Annenberg Center for Information Science + Technology at CalTech

Pasadena, CA

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The Annenberg Center for Information Science and Technology at the California Institute of Technology provides a modern center for collaborative research and instruction in the disciplines of science and engineering. The facility represents Caltech's sustainability initiatives and is LEED Gold certified. The landscape surrounding the building reflects this environmental ethic and exhibits a substantial departure from the traditional Pasadena ornamental palette.

Palo verde trees structure the building's entry courts, which are organized into a series of planks to echo the adjacent glass façade. The understory plantings heavily focus on water conservation and are comprised of a number of succulents and ornamental grasses. The project also includes a significant social component through its provision of granite gravel flooring in seating areas which are used for impromptu outdoor gatherings. The new environmental aesthetic, with its concomitant water conservation benefits, is being enthusiastically embraced by the campus community and has become a model for change.

Client

The Annenberg Center for Information Science and Technology at the California Institute of Technology

Team

Frederick Fisher and Partners
HLB Lighting Design
KPFF Consulting Engineers

COST

Confidential

LEED

Gold

Project Type

Design Build

The landscape design takes cues from the graphic nature of the building facades.

Sustainability

Landscape is an essential part of Caltech's sustainability commitment. The building and site work together to achieve LEED Gold certification.

WATER

The soils on- site did not allow for infiltration. Water is collected in a basin that feeds into a built well, allowing for ground water recharge.

Outdoor water usage is reduced by selecting low water trees, planting and grasses.

SOCIAL

The project manifests the concept of creative collisions, adding 50 movable chairs, 8 eight tables, 5 five benches and several chalk boards outside creating places for people to gather and learn. With various court sizes and planting characteristics, spaces offer mental restoration for the students on campus.

PLANTING

53 trees were planted, including palo verde, california sycamore and hybrid mesquite.

Two sycamore trees were transplanted.

Annual planting was avoided.

The project uses xeric plants which are drought resistant perennials, excellent for the context of the campus. This was a huge departure from the traditional ornamental planting on campus.

*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).