

Architectural Record Article Summary

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Rosa Parks Elementary School

by Joann Gonchar

Rosa Parks Elementary is one of 12 recent schools highlighted in *Architectural Record* demonstrating an uncommon responsiveness to their students' needs.

Some of the community members expressed a desire for a building that reflected a "national parks" theme, conveying the importance of its natural amenities, including nature trails, wetlands, and parks.

"Mahlum Architects decided to work with a Modernist vernacular to create a school tied to its surroundings," writes Gonchar. "By employing multi-story spaces, sheltering overhangs, and a palette of earthy browns and grays accented with vibrant green, they sought to imbue the building with color and character."

The school features classrooms built around a shared instructional area in pods of four classrooms each. Small group work, involving regrouping kids from more than one class, can take place there.

Shed-roofed structures clad with cement fiberboard panels make up the general layout of the school. One- and two-story wings contain the learning communities. Adjacent to the wings are administrative offices and shared facilities, such as the library, the school commons, and the gymnasium.

Rosa Parks Elementary opened in Fall 2006.

