Library with integrated community outreach, Rosario, Argentina

Project data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project group</th>
<th>Building and civil engineering works</th>
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<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Municipality of the City of Rosario</td>
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<td>Project background</td>
<td>Public commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated start of construction</td>
<td>2012</td>
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Main author

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Alfredo Tapia</th>
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<tr>
<td>Profession</td>
<td>Architect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>AFT Arquitectos</td>
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<tr>
<td>City, country</td>
<td>Cordoba, Argentina</td>
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- Emanuel Garabelli, Architect; 16. Maria Emilia Segovia
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- Emanuel Garabelli, Architect; 19. Juan Durante, Architect
- Emanuel Garabelli, Architect; 20. Mariana Acuna

Comment of the Holcim Awards Jury Latin America

The jury recognizes the mature quality of the overall project and its well-balanced architectural contextual qualities. The thorough study of the needs of the future users is seen as its strongest element together with the elegant transcription of modality into the architectural language, using a simple plywood frame construction that creates a highly suitable human atmosphere.

Project description by author

In late 2010, the 2009 PISA exam results were published. This exam constitutes a test geared toward the evaluation of 15-year-old high school students in three main areas: mathematics, reading and science. In this, the last edition of the exam, over 450,000 students from 65 countries worldwide were tested. Argentina was positioned number 58 over 65 nations tested. This information alone highlights the URGENCY of the challenge which our country faces in the field of EDUCATION.

Accordingly, the city of Rosario is carrying an ambitious political and social agenda of development in different areas of the city. Last year, the municipal government organized a design competition for a new library, which is to become the first cultural institution built in decades to boost a struggling working class district. The convergence of these two situations presents a wonderful OPPORTUNITY to solve a difficult dilemma: while the goal of boosting a 153,000-inhabitant working class district. The consensus is that in this information lies the challenge of this paradox. The reasons for this paradox are complex, but what matters is that in this information lies the challenge of this project. How to correct a reality which affects most public libraries and which leads to their gradual loss of influence on their communities.

Our response to this paradox is based in a bold idea. The Trojan Library.

This means, adding to the traditional library program, a vast network of supplementary activities of public interest, which would first attract those who habitually would not visit a library and a gateway of interest once awakened. This diversity of activities will include a sports area, a skatepark, a station for the city bicycle system, a movie theater, rehearsal rooms for dance classes, foreign language courses, cafeterias, a day-care center, tools for the creation of the users own contents in video, music, or book format or any other program that locals may deem desirable or necessary. This simple decision will have three simultaneous positive results which will work as a complete ECO/STEM. More people will be attracted to the library; the visiting experience will be extra-ordinarily enriched, and ideas and solutions will be provided to tackle the needs of this community.

Relevance to target issues by author

- Innovation and transferability – Progress
- More than a building design, our proposal consists of a system. A modular grid system made up of easily adaptable spaces for different uses, activities and program changes is punctuated with a series of patios, which provide natural light and ventilation. The flexibility and simplicity of the system will permit the reproduction of similar libraries in other districts of the city or, better still, all over the country, thus becoming an innovative network to supplement the public school system.

- Ethical standards and social equity – People
- This is perhaps the most significant highlight of the project. Firstly, it will have a dramatic positive impact immediately noticeable in this 153,000-person community. In a broader sense, the effects of this project will extend in the long run with results, which might contribute to improve the neglected educational system in Argentina. It has been proved that those countries which have managed to subvert social inequality situations, which have been able to lift vast social sectors out of poverty, and which have managed to become actors on the stage of the 21st century have not only focused on economic growth but also on education as an indispensable tool to fulfill these objectives. The 1998 article "The War for Talent" notes that a more complex economy demands more sophisticated talent with global acumen, multicultural fluency, technological literacy, entrepreneurial skills, and the ability to manage increasingly disaggregated organizations. This project aims in that direction.

- Environmental quality and resource efficiency – Planet
- The building program of the library is presented mostly on one floor reducing unnecessary vertical circulations and energy consumption. A series of patios allow natural light and ventilation. Peripheral eaves function as an arcade, which offers shade and shelter on all four sides of the building. 5000m² of photo-voltaic panels will be installed to produce energy and supplement climate control systems, which additionally, is supported by the use of geothermal energy. A water recycling system takes advantage of the abundant rainfall patterns of the region. A clear geometric order fosters the development of a simple, efficient building system. Modules use standard commercial sizes. Service systems are laid-out in a grid of ground-floor trenches. This scheme allows a lighter roof structure by eliminating considerable loads. Additionally, the use of timber as the main material entails a large number of advantages: it is a renewable resource, it is low-energy material and it is fully recyclable.

- Economic performance and compatibility – Prosperity
- The modular character of the project provides a key feature for its financing. It is easily divisible in stages; it may be expanded, and it may be replicated in other areas of the city or even the country. Its function as a library and as a public interest building, and its character as a reference project as regards sustainable use of economic and power resources will enable the access to low-cost loans.

- Contextual and aesthetic impact – Proficiency
- The project inserts in a low-height urban fabric of medium density. Additionally, it faces a District Municipal Center of Rosario, which is the local pride and joy. This context defines the features of the project, which presents the design as a low-height building, opened on all four sides, inserted within the immediate surroundings amicably while clearly is an institutional building, and transmitting an image of inviting transparency.