LIBRARY BY
design
SPRING 2008

Reed Business Information.

Librarians, Architects, and the Space in Between

Elk River PL Discovers Gold, LEED Gold, with a Savvy Eco-Design

The Hottest Furniture, Lighting, Shelving, Carpeting, and More!

***LJ*'s second Design Institute tackles the ins and outs of sustainable buildings**

By Raya Kuzyk

Going Green

On December 11, approximately 115 librarians, architects, and planners convened at the Chicago Public Library's (CPL) Harold Washington Center for *LJ*'s second Design Institute (DI). Through a daylong series of green-themed presentations, panels, and breakout sessions, they conferred on the latest developments, options, strategies, concerns, and solutions relating to sustainable design. Beyond the practical, participants came away not only "inspired to make their library buildings green," noted *LJ*'s Francine Fialkoff, who organized the program, but to use their libraries "to model best practices, to be incubators for energy efficiency, and to educate their communities."

LIBRARYJOURNAL DESIGN INSTITUTE

Helping to frame the day's discussions and provide a larger context for libraries' role in implementing sustainable thinking and practice communitywide were Mary A. Dempsey, commissioner, CPL; Erin Lavin Cabonargi, then director of planning and design, now executive director, Public Building Commission, Chicago; and luncheon speaker Sadhu Johnston, Chicago's chief environmental officer.

Following two panels, "The Case for Sustainable Design" and "Green Without 'or with' LEED," attendees took part in one of six breakout sessions revolving around design "challenges" submitted in advance by librarians in the planning, prebond, renovating, or early building stages. Challenges ranged from one library's relocation to a Food Lion grocery store to another's bid to become the first green library in its state. Breakout leaders—architects from David Milling Architects; PSA-Dewberry; Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle; Tappé Associates; Burnidge Cassell Associates; and Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf Architects—were charged with incorporating green design into the discussion. Each firm's principals supplied floor plans, photographs, and other materials to illustrate their ideas and suggestions. (See p. 10–15 for full coverage.)

These architect sponsors, together with our host sponsor, CPL, and three vendor sponsors—3M Library Systems, Agati, and Universal Air Lift—helped make the event possible. *LJ* is grateful for their involvement and commitment to advancing the discussion of green library design.

"If you're planning a library in the next 25 years, you have to think green," said Bill Brown, associate partner, Browning

→ CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

teenspacepicks

LIBRARIANS' FAVORITE TEEN-FRIENDLY FURNISHINGS

CURVY & COMFORTABLE: SETTLE IN TO THE BLOB CHAIR
P. 19

SASSY, SUMPTUOUS SOCIAL SEATING
P. 20

A HOT SPOT FOR FIRST LIFE GAMERS
P. 18

SUPPLEMENT TO LIBRARYJOURNAL.

When Dirt Is a Good Thing

Subliette County Library (SCL) in Pinedale, WY, holds the distinction of being the first modern U.S. public building to use rammed earth as a construction material, according to Matt Thackay of Carney Architects, Jackson, WY. The 10,500 square foot main library is currently being expanded by 8000 square feet—with a mixture of sand, gravel, and clay poured into molds, which then will harden into the new wing's interior and exterior walls. Principal architect John Carney recommended the unique mix of materials to SCL director Daphne Platts when she told him that she wanted to make the building as green as possible.

The rammed earth method chosen by Carney is called SIREWALL® (stabilized insulated rammed earth), formulated by Meror Krayenhoff of Terra Firma Builders, Salt Spring Island, BC (www.sirewall.com). Rebar and foam insulation sits inside each custom mold, surrounded by 14–20 inches of earth. This nestles in rubble trenches with a four-inch bed of drain rock. The construction produces no waste.

This combination is especially suitable in harsh climates, explains Thackay. "Its large thermal mass helps mitigate those extremes," he notes. The rammed earth walls hold the heat generated during the day and release the stored warmth at night. It also provides more protection against seismic activity, an issue for Jackson, which is on a fault line, and Pinedale has "some seismic activity." Fixter Construction in Jackson is the general contractor.

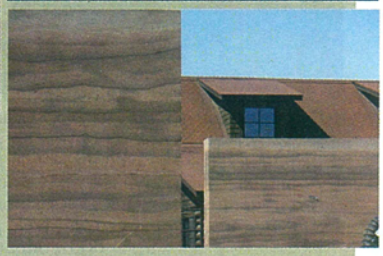
LOCAL COLOR

Platts is quite pleased with the addition's aesthetic potential. The locally procured dirt can be dyed any color. SCL used iron oxide to produce a muted palette that reminds Platts of a sunset; plus, there aren't any fumes, she says. Molds can be formed into a variety of shapes, and the rammed earth counters in an area that will be rented out for private parties are particularly attractive, says Platts. Overall, the finished product will be contemporary but will marry quite well with the original log structure, says Thackay.

Platts says the process is expensive enough that SCL can't afford to make every surface SIRE-ed, so some portions are being traditionally built. Maintaining the log exterior on the original structure, however, costs SCL $12,000 every three years, adds Platts. Rammed earth requires no upkeep, but Platts admits she might not save money over conventional construction methods. "It's a very labor-intensive process." It's an aesthetic choice—but a green one. The structure will include other moneysaving features like passive solar power generated by an array of photovoltaic collectors. It's also durable. When fully cured, the rammed earth walls are as strong as rock yet able to accept nails and be easily patched.

Terra Firma has a SIREWALL® training program in place for contractors and is a registered education provider with the American Institute of Architects. It even teaches participants how to choose the right earth.

—By Lynn Blumenstein, Senior Editor, *Library Hotline*



DOWN AND DIRTY Subliette County Library's community room (upper left rendering) will have three walls of rammed earth. The external rendering (upper right) shows the photovoltaic panel. The construction photo displays a close-up of the "sunset effect" of the tinted earth

THINGS TO LOVE

Rammed earth is: fireproof, soundproof, and impervious to wind, insects, and rodents