

Austin Lyric Opera



The Mary Ann Heller Opera Center for Austin Lyric Opera and The Armstrong Community Music School of Austin Lyric Opera joined the arts scene in downtown Austin. The new site focuses on urban reuse and encourages access to a multitude of performance and educational facilities in the vicinity. Located on the corner of Barton Springs Road and Bouldin Avenue, it is on several public transit lines as well as within walking distance to the soon-to-be-completed Long Center for Performing Arts, which will house future Austin Lyric Opera sponsored performances. This helps to relieve automobile traffic and reduce air pollution in the central business district.

Working with Austin's Green Building Program, the designers of the building strove to put the existing structure on the site to best use to minimize demolition costs and materials that would have been sent to the landfill. By designing a multistory addition, they minimized impervious coverage on the site.

Green Building features in the project:

- Urban density and building re-use
- Minimize conditioned space by utilizing exterior circulation and areas under a shaded porch for studios and classrooms
- Shaded exterior informal dining and meeting areas
- Maximize natural daylighting in the office space with shaded southern exposure
- Pervious pavers used in rear parking lot to minimize amount of run-off.
- Most finishes are natural, including unfinished structure and concrete floors
- Stainless steel used for the wainscoat on wet walls for durability and ease in cleaning.
- Incorporate used and refurbished open office cubicles into new office spaces
- No HCFC / CFC Expanded polystyrene in new building
- Increased roof insulation and roof shading system designed to minimize heat loads
- Durable, re-used and recycled materials used
- Parking plaza doubles as a gathering space for special events where shade tents can be erected

The building was designed to reduce the amount of energy used to keep it comfortable. By using trees to naturally shade and cool both the building and outside gathering areas, along with using native plants and gravel instead of concrete for pathways, the design not only helps conserve energy and water (thus reducing operation costs), but also adds to the natural environment in the area.