

# Asia Society Texas Center

*Houston, TX*

*Located on a 2.3-acre parcel in Houston's Museum District, the 38,000-square foot Asia Society Texas Center serves as the home to Asia Society, the leading educational organization promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders and institutions of Asia and the west.*

The location is sited to take advantage of the distant Houston skyline. The Center uses business, policy, education, outreach, art, music, dance, theater and cultural programming to promote an understanding of the Asian culture within the greater Houston community.

Visitors are welcomed by a landscape that adheres to a thoughtfully executed minimalist ethic. The front yard includes a simple plane of ground cover and heritage oaks that frame views to the main entry and serves as a venue for special events. At the rear of the building, an allee of bald cypress trees form a vertical hedge that hold the view of the second level Green Garden.

A series of three individual gardens are located on the second level of the building. The Water Garden Terrace features a water skin that reflects shadows from two heritage oaks and the Houston skyline. Misters produce fog that rises over the edge of the Water Garden, obscuring the ground plane. The Stone Garden is a contemporary simple plane of gravel and black timber bamboo that serves as a backdrop to rotating pieces of sculpture and event displays. The Sculpture Garden is accessed from the central meeting room that is lined with a continuous unobstructed wall of glass. A generous terrace is held be a sloped carpet of ground cover with stone sculptures carefully placed in the composition.

Additionally, the site was designed with environmental longevity in mind with trees intercepting 40,000 gallons of storm water runoff on-site and sixty-six percent permeable surface on the building block. Native plants blend with Asian inspired flora to offer visitors a transition into the space and add to the authenticity associated with the mission of the center.

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## Client

Asia Society Texas Center

## Team

Taniguchi and Associates  
 Waterscape Consulting  
 Minor Design  
 GBA Architecture (Interior Design)  
 Kendall/Heaton Associates  
 Ingenium  
 CHPA Consulting Engineers  
 Walter P. Moore  
 Fisher Marantz Stone  
 Shen Milsom & Wilke

## Awards

AIA Houston Design Award for Architecture Less Than 50,000 SF, 2014

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*The architecture and landscape work together to blur the line between indoors and outdoors.*

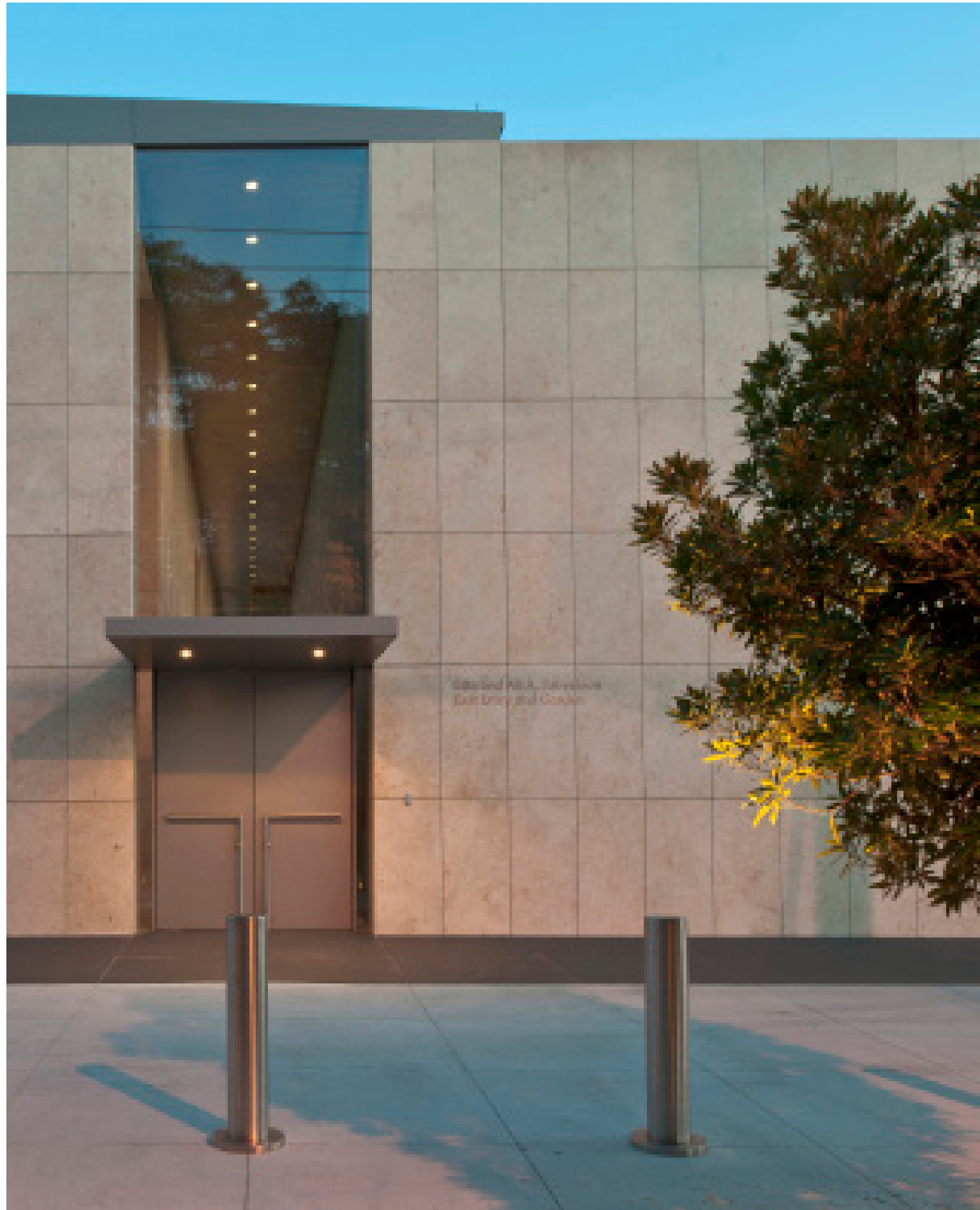






The Center is a backdrop for cultural events and community gatherings.





## Sustainability

*Native plants blend with Asian inspired flora to offer visitors a transition into the space and add to the authenticity associated with the mission of the center.*



### LAND

The project was developed in the museum district. A mixture of residential single family homes and apartment complex mix with cultural centers. The site and building position continues the pattern.

A pre-design soil assessment was conducted allowing for existing soils to be amended.



### PLANTING

80 trees planted.

2 trees saved on site.

The project avoids annual planting.

Native plants blend with Asian flora offering visitors a transition and authenticity associated with the mission of the center.



### WATER

66% permeable surfaces on the building block.

The site design mitigates runoff.

The trees can intercept 40,000 gallons of storm water runoff on site, which is the equivalent to the water usage for 400 American residents for one day. \*



### CARBON, ENERGY & AIR

A geothermal heating and cooling system was installed under the parking lot with 117 wells installed 250 feet underground. This is the first time this system was built in the Houston, saving \$7,000 -10,000 a month in electricity charges.

The trees sequester 9,600 pounds of carbon annually. \*\*

Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke was minimized through designated smoke-free zones and prohibited smoking on site.



### SOCIAL

The project provide optimum site accessibility, safety, and wayfinding.

The building serves the highly diverse Houston community by offering a continuous series of programs and events, focused on arts and culture, business and policy, education and outreach and exhibitions.

Users are still satisfied. Facebook has a rating of 4.6 out of 5.0 with over 10,000 check-ins.

\*The tree average for water interception is 500 gallons. American's use an average of 100 gallons of water per day (EPA's water trivia facts).

\*\*120 pounds of CO2 per tree annually (This number is based on an average from the National Tree Benefits Calculator) One car produces an average of 8,320 pounds of CO2 per year (The Code of Federal Regulations - 40 CFR 600.113).