

A historic public garden leads green building into the future

Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens - Center for Sustainable Landscapes

Case study



Scope

The Center for Sustainable Landscapes (CSL) is a 24,350-square-foot education, research and administration facility at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, a public garden attraction in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA.

Designed and built to generate all of its own energy while treating and reusing all water captured on-site, the first facility in the world to meet four of the world's highest green construction standards now adds the distinctive BREEAM In-Use Outstanding rating for existing buildings to its resume.

The core function of the CSL is to increase awareness of the interconnection between the natural and built environment, and the efficacy of sustainable systems. By employing a design that invites exploration while seamlessly integrating with the guest experience of Phipps — a 125-year-old institution which receives over 500,000 visitors annually — the CSL is uniquely

positioned to showcase renewable energy technologies, conservation strategies, water treatment systems, and sustainable landscaping to a broad audience, including many engaging with these topics for the first time.

Challenges

Designed to operate efficiently, the Center for Sustainable Landscapes (CSL) project demanded goals that had never been accomplished before. The stringent parameters required by robust building certifications necessitated an integrative design process with well-defined goals shared by the entire design team and the owner. These "limits" actually served as catalysts for creative and innovative solutions that define the forefront of sustainable design.

// At Phipps, we are increasingly finding ourselves on an international stage when sharing our experience with the Center for Sustainable Landscapes. The addition of a BREEAM rating helps us to communicate the value of green building to new audiences while placing us in the company of some of the world's most innovative sustainable building projects. //

Richard Piacentini, President and CEO Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

Solution

The CSL was occupied in late 2012 and has continued to maintain its green goals through energy reduction efforts. BREEAM In-Use certification confirmed that the CSL strategies are working to maintain the building's status as one of the greenest buildings in the world. Additionally, as an educational institution that champions the value of green building standards, Phipps' experience with BREEAM In-Use certification allows the organization to speak intelligently on the benefits and opportunities provided by the certification to interested members of the public or from other organizations.

/// We believe, at Phipps, that public gardens have a role to play in mitigating the challenge of climate change, and we believe the answer lies in regenerative thinking that extends to our buildings, programs and operations. BREEAM In-Use is an essential milestone in this effort, as it demonstrates the results of that transformation, and the value of changing the way we see the world. ///

Richard Piacentini, President and CEO Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

Benefits

While the CSL was not designed with a goal of meeting the BREEAM standard, the achievement of the Outstanding In-Use rating demonstrates that the building operates as if it were. This exciting new distinction proves the value of utilizing certification standards in tandem for a holistic approach to building performance assessment while connecting Phipps to a larger international audience of green building professionals.



Project Team

Client: Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

BREEAM Assessor: Enight Consulting

Consultant: 3R Sustainability

Key Facts

BREEAM Scheme: BREEAM USA In-Use: 2016

Rating achieved: Building Management: Outstanding (93.3%)

Size: 24,350 ft² (2,262 m²)

Certification No: BIU00002465-1.0

Get in touch

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