

Green Building Case Study

Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center



The Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center, located in Parque Zaragoza Park, has been a positive addition in its central east Austin neighborhood. The 17,500 square foot facility includes a gymnasium, complete with locker rooms and showers; an arts and crafts room; weight/exercise room; kitchen; multi-purpose room; and administrative offices. The park grounds include public amenities such as a swimming pool, outdoor stage, outdoor basketball court, sand volleyball court, and a multi-purpose field.

Green Building features in the project:

- Landscape and building design preserved two large existing oak trees that provide a shaded outdoor space.
- Local plants and xeriscaping techniques conserve water.
- Limestone chosen for the interior columns and exterior cladding was quarried locally; its light color minimizes heat gain.
- Galvalume roofing also helps minimize heat gain and is durable, low maintenance, and provides shading for the windows.
- Rainwater is collected from the metal roof for use in landscaping.
- Recycled materials were utilized throughout the project including Congress Avenue bricks used as a wall surface and leftover wood flooring from the gym floor used for countertops and art projects.
- The stained concrete floor is low maintenance and beneficial for a healthy indoor environmental.
- Natural day-lighting strategies were incorporated into the main spine of the building and the gymnasium to reduce energy use and help orient building occupants with the outdoors
- High efficiency metal halide lighting in the gymnasium and T8 fluorescents with electric ballasts help reduce energy consumption.
- Ground Coupled Water Source Heat Pumps in conjunction with an Energy Management System also reduce energy use.
- The recreation center is located near public transportation to encourage alternatives to personal automobile use, which reduces traffic and the emissions and toxins that cause air and water pollution.

Intended to be a community center, members of the neighborhood were asked to help design the facility. Outdoor restrooms, accessible from the park, and the cultural murals throughout the project are a result of that collaboration. Programs focusing on cultural and athletic activities for youth, as well as adult sports and leisure activities, teen activities and special events all take place at this neighborhood center.

Murals by a local artist incorporate a sense of community, history and ethnic pride. Three large murals by Fidencio Durán illustrate the cultural heritage of the surrounding neighborhoods. They depict and honor the three neighborhood leaders who established Parque Zaragoza. They are portrayed alongside General Ignacio Zaragoza, commander of the Mexican forces on Cinco de Mayo.