Arboreal Platform
Low-impact timber rainforest center, Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí, Costa Rica

Summary and appraisal by the jury

The jury greatly appreciates the project’s general posture vis-à-vis sustainable development, one giving due credit to an understanding of sustainability as a “common sense” culture and contributing to an architecture based on fundamental principles. A broad spectrum of complex environmental parameters is addressed to create a simple and seemingly self-evident building, a straightforward structure that is nonetheless poetic in its expression. All in all, the design offers a suitable and convincing solution for a foundation dedicated to preserving the biodiversity of the natural habitat.

Sustainability concept

Progress: The use of wooden structures are practically lost and forgotten in Costa Rica, actual construction methods are based upon covered steel skeletons or concrete-based elements with a poor or absent environmental presence as a land monitor that protects – both literally and metaphorically – the forest. The position is subtle; crowning a hill and showing its logic of settlement used for generations around the site. The design response is materialized into an elevated wooden structure based on available site topography and takes care to minimize the building’s impact on the ground. The design offers a suitable and convincing solution to “contribute to sustainable management of natural resources.”

Prosperity: Fundecor has been a pioneer organization in Latin America for the positioning of forestry as a sustainable and responsible economic activity, and at the same time giving value to the forestry ecosystem. The timber and economic funds that will be used for the center are translated into physical resources.

Place: The position of the project takes advantage of the available site topography and takes care to minimize the building’s impact on the ground. The design response is materialized into an elevated wooden structure based on the logic of settlement used for generations around the site. The position is subtle; crowning a hill and showing its presence as a ‘land monitor’ that protects – both literally and metaphorically – the forest.

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Project data

Project group: Architecture, building and civil engineering
Client: Fundecor (Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Cordillera Volcánica Central)
Project background: Private commission
Planned start: February 2015

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