

— OFFICE + COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS —

# AUDUBON CENTER FOR RESEARCH OF ENDANGERED SPECIES (ACRES)

Lower Algiers Coast, Westbank, 1996



Eskew Filson Architects

(now Eskew+Dumez+Ripple)

Allen Eskew, principal-in-charge

Chuck Hite, B.J. Siegel, Mark Ripple  
Nick Marshall, Bob Kleinpeter



Across the river in the forest of lower Algiers is the ACRES building for the Audubon Nature Institute. The Audubon Center for Research of Endangered Species was designed as a joint venture of the Design Consortium, for landscape and animal facilities, and Eskew Filson Architects, the lead design firm. In addition to housing office and conference space, ACRES also accommodates laboratories and animal-treatment and holding facilities. It is a single story building with a pitched roof; but, the vertical scale is generous, like much of traditional New Orleans architecture. It is also designed with a traditional New Orleans planning device—an outdoor court. The court has some paving and some natural vegetation, and it opens to the east to engage the natural landscape.

The ACRES facility utilizes another concept of traditional New Orleans architecture: visually connecting the

interior and exterior. The covered outdoor breezeway under the roof at the entrance is an unusual expression of this concept. A continuity of materials—brick piers and extensive use of redwood and mahogany—occurs both inside and out.



Entrance  
Timothy Hursley

Courtyard  
John P. Klingman

Library  
Timothy Hursley

Circulation  
Timothy Hursley

Conference Room  
Timothy Hursley

A strong symbiosis between building and site, interior and exterior, animal and human, characterizes the success of the ACRES project.



As in the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, the corners of the building are often glass with no framing, extending the unbroken view from inside to out. Because of the soft colors of the local St. Joe brick and wood, the building is strongly compatible with the natural environment in which it is placed.

This facility is architecturally legible; one can identify the individual components of the interior by looking at the outside. The conference space is marked by its barn-like scale and high clerestory cupola, the pop-up glazed element along the roof ridge. From the courtyard, the library and the repetitive bays of the laboratory are all clearly distinct as individual entities. Project designer B. J. Siegel indicated that this was undertaken consciously at the client's request. The character of the interiors is also intriguing. Architects tend not to discuss projects in terms of their associations so it was particularly humorous to hear some recent visitors describe the ambiance as "like a hunting lodge."



## BAMBOO APOTHECARY

4112 Magazine Street, Uptown, 2005



Perry Poole, designer

Terrell-Fabacher Architects

Tim Terrell, project manager

This replacement building on Magazine Street maintains the New Orleans tradition of commercial space on the ground floor with residential occupancy above. The commercial space houses the Bamboo spa; and the upstairs was designed as a residence for its owner, Jill Painter.

The building sports a fresh appearance new to Magazine Street and rather rare in the city. It is straightforwardly modern with crisp counterpoints of white stucco and clear, finished wood strips. Designer Perry Poole, who practices in Charlotte, says he has great respect for New Orleans architecture, "but for me to recreate the past would belittle what was already there." He felt that simple volumes and a limited-material palette would be an appropriate response.

In addition, the second floor balcony and recessed entrance from the street are familiar elements within our urban context. The wood is "little bitty boards of Costa Rican teak," originally finished with linseed oil and mineral spirits; it has been refinished several times to maintain a bright, clear appearance.

The horizontality of the building is increased by the roof projection, and the structure seems somewhat miniaturized in its context; the two-story Bamboo structure aligns with the roof of an adjacent one-story nineteenth century shotgun. However, the architect reports that the low height of the first floor was an existing condition; in fact, the new second floor is now positioned almost a foot higher than before renovation. The old framing had to be jacked up to



View from Entrance  
Jeffery Johnston

Along Magazine St.  
Jeffery Johnston

Front Facade  
Jeffery Johnston

View of Bamboo Courtlet  
Jeffery Johnston

allow for new foundations, but the building permit classifies the project as a renovation!

Inside, the sense of clean, unadorned space and surface continues. The walls are white; the floor is of bamboo (naturally), an increasingly popular material among those interested in sustainable design. There is a subtle ramping effect, a serendipitous artifact left over from the previously existing slab beneath. Meanwhile, as you enter, the eye's attention is captured by dappled sunlight dropping into a tiny bamboo garden court. This is a focal condition, but it also divides the more public commercial realm from the spa treatment areas beyond. The manicure room on the other side of the small bamboo court also receives

light from a vertical slot into it. Beyond, the treatment area is functional but devoid of the light and drama so evident at the front.



A visual presence on the street and a compelling contrast of materials provide an architectural identity that is resolutely contemporary and appropriate.



## CARROLLTON BRANCH, WHITNEY NATIONAL BANK

1324 S. Carrollton Avenue, Carrollton 2004



Eskew+Dumez+Ripple

Steve Dumez, principal-in-charge

Allen Eskew, consulting principal

John Anderson, Jose Alvarez,  
project designers

Chuck Hite, project manager

Shannon Downey, Rick Dupont,  
Bob Kleinpeter

Main Entry  
Alan Karchmer

View from Entrance  
Alan Karchmer

Facade from Carrollton Avenue  
Alan Karchmer

Lobby Corner  
Alan Karchmer



A handsome structure has arisen on Carrollton Avenue to house a branch of the Whitney Bank. It replaces the Oak Street branch, a well loved local landmark, with a modern facility. Current banking requirements for abundant automobile space ruled out the renovation of the older structure. Interestingly, the new building was conceived as an urban structure with a strong street presence. This is accomplished not only by proximity to the avenue but also by its generous scale and transparency.

Architects Eskew+Dumez+Ripple created a “lantern to the street” in the words of principal Steve Dumez. The

heart of the project is the banking hall, a traditional component of bank architecture that has been designed as a transparent space behind a massive exterior colonnade. This monumentally scaled room is representative of historic bank architecture, while the slick glass front is a reference to the modern. The banking hall interior is well proportioned with elegant materials and an outstanding use of daylight. The crystalline room holds the customer service representatives and the teller windows. In their interior design Chrestia Staub Pierce enhanced the project by specifying handsome furnishings that maintain the openness and simplicity of

the space. The office areas along the avenue edge benefit from morning sun, filtered through the live oak canopy and the stucco piers. Although the piers can look overly heavy when seen obliquely, their role in diffusing the light is important and successful.

On the opposite side of the banking hall there are linear skylights that balance the daylight and wash brightness onto a paneled mural, high on the wall. The mural, by local artist Christopher Fischer, depicts an idealized bird's-eye view of Carrollton from the river. At night the mural is spotlighted, enhancing visibility from the avenue. The primary entrance is from the lake side where auto entry, a projecting canopy, and a single, specimen tree introduce the building. Another strong design idea is evident just inside; at the end of the axis of entrance is the vault with its monumental door.

Around the back there is a shock: the character of the building changes radically, displaying a more suburban attitude. It is one story, surrounded by what seems to be an overabundance of parking. However, even this is perhaps indicative of a building well designed to reflect the dignity of traditional bank architecture but with the convenience and accommodation important for the future.



The Whitney establishes an elegant, modern ambience; its simplicity of form acts as a contrasting backdrop to the historic live oak trees.

