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SASKATOON – (June 3, 2016)

Winners of the 2016 Prairie Design Awards Announced

Ten projects represent the best in architecture, landscape and design across the Canadian Prairies

The Alberta Association of Architects (AAA), the Saskatchewan Association of Architects (SAA) and the Manitoba Association of Architects (MAA) are pleased to announce the winners of the 2016 Prairie Design Awards.

Presented biannually by the three provincial architectural associations on a rotating basis, the Awards represent an opportunity to honour the uniqueness of the region's powerful landscapes and the evocative history of its iconic prairie forms. More importantly, the Awards celebrate excellence in design across the prairie provinces, recognizing the talent, skill and commitment of architects and designers in realizing buildings, landscapes and interiors that surpass the expectations of their clients while elevating the standard of design and construction in Western Canada.

Representing a wide range of building types – from dinosaur museum to courthouse to portable pop-up library – the projects were chosen from cities and towns across the prairies: Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary and Wembley, Alberta. The buildings, installations and landscape/urban design interventions represent significant contributions to these communities, substantially improving the quality of life for their citizens through the creation of profoundly human environments and enhancements to the public realm.

One hundred and one submissions were received in four categories: Recent Work, Small Projects, Landscape Architecture, and Interior Design. Of the ten projects selected, four received an Award of Excellence, and six were recognized with an Award of Merit.

Award of Excellence

Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum

Wembley, Alberta

Stephen Teeple Architect | Architecture Tkalcic Bengert

Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre



Edmonton, Alberta
MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects | HIP Architects in Joint Venture

John Fry Sports Park Pavilion

Edmonton, Alberta
the marc boutin architectural collaborative inc.

Memorial Drive Landscape of Memory: Pathway Remediation

Calgary, Alberta
the marc boutin architectural collaborative inc.

Award of Merit

Court of Queen's Bench Expansion and Renovations

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Henry Downing Architects

Borden Park Pavilion

Edmonton, Alberta
gh3 architecture

Mill Woods Park Pavilion

Edmonton, Alberta
Dub Architects Ltd.

youCUBE

Winnipeg, Manitoba
5468796 Architecture Inc.

The Edmonton Military Commemorative Monument

Edmonton, Alberta
the marc boutin architectural collaborative inc.

Little Red Library

Winnipeg, Manitoba
David Penner Architect



Jury

The jury for the 2016 Prairie Design Awards was comprised of Tania Bortolotto, James Cheng, Leslie Jen and Colin Ripley. Tania Bortolotto is the founder and president of Toronto-based architecture and design firm Bortolotto; James Cheng is the founding principal of James K.M. Cheng Architects in Vancouver; Leslie Jen is a graduate architect, journalist, communications consultant and the former associate editor of *Canadian Architect* magazine; and Colin Ripley is a professor in Ryerson University's Department of Architectural Science, a director of RVTR, and project director for the University of Saskatchewan School of Architecture initiative.

Celebrating the Winners

The winners of the 2016 Prairie Design Awards were recognized on June 3, 2016 during an evening reception and presentation at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina, Saskatchewan. With Harvard Developments Inc. as the presenting sponsor, the event was held in conjunction with the 2016 Saskatchewan Association of Architects and the Society for the Study of Architecture conferences, and was one of many special features taking place during Saskatchewan Architecture Week in the city of Regina (May 30–June 4, 2016).

Additional Information

For further details, please visit www.prairiedesignawards.com. To obtain high-resolution images and to arrange interviews, please contact Janelle Unrau, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Association of Architects at execdir@saskarchitects.com or 306.242.0733.

About the Prairie Design Awards

Every two years, the Alberta Association of Architects, the Saskatchewan Association of Architects and the Manitoba Association of Architects celebrate those setting new standards of creativity and skill in architecture, landscape architecture and interior design. This tri-provincial collaboration has been recognizing design excellence in the prairies since its inauguration in 2000. www.prairiedesignawards.com

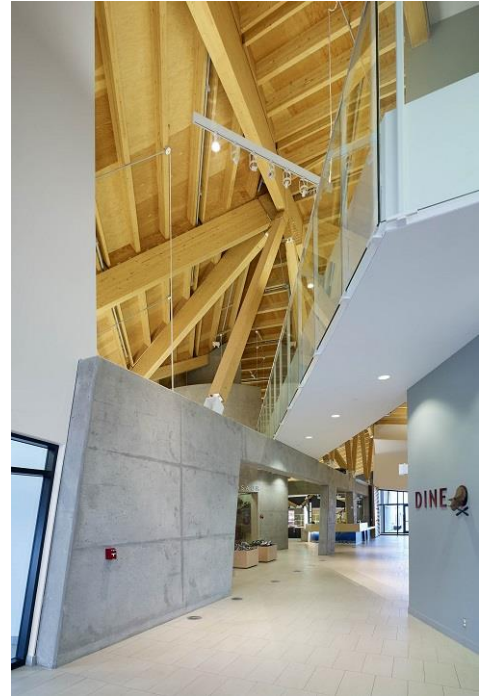
Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum

Wembley, Alberta

Stephen Teeple Architect | Architecture Tkalcic Bengert



Tom Arban



The Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum is an internationally significant centre of paleontology in fossil-rich northern Alberta. Visitors move through a sequence of spaces and experiences that form an architectural narrative of the discovery of the Pipestone Creek dinosaur bone bed. Two massive retaining walls push back the earth to expose the museum floor four metres below; visitors descend to view the assembled skeletons. The form of the building references the rolling prairie landscape and the jagged white horizon formed by the Rocky Mountains, as if the land itself was lifted up to reveal the secrets buried in the earth below.

Jury Comments

Powerful contextual references to the specificities of site are successfully implemented in the building. The expressive roofline responds well to the Western Canadian context, evoking iconic silhouettes seen in the work of great prairie architects such as Clifford Wiens. There is a sense of the close connection between building and landscape; the Museum seems to emerge from the ground itself. Its hulking, muscular form belies an intimately scaled interior that is conducive for viewing the exhibitions contained within: intersecting and overlapping bridging elements provide a unique narrative experience rife with cinematic potential. The degree of technological innovation in the structure and structural connections is appreciated.

Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre

Edmonton, Alberta

MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects | HIP Architects in Joint Venture



Tom Arban

This new facility adaptively reuses a stadium fitness centre dating from 1978, and rehabilitates the once residual condition of the stadium grounds into a revitalized urban park and event destination, connecting neighbourhoods through the site and reinforcing transit in the process. The project is designed for shared use between community members, the Edmonton Eskimos pro football team, and stadium operations – with numerous event overlays. Three primary building masses of Field House, Aquatics and Gymnasium respond to the dynamic triangulated geometries of the site and frame a central lobby space which is the facility’s social heart. These in turn define three exterior forecourt spaces.

Jury Comments

A skilled team of architects has crafted a sublime response to a complex program. Inherently bulky building components have been arranged such that the program is located at the perimeter, keeping circulation compact and efficient at the centre. A cinematic layering of spaces is achieved, with framed moments in the elevation capable of engaging not only various user groups but the outside world. The massing of what could be a monolithic imposing building is broken down into digestible elements that interrelate with each other, and a critically important human scale is maintained – which, along with generous daylighting and a warm palette of materials, provides a truly welcoming facility for the community.

John Fry Sports Park Pavilion

Edmonton, Alberta

the marc boutin architectural collaborative inc.



Yellow Camera

The John Fry Sports Park is dedicated to hosting baseball games and tournaments with up to 5,000 spectators. Given the task of designing a pavilion consisting of change rooms, washrooms and a concession, the design team challenged conventional typology by inverting the typical organization of support facilities: the location of the private support spaces in the core enables a public ring to surround the building. Opening up to the playing fields, south-facing retractable doors provide both shade and permeability. The pavilion becomes an illuminated beacon, providing a vibrant and recognizable focal point for gathering in the park.

Jury Comments

The response to the park program is sophisticated in both its conceptual clarity and in a rigour of execution that extends that conceptual clarity down to the level of detail. Its rhythmic structure and use of supergraphics result in an unambiguous and well resolved building that is simultaneously nuanced. The economical choice of cladding – similar to polycarbonate or frosted glass – creates a building that is opaque by day and translucent by night, offering a dynamic presence to the park year round. It should be noted that the City of Edmonton's initiative to improve the quality of its public buildings is yielding dramatic results; this project is one of several recognized in this awards program. Other municipalities, take heed.

Court of Queen's Bench Expansion and Renovations

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Henry Downing Architects



Kelly Pankratz Photography

The Saskatoon Court of Queen's Bench expansion includes a new secure and identifiable public entrance and space for Family Court. Open stairs connect offset floor levels while enhancing the spatial dynamic of the building; in contrast, judicial and secure areas are discreetly tucked away. The 4,067-square-metre four-storey addition includes a ground-floor registrar's office, second-floor courtrooms, and third- and fourth-floor offices. Massing, setback and materials complement the existing three-storey Neoclassical heritage building and the streetscape.

Jury Comments

Additions to existing heritage buildings present significant challenges to architects, particularly when located on prominent sites such as this. However, the expansion and renovation of the Court of Queen's Bench has been achieved successfully in a respectful manner here. Massing and materiality are proportionately complementary to the existing building, and wayfinding is dramatically improved through the organizing device of the grand stair in the open atrium. The scheme maintains a modicum of sobriety and gravitas appropriate for the function and image of a courthouse, yet ample glazing on the front elevation imbues the interior with light while providing a sense of connection to the community through views of the street and the striking riverside landscape. Although set back in deference to the immediate context, the upper levels are disappointing in the execution of the façade and choice of cladding, particularly in comparison to the well-resolved substantial base.

Borden Park Pavilion

Edmonton, Alberta

gh3 architecture



Raymond Chow

The building attempts to recall the history of Borden Park through a reintroduction of the playful qualities of its status as an amusement park in the early 20th century. The pavilion's form and expressive timber truss structure evoke the playful qualities of children's toy drums and the merry-go-round that once occupied the park. Material simplicity and structural uniqueness result in a pavilion of studied minimalism. Triangulated floor-to-ceiling glazing provides captivating panoramic views out from the pavilion while blurring the boundary between interior and exterior space, intensifying the sense of connection to seasonal dynamics and to the park itself.

Jury Comments

An accomplished piece of architecture, this park pavilion establishes contextual significance through the well researched history of the park. The building's dematerialized and evanescent quality is achieved through mirrored glass cladding that reflects the foliage of the surrounding trees, enhancing the verdant aspects of the park while imposing minimally on the landscape. However, the pure geometry of the circle is problematic: the entry sequence lacks resolution, and the relationship between the two circular shapes – internal and external – could have been developed further.

Mill Woods Park Pavilion

Edmonton, Alberta

Dub Architects Ltd.



Jim Dobie Photography

The Mill Woods Park Pavilion serves adjacent playing fields with a program that includes team and officials' change rooms, public washrooms, a concession area, and sports equipment storage. The pavilion is designed as a simple horizontal object within the prairie landscape and large expanses of glazing provide ample transparency and light, mitigated by a roof overhang and metal sunshade. The building's graphic quality is reinforced by a pale white interior that contrasts with a dark grey exterior, achieved through a highly durable material palette of brick cladding, concrete block interior walls, and exposed concrete floors. This inclusive, inviting and flexible facility meets the expanding needs of the park and greater community.

Jury Comments

The utter simplicity of the low-slung horizontal bar form reflects the flat prairie landscape in which it is sited. Hierarchical clarity and clean articulation of the structural elements of columns, beams and decking are achieved through simple, economical materials, translating into a pleasingly minimal graphic composition of the primary elevation. Floor-to-ceiling glazing admits an abundance of daylight to the interior, refreshingly uncharacteristic of this particular building type. A covered arcade is a nice touch, offering shade and protection from the elements.

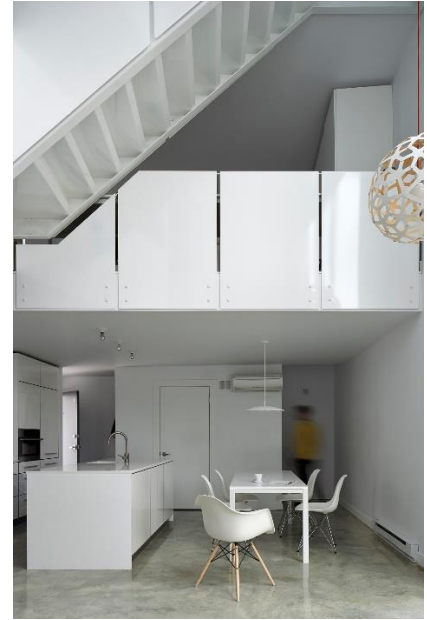
youCUBE

Winnipeg, Manitoba

5468796 Architecture Inc.



James Brittain Photography



youCUBE is an 18-unit housing development that explores the potential for density and affordability on a narrow 63' x 264' urban lot. Located on the north end of Waterfront Drive in Winnipeg, the project occupies a seemingly unremarkable site with limited visibility of the nearby river and its neglected industrial surroundings. Within the confines of a modest budget, the developer requested a design that could be built using standard construction methods by residential contractors. In response, the project challenges conventional multi-family housing design with a modular and more affordable configuration of individual dwellings that goes beyond the brief to include extensive outdoor space and inspired architectural interiors.

Jury Comments

The scheme is to be commended for its innovations in multi-unit housing, a building typology that has for too long cleaved to an unimaginative and predictable model. The jury appreciates the efforts made to give each unit a sense of uniqueness and privacy through an individual front door, the provision of private indoor and outdoor spaces, and the attempt to engender community through the central raised plaza/circulation spine that links all units. However, serious reservations were expressed regarding the weaknesses in the development's street edge and how it meets the ground, with concerns about potential negative effects on the neighbourhood resulting from the building's internal configuration. Security issues were identified in the open parking garage, as well as in the various nooks and crannies present among the buildings' complex geometries, which have the potential to become hotspots for illicit activity. Lastly, universal accessibility does not seem to have been adequately considered.

Memorial Drive Landscape of Memory: Pathway Remediation

Calgary, Alberta

the marc boutin architectural collaborative inc.



Yellow Camera

Memorial Drive was designed as a tribute to Canadian war veterans following World War I and was planted with cottonwood trees to act as a “living memorial.” This project connects two new nodes – the Peace Bridge and Poppy Plaza – through a public promenade that creates opportunities to engage with the river landscape. Integrated planting of natural flora along the pathway coincides with moments of intensification or densification in the precast system, resulting in public spaces of engagement. The precast system is easily expandable for future phases of development, with the aim of enhancing Calgary’s public realm.

Jury Comments

This urban-scale project, of which only the first phase is so far completed, forms a pedestrian linkage along the length of the Bow River in Calgary. It was perceived by the jury as a bold gesture and a catalytic force uniting the waterfront, a distillation of future development that will cohere the river’s edge, facilitating engagement with the city’s outdoor spaces. In the well detailed and executed completed segment, a delicate balance of hard and soft landscaping – along with widened portions of the pathway – create moments of pause and reflection, resulting in an intensification and improvement of the public realm. The jury hopes that this level of design consideration is applied to the remaining portions of the project.

The Edmonton Military Commemorative Monument

Edmonton, Alberta

the marc boutin architectural collaborative inc.



Yellow Camera

This project asks visitors to construct their own understanding of the roles of the modern military and community. Through stitching together fragments of stories, personal experiences and associations, the images contained in the monument's constituent parts can be assembled and reassembled into emergent narratives of peacekeeping, aid, community and homecoming. Activated by visitors' movements through the site, memories shift in and out of focus as literal and figurative connections are established, released and reflected.

Jury Comments

This military commemorative monument in Edmonton communicates a pleasing balance of figurative imagery and formal abstraction – which, in combination with a contemporary material palette of aluminum and concrete – places it squarely within the modern design idiom. A compositionally sophisticated layering of totemic forms encourages visitors to engage with and move through the site, reassembling the deconstructed images that are rendered in the perforated aluminum surfaces. The depicted scenes achieve additional poignancy through the impressionistic quality of the subtle pixellations.

Little Red Library

Winnipeg, Manitoba

David Penner Architect



Jacqueline Young



Inspired by traditional Manitoba ice-fishing shacks, the 8' x 8' x 8' Little Red Library is a fantastical dematerialized cube. Like the books it houses, the library provokes thought and arouses imagination. Its immersive sensory environment intensifies the visitor's experience, inspiring pause and reorientation. Constructed of a transparent welding curtain thermo-stretched over a tubular steel frame, the structure has lived both upon the frozen river and at sites throughout the city, morphing between a free library, warming hut and art gallery. It serves as an urban marker and is a local hub in and around which the public can interact and share their passions, regardless of the season.

Jury Comments

Framed by hoarfrost-covered trees, the iconic image of a vermilion box of knowledge perched on Winnipeg's frozen Assiniboine River is conceptually powerful and seductive, evoking the solitude of prairie life. Depicted in both winter and summer as a portable all-season pop-up, the delightfully poetic structure serves a valuable educational purpose while engendering a sense of community. The Little Red Library references the tradition of warming huts favoured by ice-fishing enthusiasts in northern climes, entirely appropriate for its Manitoba context. The jury acknowledges budgetary constraints, but regrets that the project's execution does not quite meet the standard of excellence.