



AIA Minnesota

A Society of The American Institute of Architects

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Digital images available on request

Humanities and Fine Arts Center, University of Minnesota–Morris and Landmark Center Receive AIA Minnesota 25-Year Awards

Minneapolis, Minnesota – The Humanities and Fine Arts Center, University of Minnesota–Morris and Landmark Center have each won AIA Minnesota’s prestigious 25-Year Award for 2005. The Arts Center was designed in the early 1970s by Ralph Rapson, FAIA, Ralph Rapson and Associates, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Landmark Center, originally completed in 1902, was renovated in 1978 by Winsor/Faricy Architects, St. Paul (now Collaborative Design Group in Minneapolis).

AIA Minnesota established the 25-Year Award in 1981 to recognize exemplary architectural projects, 25 years or older, that have withstood the test of time. The jurors critiqued the seven submissions this year based on information assembled in a binder from the architect/architectural firm. They were do not visit the project sites. Jury members were Leon Satkowski, professor at the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of Minnesota–Twin Cities; Nina Ebbighausen, AIA, architect at Architectural Alliance in Minneapolis; and Vincent James, principal of Vincent James Associates Architects also in Minneapolis. The jury thoughtfully considered a building’s social impact, the complexity of its program and the state of its current condition as factors in weighing each entry’s architectural importance.

Humanities and Fine Arts Center, University of Minnesota–Morris

This academic complex houses facilities for speech, communication, theater arts, music, and fine arts departments. It’s a large building with a brick exterior on a narrow site which called for a long, linear floorplan. The building was constructed in three phases, though it functions and appears as a cohesive whole. Completed in 1974, the complex won an AIA Minnesota Honor Award the following year; the jury at that time commented that the Arts Center was “a distinctive, expressive complex...clearly organized, with good scale and is obviously a stimulating yet unimposing environment for students.” The 2005 25-Year Award jury shared similar thoughts, saying “The Center still fits well into it’s site and connects well to other spaces on campus. It’s scale is effective and handled well, it has utilitarian simplicity yet incorporates quality materials and integrates them with finesse.” It is a testament to the architect, Ralph Rapson, and the building’s original design that few changes have been made to the Center and the complex is still a vibrant part of the University campus today.

Landmark Center

A castle-like building in downtown St. Paul, Landmark Center originally served as a federal courthouse and post office. In the 1970s however, the building was in danger of demolition, but funds were found to renovate the structure and the transformation was so successful the project won an AIA Minnesota Honor

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Award in 1979. One juror that year call the project, “A major preservation project executed with sensitivity and a minimum of intervention.” The renovation, by Winsor/Faricy Architects (the successor firm is Collaborative Design Group), included extensive refinishing of interior surfaces, restoring courtrooms to their original grandeur, and new plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems, thus making the building usable for events and by local organizations needing office space. The 2005 25-Year Award jury commended the project saying, “The building is enhanced by this lasting restoration which is well-done; the use of color is unique and highlights original details. It was an important project for its time, few preservation projects of this scope were pursued in the 1970s, and fortunately it is still a living, breathing space full of community organizations and activities.”

These architects and clients will be formally presented with their awards at the AIA Minnesota Awards Celebration on Friday, December 2, 2005.

The American Institute of Architects Minnesota, founded in 1892, is dedicated to strengthening our communities, improving our built environment and providing exceptional design. For more information on the organization and Minnesota architectural firms, reference our Web site at www.aia-mn.org and pick up a copy of Architecture Minnesota, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest.

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