

The Nature of Buildings

In recent decades, the emergence of environmental education buildings and interpretation centers has afforded architects occasion to explore the expressive potential and practical realities of materials and details – often cutting-edge technologies – in stunning landscape settings. In so doing, architects have built some of their most exquisite and compelling work.

Purpose:

This is a jointly-taught double studio that will emphasize design integration in the context of an explicit intention to craft evocative, aesthetically meaningful buildings. Students will be asked to make buildings of strong character with an identity that derives primarily from the materials and systems of construction they employ. The goal will be to make space in the landscape, between the buildings, and within the buildings, using expressive systems of structure and high-performance enclosures. This will be an opportunity to make comprehensive designs in preparation for the terminal studio level. Completion of ARCH 4/562 or other evidence of advanced preparation in systems of structure will be a prerequisite for the course. Concurrent enrollment in ARCH 5/471 is anticipated.

Project:

The project will draw on the rich typology of outdoor schools and environmental education centers, offering observation stations, classroom/laboratories, social buildings and overnight accommodation. A site will be selected in the Finley National Wildlife Refuge, south of Corvallis, Oregon. The buildings must engage the land form and each other to make a series of learning centers, inside and out. Consistent with the overall mission of the school, the buildings must demonstrate an ethos of appropriate technology and environmental responsibility.

Process:

Working through the elements of the program, from small to large, a construction vocabulary will be developed for the school as a whole. The full range of media for design development will be required: sketches and topographic models to explore the site, digital and physical models to test the relationship between space and structure, freehand and measured drawings for generative details in the system of enclosure.



North Cascades Environmental Learning Center
HKP Architects | 2006



Tillamook Forest Interpretive Center | Miller Hull | 2006



Pocono Environmental Education & Visitor Center
Bohlin Cywinski Jackson | 2005