

**PENN STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
(SALA)  
(Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania)**

**Project size:** 110,000 sq. ft.

**Client name:** Pennsylvania State University

**Cost:** \$22,600,000

**Scope of the program:** New facilities to house the School of Architecture and The School of Landscape Architecture at The Pennsylvania State University. The program includes integrated studio spaces for the schools as well as critique spaces, faculty offices, library, gallery, computer labs, general classrooms and administrative offices.

**Location:** State College, Pennsylvania

**Architect:** Design Architect-Overland Partners Architects

**Project Team**

Design Architect-Overland Partners Architects

Robert Shemwell, FAIA, LEED (Principal In Charge)

Jim Shelton (Project Architect)

Fernando Ortega (Architect)

Architect of Record- WTW Architects

Richard De Young, AIA (Principal in Charge)

Joseph Nagy, AIA, LEED (Project Architect)

Landscape Architect-LaQuatra Bonci

Fred Bonci, ASLA (Principal in Charge)

Joseph Hackett, ASLA (Landscape Architect)

**Site considerations:** The building site was a previously neglected area of the campus filled with parking lots, a small credit union building, and dilapidated basketball courts. The school of architecture and landscape architecture (SALA) fills the space between the last remaining portion of Hort Woods and the fine and visual arts buildings. It is adjacent to major pedestrian circulation paths.

**Key elements of particular interest and relevance:**

- The first LEED™ certified building to achieve Gold LEED™ rating at no additional cost
- Façade is made of recycled copper and contextual brick
- The building uses revolutionary “green design” technology to regulate heat and air-conditioning. This includes roof monitors that automatically open or close windows depending on the temperature and humidity.
- Windows & clerestories allow for maximum daylight throughout the interior, reducing energy consumption and improving light quality.
- Each student work station can be individually regulated for temperature through the use of vents that can be manually opened or closed. This reduces energy consumption and allows for a more comfortable working environment
- Building orientation minimizes heat gain and defines a quadrangle that is a place of formal exchange between neighboring dormitories, recreational facilities, the art museum and the art school
- Indoor air contaminants were reduced with the use of materials that met or exceeded VOC limits for adhesives, sealants, paints, composite wood products, and carpet systems
- Operable window and lighting control mechanisms are supplied at a minimum of every 200 square feet of occupied space that is within 15 feet of a perimeter wall. This provides a high level of individual occupant control of thermal, ventilation and lighting systems.

## **Color within Penn State SALA:**

Penn State School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture is distinguishing in appearance by its façade of natural green recycled copper juxtaposed against a backdrop of contextual red brick. Situated in the Hort Woods, the surrounding trees accent the natural patina of the copper. Additionally, the rich flora enhances even the interior of the building, as one looks out through large expanses of windows that seem to bring the exterior landscape inside. Skylights and clerestories bathe the work spaces with natural light, giving the occupant the impression that he or she is still a part of the nature just outside the door. There are splashes of crimson in hallways and classrooms, pale maple floors and the use of glass panels in place of walls. All of these elements help to elevate the mood so that even on overcast days, there is a feeling of lightness about the space. The openness of the workspaces, the outside vegetation that can be seen from within, and the vividness of color inside create an exhilarating experience for the aspiring architects and landscape architects within.

## **Brief summary of the project:**

The School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at Pennsylvania State University is the school's first major comprehensive attempt at sustainable design, and is the first project to involve a significant format -- including charettes, public presentations, and website - for public participation and feedback. The design provides new life into a former "back of house" area of the campus, integrating major pedestrian ways and access to the adjacent Hort Woods in the creation of building and landscape. Designed to be a center of activity and accessible 24 hours a day, the new SALA will not only provide a world class facility for its curriculum, but also create a new stage for events and place of vibrancy for the entire sub-campus area.

## **Description of the design solution:**

The new School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (SALA) is the first LEED™ certified building for this university. The building brings together the two previously separate departments in a flexible learning environment, which fosters collaboration and shared value through the design of open and interconnected spaces for casual meetings, discussions, formal classes, lectures, and studios.

The program for the building includes studios for both Architecture and Landscape Architecture departments, faculty and administrative offices, library, computer labs, classrooms, and wood working shop, as well as community outreach centers for design and landscape resource management.

The building addresses its site with two distinct personalities. One façade is contextual, yet contemporary to the brick quadrangle that it now completes. The second responds to the organic nature of original old growth Hort Woods with a sculpted south facade of recycled copper. The movement in the south wall acknowledges the two historic grids of the campus and the gravity of the existing water tower that frames an entry court adjacent to the south entry. This south elevation is articulated with sun shades and deep windows. The building envelope is designed to be as transparent as possible to allow the landscape to infiltrate with views into and out of the space while allowing the activity of the interior to read through to the exterior. This expression on the exterior was important due to the almost 24 hour occupancy of the building, therefore creating a new stage for events and a place of vibrancy for the entire arts sub-campus area.

The 110,000 square-foot facility employs numerous sustainable strategies in an integrated design. In addition to being the University's first LEED™ certified building, and has achieved LEED™ Gold rating. The SALA building adapts to seasonal variations, provides flexibility in space configurations, and accommodates changes in technology. The design is based on human needs and ergonomics. Studio floors are elevated for mechanical, electrical and data systems, maximizing studio space and personal comfort, and promoting community without compromising individuality. The building features extensive day-lighting and is naturally ventilated throughout, including the basement level wood shop. The grade to the north is pulled away to form a construction yard and informal amphitheater.

SALA was conceived as a teaching tool for future architects and landscape architects to learn about design and building technology, especially sustainable concepts. It promotes a higher quality of life, creating a special place that inspires creative problem-solving as well as appreciation for the resources, both natural and man-made, which shape the built environment.