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AIA Minnesota Announces 2013 25-Year Award Recipient Land O' Lakes Corporate Headquarters



Photo credit: Rick Schuster

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA Established by the American Institute of Architects Minnesota in 1981, the prestigious 25-Year Award annually recognizes one exemplary architectural project that has withstood the test of time. Recipients must be completed building projects, either individual buildings or groups of buildings, completed at least 25 but not more than 50 years ago, designed by firms with architects registered and practicing professionally in Minnesota.

AIA Minnesota is proud to announce that **Land O' Lakes Corporate Headquarters**, designed by Architectural Alliance, is the recipient of the **2013 AIA Minnesota 25-Year Award**. Project team members include: Dennis LaFrance, AIA; John Lackens, FAIA, Ron May, Lynda Lujan, David Solomon, Gretchen Wesenberg, Charles Sandvig, Paul Ashley, Rex Crook, Craig Johnson, and Bob Stoltz.

In 1921, 350 Minnesota farmers started a dairy cooperative. By 1979, Land O' Lakes, Inc. had become a diversified, Fortune 500 agribusiness that set out to create a headquarters complex to both serve the needs of their growing business and establish a harmonious relationship with the natural environment.

The result was a building successful on multiple levels - environmental, functional, and economical. The facility is located in Arden Hills on a 50-acre site adjacent to a major freeway. Originally a largely rural area, it is today part of a small enclave of light industrial, office, and retail, amid suburban residential development. The site remains heavily wooded and almost unchanged over the years. Existing marshes were retained and expanded to control storm-water, creating naturally landscaped focal points for views to the south. Parking is at the north side with wide, tree-planted dividers between the rows.

The intersections of strong rectilinear and trapezoidal geometries are the occasion for public, entrance, and ceremonial spaces. A dramatic three-story entrance lobby, with sloped glass and extensive plantings, is an interior focal point for the complex. Energy efficiency was integral to the building design. An economical post-tensioned, concrete structure provides thermal mass for short-term heat storage. Earth sheltering and generous insulation minimize heat loss. Natural ventilation uses outdoor air for cooling during times of moderate outdoor temperature. Heating requirements were further reduced through recovery of computer waste heat. A unique electrical distribution system reduced lighting loads to 60% of what was typical for the time.



The AIA Minnesota 25-Year Award Jury was comprised of Twin Cities architectural experts, including: Steve Fiskum, FAIA, principal, Hammel, Green, and Abrahamson, Inc.; Jennifer Yoos, FAIA, principal, VJAA; Todd Grover, AIA, principal, MacDonald and Mack Architects, Ltd.; and John Comazzi, Associate Professor of Architecture at School of Architecture - College of Design, University of Minnesota.

Some of the jury comments were:

"The planning strategy is nice – very discreet. I'd really like to see it. Its innovative aspects are light years ahead of its time."

"This is a model of a good project."

"The client takes great care of the building, which reflects their enjoyment of it."

"I like this project. I'm a modernist at heart – but this is so clean."

"I like the site strategies - even the parking is thoughtful. I can imagine the site plan took a lot of care. The employee entrance has a beautiful view – nicely done."

"The details withstood the test of time. Well maintained."

Project Principal Consultants include: McGough Construction (GC); Lundquist, Wilmar, Schultz, Martin (LWSM) (M/E); Bakke, Kopp, Ballou, McFarlin (structural); Bather, Ringrose, Wolsfeld, Jarvis, Gardner, (civil and traffic); Van Hemert Associates, Inc. (food service).

More information regarding AIA Minnesota's 25-Year Award may be found at http://www.aia-mn.org/int_committees/awards.cfm

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 <http://www.aia-mn.org> and pick up a copy of Architecture Minnesota, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest. Visit AIA Minnesota on Facebook at www.facebook.com/aia-minnesota