

# SWA GROUP



Bill Callaway



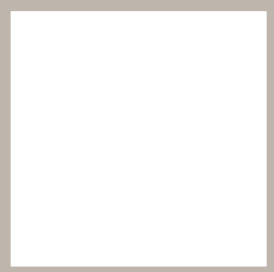
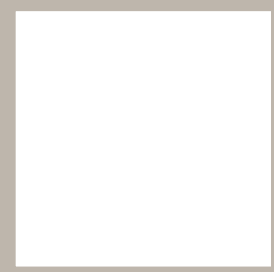
Tim Peterson



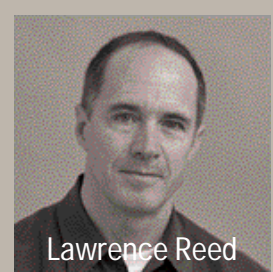
Roy Imamura



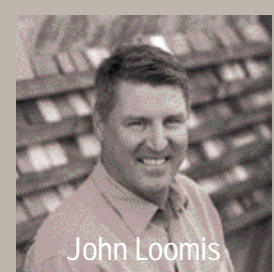
Kevin Shanley



Bihan, Rene



Lawrence Reed



John Loomis



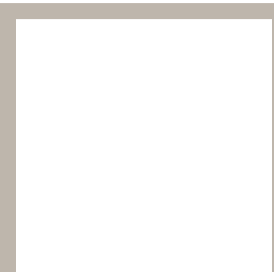
Cinda Gililand



Jim Lee



Hui-Li Lee



## SWA Group

SWA Group (SWA) is an international design firm focused on landscape architecture, planning, and urban design and founded in 1957. The firm is headquartered in Sausalito, California with additional offices in Laguna Beach, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, California, as well as in Houston and Dallas, Texas, and Shanghai, China. SWA is one of the largest landscape architectural firms in the world and has worked in over 50 countries. Over the course of its history, SWA's projects have received over 500 awards and the firm received the American Society of Landscape Architect's Firm Award in 2005. SWA is 100% employee owned.

SWA has worked on a large array of types and scales of projects from the design of new city districts and the revitalization of urban waterfronts, to the planning and design of new communities, conservation areas, corporate, civic, commercial and hospitality facilities, and university campuses. Its work in large-scale land planning and urban design has a strong land- and landscape-based focus which incorporates the contexts of terrain, natural systems and urban land uses. While SWA has particular expertise in working with large, complicated projects, its designers have also done work at a much smaller scale in the creation of sustainable green roofs, small urban parks and plazas, and intimate gardens.

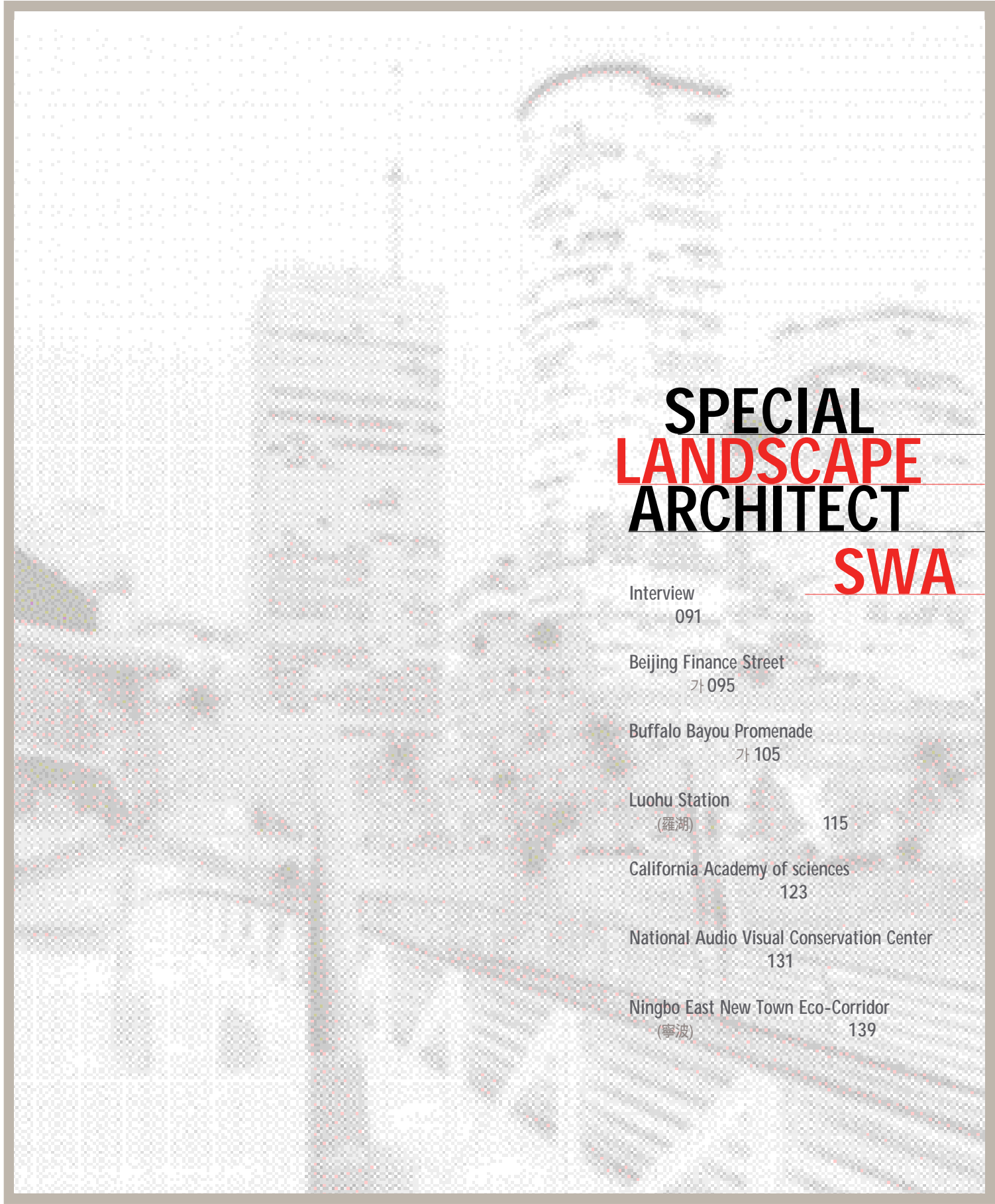
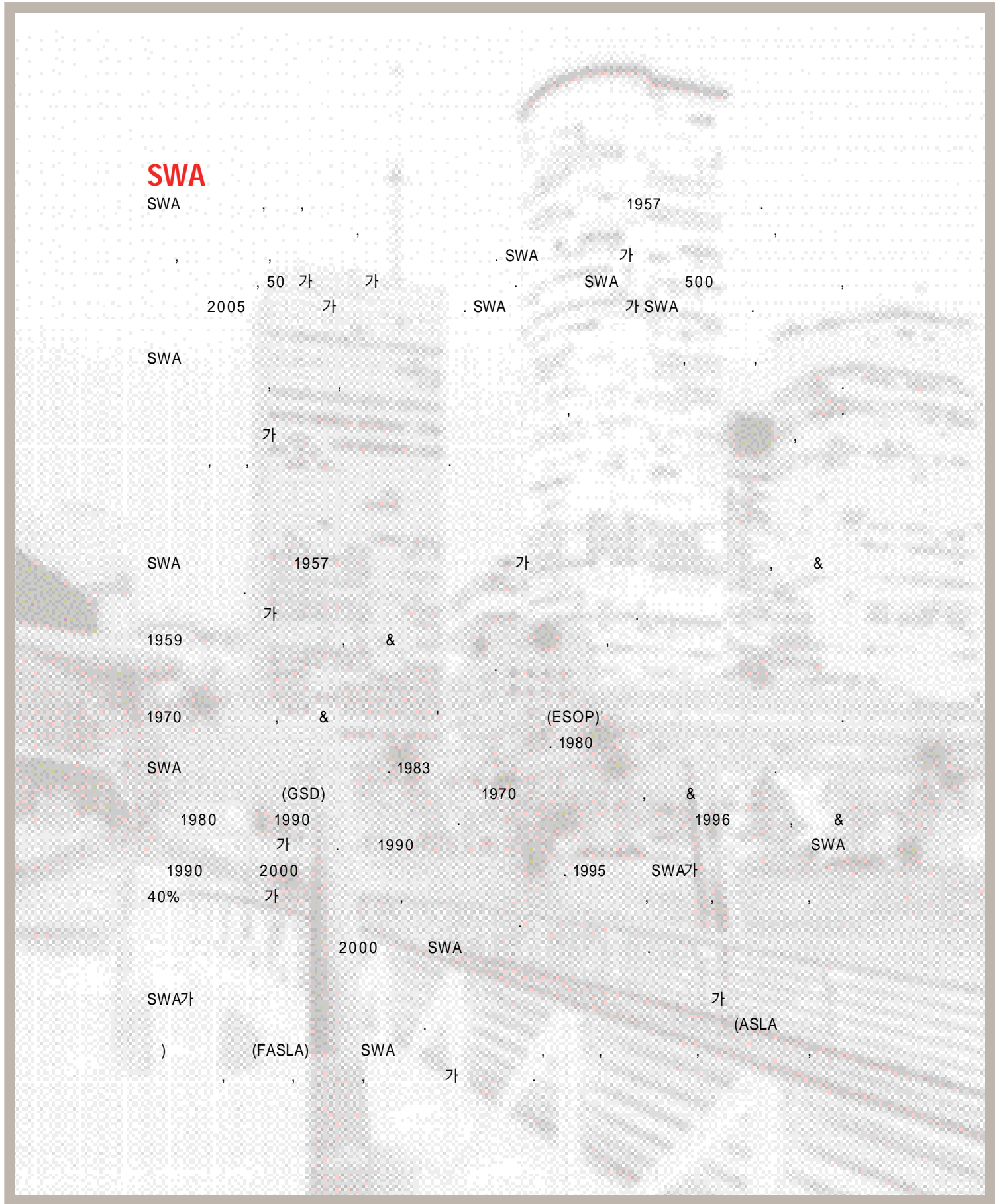
## History

The parent firm of SWA Group was Sasaki, Walker and Associates, established in 1957 in Watertown, Massachusetts by Hideo Sasaki and Peter Walker. While serving as chair of Harvard's department of landscape architecture, Sasaki became a colleague of other Harvard design professionals and began collaborations that ultimately became his legacy. In 1959, Walker, a former student of Sasaki, opened a regional office of Sasaki, Walker and Associates in San Francisco, Walker and his colleagues built a collaborative practice that thrived in the high-energy atmosphere of the growing economy.

In the early 1970s, the firm became an employee-owned company by means of establishing an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). This ownership arrangement was one of the first of its kind on the West Coast of the United States. During the 1980s, SWA's work continued to grow nationally with the establishment of multiple offices throughout the United States. In 1983 Peter Walker left the firm to form his own office.

Kalvin Platt, a graduate from Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD), had been involved in company leadership since the early 1970s and continued to provide leadership through the 1980s and early 1990s. William Callaway, also a graduate of Harvard's GSD, took over leadership of the firm in 1996 during the 1990s and 2000s SWA expanded significantly into global markets, particularly as the U.S. recession of the early 1990s curtailed domestic work. By 1995, almost 40% of SWA's work was being done outside of the United States, beginning in Hong Kong and Japan, projects expanded throughout Asia, Asia-Minor, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. Kevin Shanley, trained at Santa Clara University and Harvard GSD, joined SWA senior leadership in the early 2000s.

While SWA is a group practice, many individually recognized landscape architects in the United States have been associated with, or continue to be associated with, the various offices of the firm. In addition to current senior leaders and designers William Callaway (winner of the ASLA Medal) and Kevin Shanley (FASLA), current Managing Principals of the firm include John Wong, Joe Runco, David Thompson, Scott Slaney, David Berkson, Sean O'Malley, Rene Bihan and Gerdo Aquino.







**4. Many designs have a gap between the original plan by construction. How does SWA Group settle the problem?**

We are probably unique in that we have construction observation professionals in each of our offices who are principals (partners) of our firm. That is how strongly we feel about the implementation of our designs. We train and promote top construction oversight people in the same way that we train and promote top designers. We send these people all over the world to oversee the implementation of our designs. They seek out the best construction companies and nurseries in each country. We strive to include these professionals early on in the design process in order to better assure quality and the practicality of our designs. Our designs are not valuable to our clients or ourselves unless they get constructed well.

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**5. Landscape architecture should be well managed after construction is finished. Please introduce SWA Group's program for managing.**

While we don't directly carry out maintenance ourselves, we frequently prepare long-term maintenance plans and guidelines to retain the quality of design. These guidelines may contain specific maintenance techniques and directions as well as materials to be used, including recommended maintenance schedules. When we follow up and visit project sites, we are known to push our clients if they have not been dutiful in properly maintaining their project.

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**6. Please let us know your future lecture plans if you have any, and what you emphasize when you lecture. What attitude should a landscape designer be equipped with?**

As an SWA principal with special involvement in Information Technology, I emphasize a balance between the traditional design process and new technology. It is very important to embrace technology as a tool, not, as complete design. This means landscape architects should be able to pick and choose proper techniques and design work flow without adhering strictly to one way, either technical or non-technical. It is very important to at least understand what kind of technology is available for better design expression. At the same time, it is paramount that landscape architects think with their minds, not with computers.

Most fundamentally, landscape architects should consider themselves as protectors of well-balanced development, meeting the reasonable needs of both humans while preserving nature.

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**7. The New Korean Government is promoting Public Design policy. What is your opinion on landscape cases in the USA and directions for landscape's future?**

It's a global world. Every major project needs to be based on local knowledge informed by international ideas. Many areas have plenty of people with local knowledge but don't have the experience for a specific project type. Whether the outside knowledge needs to come from the next city over or from across the world, it is now relatively easy to take advantage of it. Additionally, as the world environment is more and more developed with never-ending human population growth, thinking and implementing "green", sustainable technologies and solutions is more critical than ever to preserve the remaining integrity of nature.

Urban design opportunities in Korea are better than most parts of the western world. People flock to public spaces, streets are vibrant with activity. In many western cities (especially US) there is not a culture or public space use. In Korea, governments can plan more comprehensively and make projects happen by financing them and providing political will.

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# California Academy of Sciences

**Work Team:** John Loomis, Lawrence Reed, Zachary Davis, Rick Story

**Architect:** Renzo Piano Building Workshop

**Collaboration:** Arup/Engineering and Sustainability Consulting, Paul Kephart/Horticultural Consulting

**Location:** Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California, USA

**Area:** 9.5 acres

**Opening:** 2008

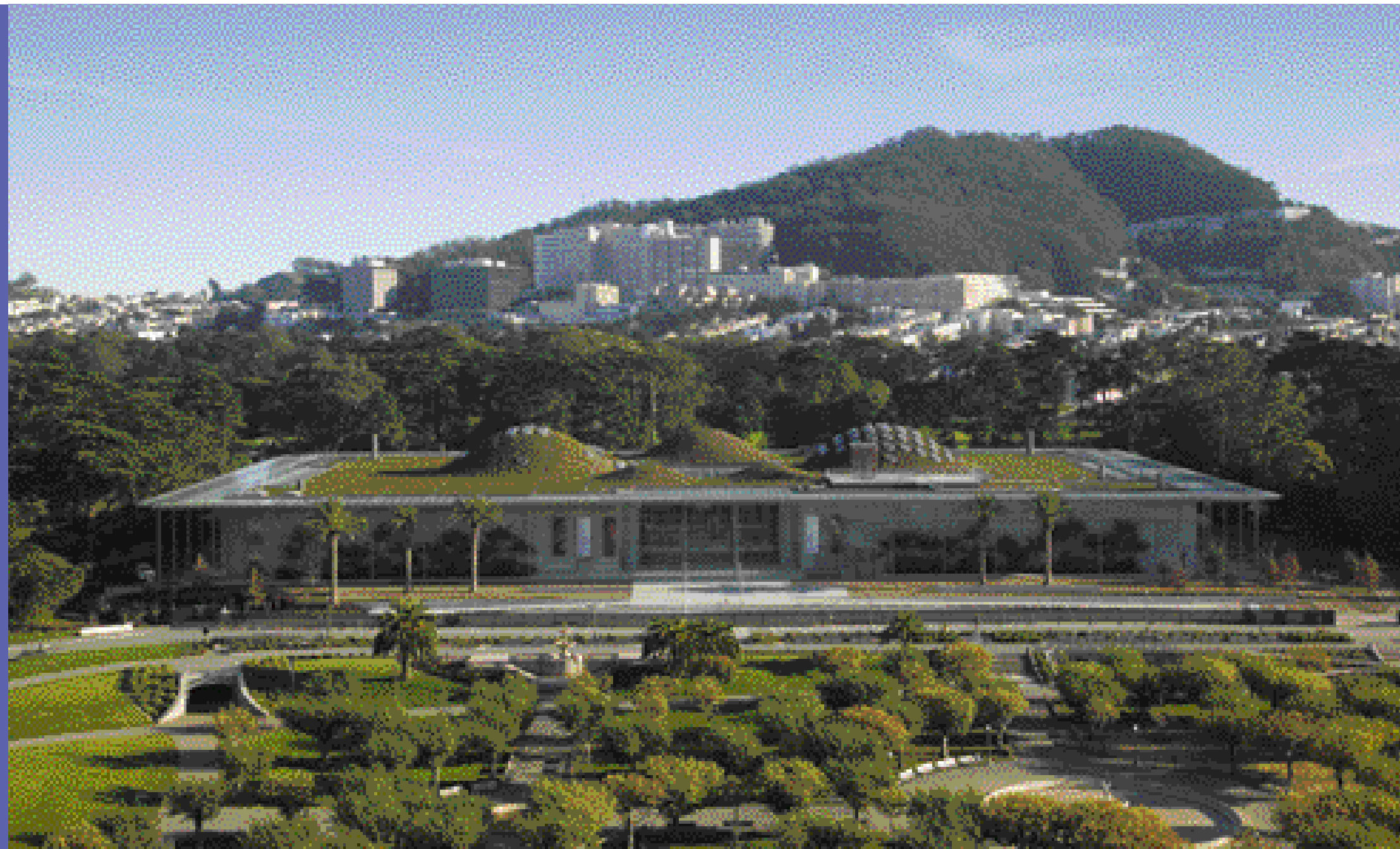
**Client:** California Academy of Sciences

**Contractor:** Webcor Builders

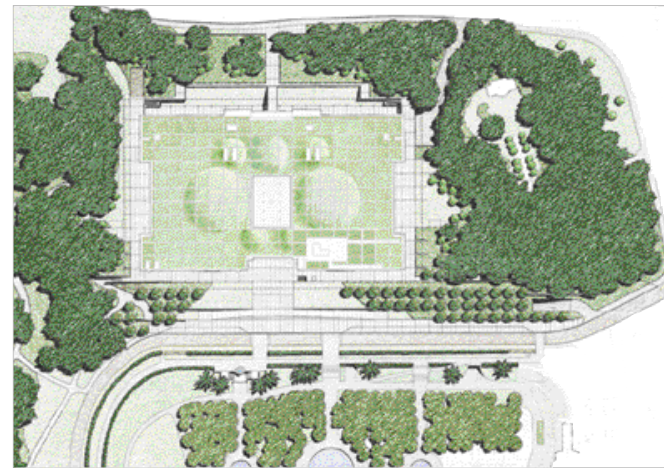
**Photographer:** Tom Fox

This is the new California Academy of Sciences with the SWA designed green roof.

The California Academy of Sciences building will house the four previous buildings including the Steinhart Aquarium and Morrison Planetarium in one consolidated building with a smaller overall footprint. RPBW's winning design in essence lifts the natural landscape three stories up as the dramatic and showcased living roof. It will undulate to the form of seven elegant mounds that conform to the uses below and slope as steep as 60 degrees. The project recently received the Holcim Award (Silver, 2005), and was published in the October issue of architectural record. It was recognized for playing a prototypical role in raising awareness about the benefits of environmental design and also for its social components. The public has been carefully listened to and considered during the design process, resulting in features such as the living roof and observation deck, the public plaza, and the planetarium. The project cites reductions in energy consumption and water usage and stands as an example of technical and natural systems coming together in a harmonious way. The roof will be one of the world's leading green roof research facilities and will emphasize habitat quality and connectivity. The project is approaching 100% CD completion and is scheduled to open in 2008.

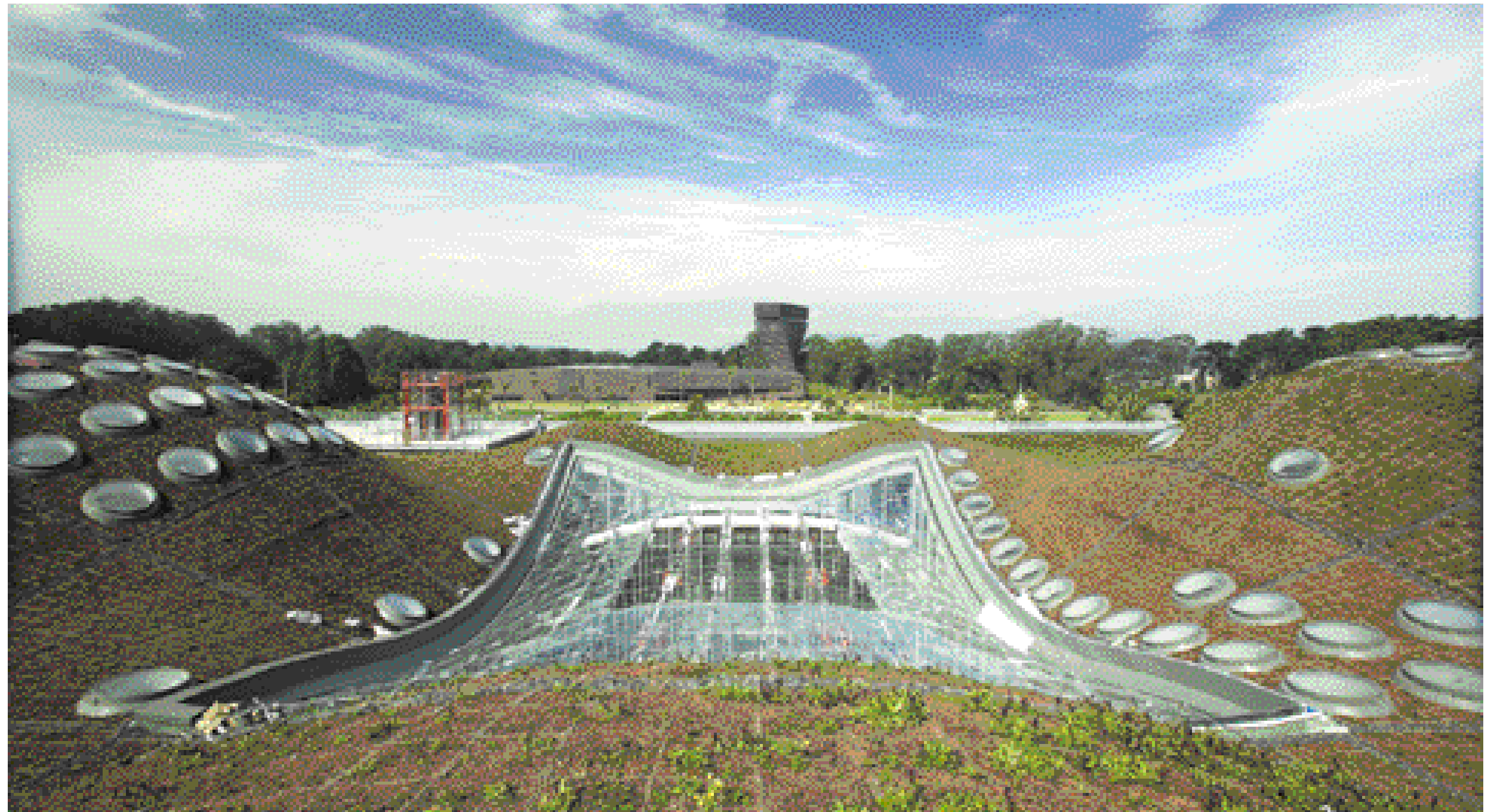


The SWA Master Plan for the green roof and surrounding gardens of the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. SWA provided full landscape architectural services for the new Academy of Sciences, one of San Francisco's first sustainable building projects.



Master plan

A perspective sketch of the proposed SWA Design for the new green roof of the California Academy of Sciences.



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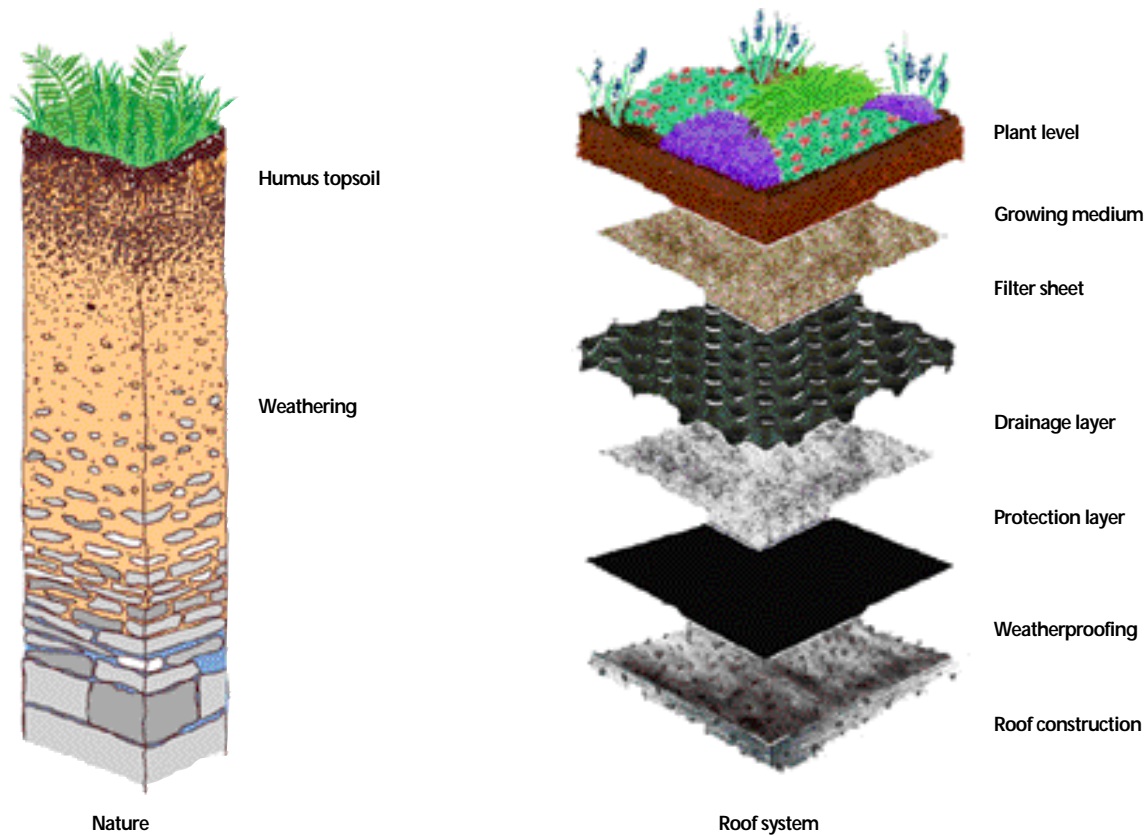
(RPBW)

Here is the glass roof of the new atrium allowing much natural lighting in the interior of the building. The new DeYoung Museum appears in the distance.



Several layers of the soil structure are visible in this picture. Testing continued throughout construction to determine the best planting solutions. Here a section of turf is being used to test the stability of the soil system.

This soil system, designed by the SWA/Rana Creek team, simulates the drainage system of natural soil layers in nature. (Illustration by Paul Kephart)



The biodegradable trays, made from coconut hull, were planted at Rana Creek nursery, and then moved to the site when the plants become established.



Peeled away view of the roof showing several layers of the roof system.



With slopes as steep as 60 degrees, the work on the roof's surface proved to be a constant challenge to those who constructed and planted it.

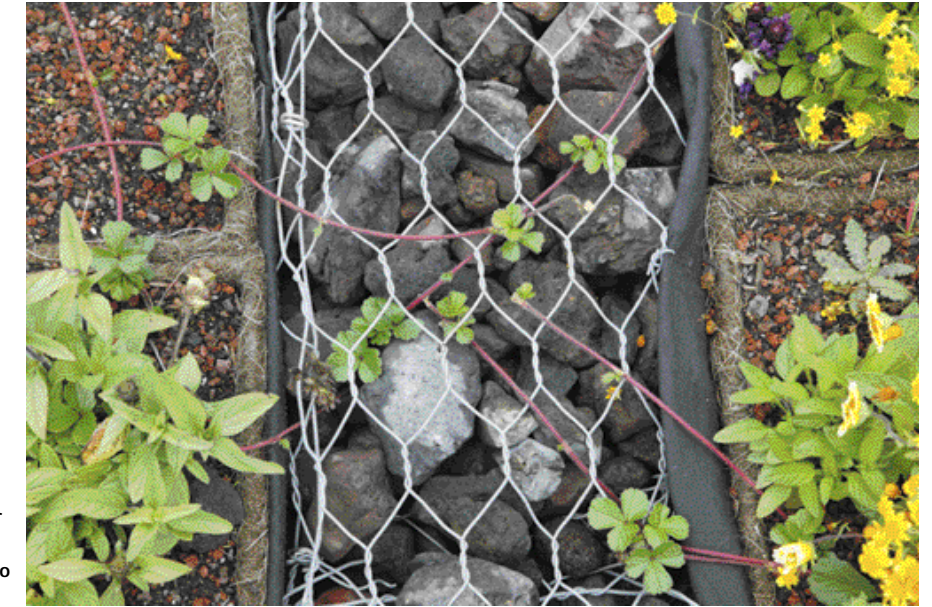




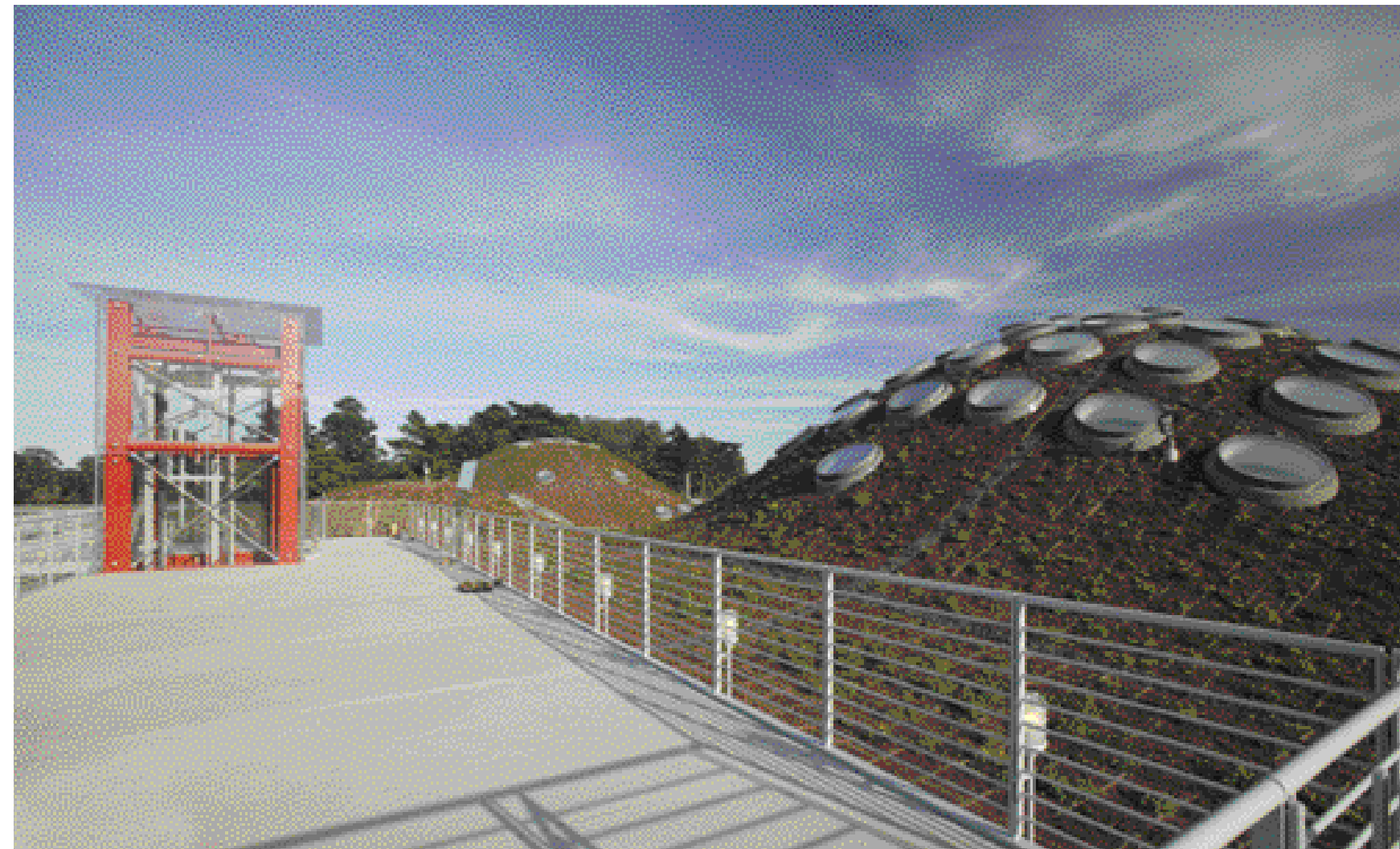
A view from the roof to the turret of the new DeYoung Museum located across the concourse from the California Academy of Sciences.



The roof will consist of California selected native plant material suited because adapted to San Francisco's highly seasonal natural irrigation patterns. All draining storm water runoff is directed back into the water table.



As the roof designers projected, the plants quickly begin to establish a root and root runner that adds to the stability of the planting. Here the off-shoots from the plant have started to attach themselves to the gabion system.



The public will have an opportunity to view the living green roof from the observation deck shown here.

# Buffalo Bayou Promenade

**Work Team:** Kevin Shanley, Nancy Fleming, Tim Peterson, Scott McCreedy, Lance Lowrey, Rhett Rentrop, Ashley Sutch, Mary Edwards, John Brandt

**Collaboration:** John Runnels/Public art sculpture, L'Observatoire International, Stephen Korn/Architectural Lighting

**Location:** Houston, Texas, USA

**Area:** 23 acres(1.2 miles in length)

**Completion:** 2006

**Client:** The Buffalo Bayou Partnership of Houston, City of Houston, Texas Department of Transportation, Harris County Flood Control District

**Photographer:** Tom Fox, Bill Tatham

The bayou meanders around the city center and offers dramatic views of the Houston skyline.

The Buffalo Bayou Promenade is one of the largest investments in public parkland ever carried out by the City of Houston and converts a neglected, trash-soaked eyesore into 3,000 linear feet of urban park. It adds 23 acres of parkland to Houston's inner city. It is the first major project to realize the civic and recreational potential of the bayou that literally gave birth to the city in 1836. The project was the result of an historic public/private partnership to revitalize downtown's urban waterfront. Improvements include naturalization of gently sloping banks, extensive native landscaping, hike and bike trails, public art, dramatic artistic lighting, 12 new street-to-bayou entryways, new pedestrian bridge which connects north and south sides of the bayou (for the first time downtown), and way finding and interpretive signage.

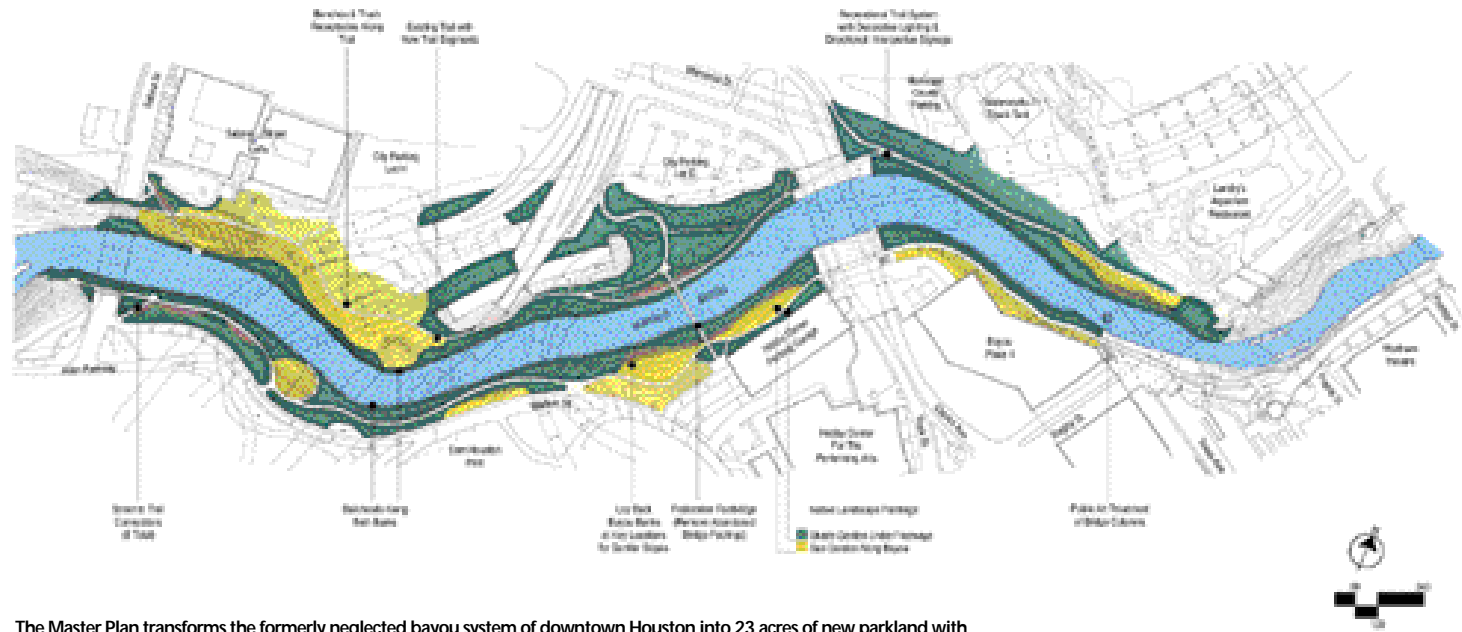
The project is quite exceptional in terms of all of the factors listed above:

1. Resourceful use of land: The project takes a previously neglected, unused eyesore and transforms it into a significant downtown Houston amenity. It integrates the natural and historic Buffalo Bayou into the fabric of the City.

2. Preservation or enhancement of the built or natural environment: The project is one of the largest investments in public parkland ever carried out by the City of Houston. It adds and preserves 23 acres of park space to Houston's inner city. Re-engineered sloping of the banks and a series of stairs and ramps re-connect Houstonians to their native bayou.

3. Innovative design and planning: The natural channel and the soil along the banks of the bayou were stabilized through the use of gabions and the anchoring of 14,000 tons of rock and recycled concrete. Weeds and other invasive plants were replaced by nearly 300,000 plants (including native perennials, groundcover and 640 trees). The lighting system provides glowing orbs that follow the monthly phases of the moon: lights are blue when the new moon occurs and gradually shift to white as the full moon emerges. All lighting, plantings and walkways were designed to withstand the natural, periodic flooding of the bayou. The project provides continuous pedestrian and bike trails, public art, and special maintenance and safety provisions. The waterway now teems with ducks, herons, turtles and fish. The Corps of Engineers' existing HEC model was used to ensure that the new design would help expedite floodwater conveyance.





The Master Plan transforms the formerly neglected bayou system of downtown Houston into 23 acres of new parkland with extensive bike trails and pedestrian connections to the downtown area.



Located in the heart of Houston, the project extends from the north down along the urban core and continues on, following the bayou to the west.



Wayfinding and interpretive signs are strategically placed throughout the 23 acre urban waterfront park.

4. Filling or a special societal or market need: The natural channel and the soil along the banks of the bayou were stabilized through the use of gabions and the anchoring of 14,000 tons of rock and recycled concrete. Weeds and other invasive plants were replaced by nearly 300,000 plants (including native perennials, groundcover and 640 trees). The lighting system provides glowing orbs that follow the monthly phases of the moon: lights are blue when the new moon occurs and gradually shift to white as the full moon emerges. All lighting, plantings and walkways were designed to withstand the natural, periodic flooding of the bayou. The project provides continuous pedestrian and bike trails, public art, and special maintenance and safety provisions. The waterway now teems with ducks, herons, turtles and fish. The Corps of Engineers' existing HEC model was used to ensure that the new design would help expedite floodwater conveyance.

The Sabine-to-Bagby Promenade links the cultural and entertainment venues such as the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts and Bayou Place to the east and by the Sabine Lofts, a residential loft property, on the west.

Completion of the Sabine-to-Bagby Promenade is an integral part of the Buffalo Bayou and Beyond Master Plan, a 20 year vision that is transforming Buffalo Bayou into an active and vibrant waterfront.

The project was the result of an historic collaboration between numerous public and private partners-a genuine community effort, spearheaded by the Buffalo Bayou Partnership. The City of Houston, Harris County Flood Control District and Texas Department of Transportation contributed \$12 million to this project and Buffalo Bayou Partnership committed raised \$3 million in private funds (raised from several foundations, corporations, and individuals in Houston).

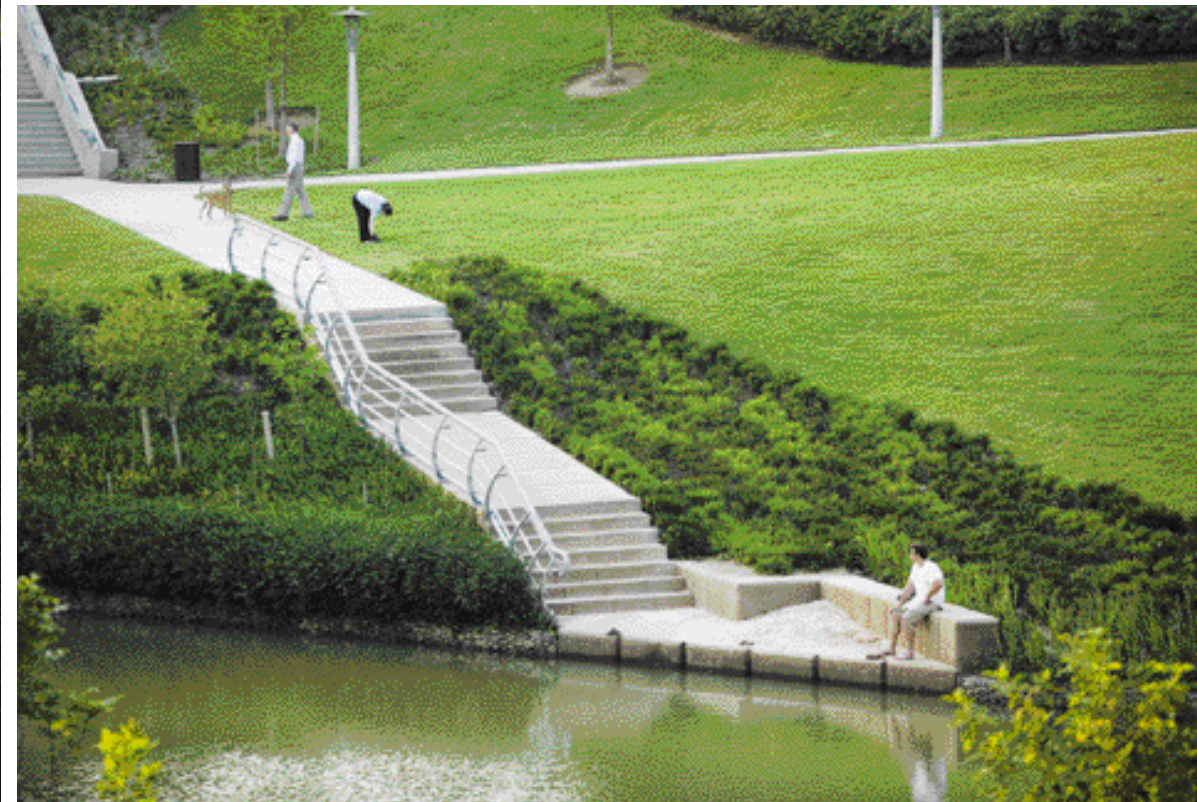
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Buffalo Bayou Promenade provides opportunities for urban dwellers to experience the benefits of Nature while still in the heart of the city.



The bayou is restored with the planting of over 600 trees, making it an environment conducive to many new uses.



Re-engineered slopes and a series of stairs and ramps have reconnected Houstonians to the waterways.



The bayou is now cleaner, engendering the growth of water recreation and small business opportunities such as kayaking, canoeing, boat rentals and boat tours.



Overhead freeway support frames a view to the Sabine Street Bridge.



The project provides continuous pedestrian and bike trails.



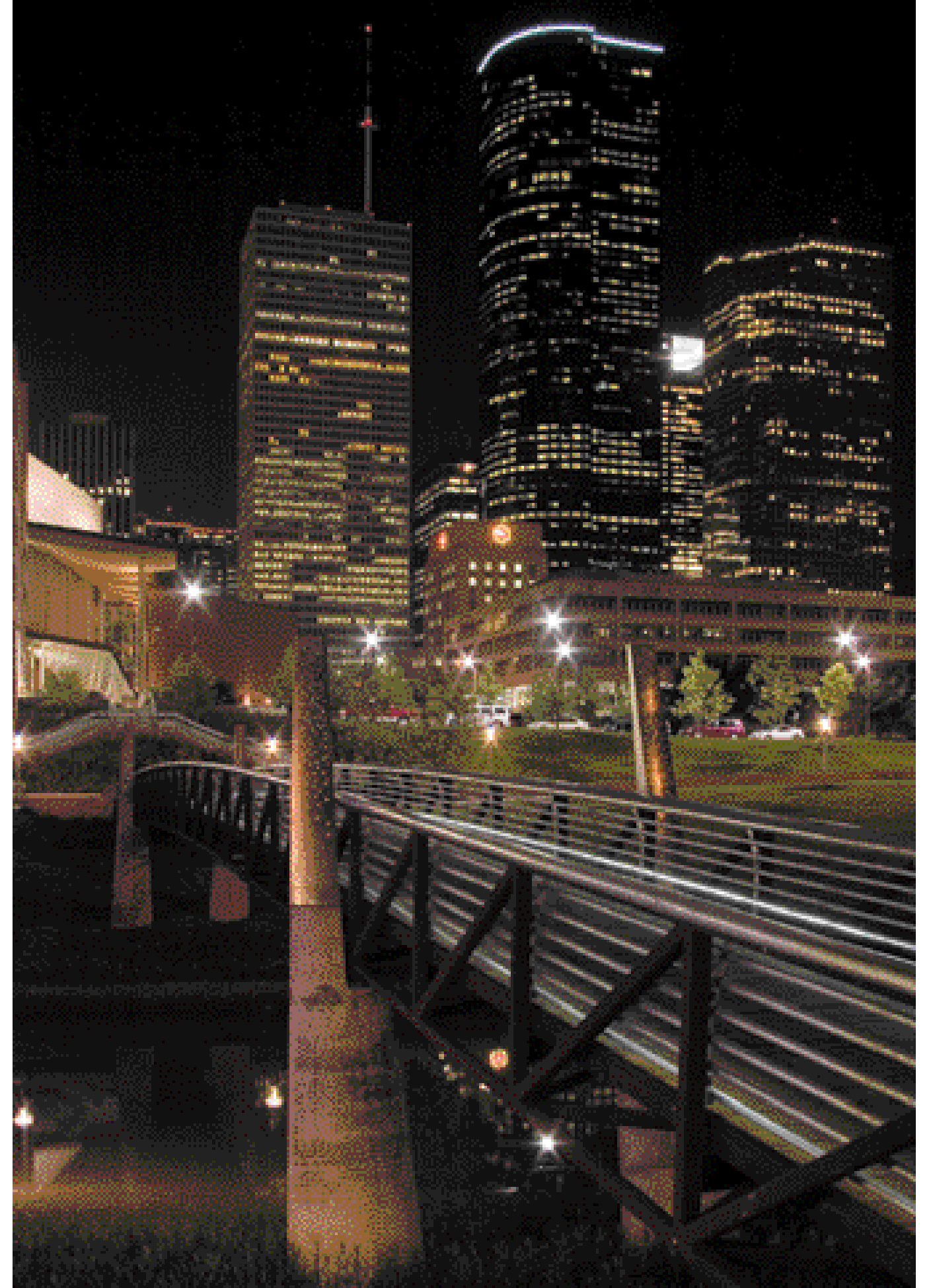
The trails are multi-use and accessible to all.



A newly designed pedestrian bridge connects the north and south sides of the bayou for the first time in the city center.



The project transforms a previously neglected part of the city, reconnecting Houstonians to their native bayou.



There is designed lighting in the stanchions and specialized fiber optic lighting installed all along the pedestrian bridge, Bill Tatham