warmer months, the ample operable windows and ceiling fans create natural ventilation. Projecting timber overhangs work to reduce solar heat gain. As the structure and building components are visible and legible, visitors to the center also have an interactive sense of the ecological building principles, which are contemporary expressions of the legacy of Henry David Thoreau and the American conservation movement.

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