

Children's Museum of Los Angeles

by Sarah Graham

The Los Angeles Unified School District is the 2nd largest public educational system in the United States, following New York.

The school district is impoverished, having been hit for over twenty years by a deficit of resources. In California, more money is currently spent on jails than on schools. At the same time, the school system has the social obligation to provide education on basic hygiene, nutrition, as well as education to a multi cultural audience. At least 57 languages are spoken in Los Angeles, and the majority of families within the educational system do not speak english.

The private realm in America has come to supplement cultural functions no longer adequately provided by the public sector. Institutions such as Children's Museums have emerged in many cities, used by teachers, schools, and families to further social and educational goals.

The Children's Museum of Los Angeles has a vision to build a series of museums throughout the city, in various cultural contexts and neighborhoods. The design philosophy for the new Children's Museum of Los Angeles at Hansen Dam is based on three principles. First, pursuant to the educational mission of the Museum, the building will serve as one of the environmental exhibits and inform visitors how it works. Second, the spaces are based on dynamic sequences of movement, weaving interior and exterior into a programmatic play. Third, the architecture will be of the landscape, appropriate for its park setting and influencing construction and material choice.

Following from the definitions laid out in the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, the building's sustainability is valued based on ecological, economic, and social sustainability.

Ecologically, the building systems provide a progressive network of integrated systems that reduce the consumption of natural resources over time.

Economic sustainability has been defined as an economic feasibility whereby the building systems pay for themselves within a maximum of 15 years.

Social sustainability is a didactic or educational construct: the building systems are made visible and interactive with its users, in this case, the children of Los Angeles.

Within its cultural context in which most children have never experienced a work of architecture, the building will provide an aesthetic impact on its environment. It is hoped that children might perceive fundamental relations between architecture and the land, questioning just what a building can be.

Sarah Graham

AA/G/P/S Architecture/ Harvard Graduate School of Design

agps architecture los angeles

2413 Ripple Street

Los Angeles, ca 90039 / USA

P +1 323 668 15 26

architecture@agpsla.com