



Ursuline Academy Early Learning Center

New Orleans, LA

Renovation/Adaptive Reuse/Restoration Childcare Center

Concordia LLC
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DESIGN TEAM

Concordia LLC
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Bayne Dickinson
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WDG Architects and Engineers, MEP
Catco, Inc., General Contractor

OWNER/CLIENT

Ursuline Academy
New Orleans, LA
Karen McNay, Academy President
504/861-9150

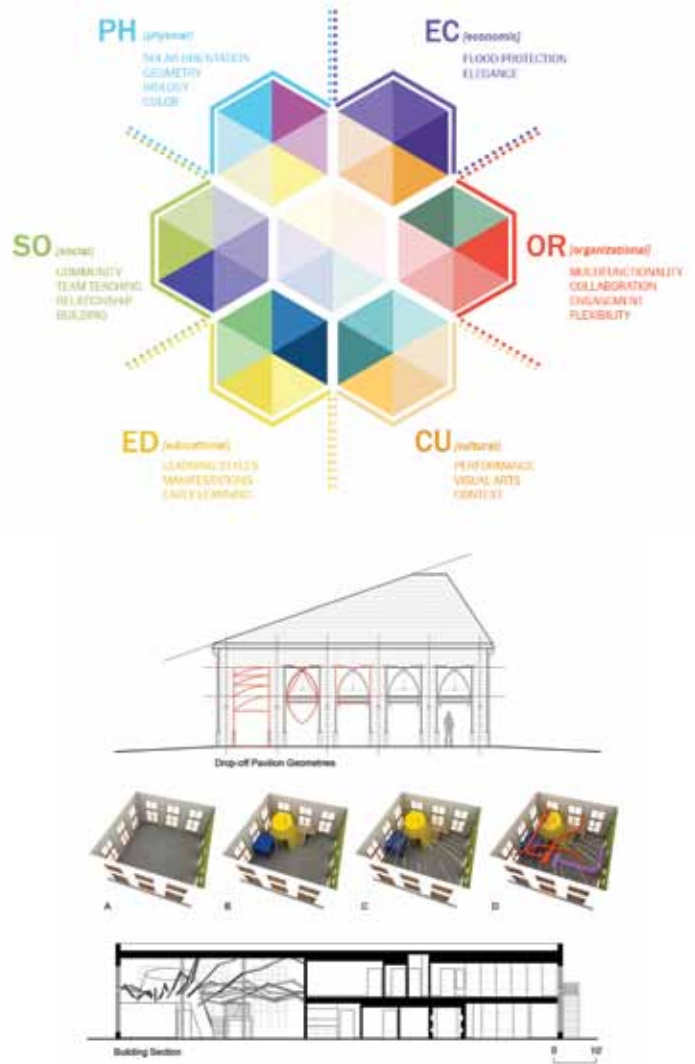
KEY STATS

Grades Served: Toddler 2 - Kindergarten
Capacity: 120 students
Size of Site: .58 acres
Building Area: 9,190 sq. ft.
Building Volume: 192,990 cu. ft.
Space per Student: 77 sq. ft.
Cost per Student: \$25,833
Square Foot Cost: \$336
Construction Cost: \$3.1 million
Total Project Cost: \$3.6 million
Contract Date: Aug. 2009
Completed: Aug. 2010

PHOTOGRAPHY: WILL CROCKER
DIAGRAMS: CONCORDIA LLC

After Hurricane Katrina, the Ursuline Academy laundry building was transformed into an innovative early learning center, recognized for both its unique curriculum and synergistic design process. Working closely with the school's administration, teachers, and staff, the design team developed both curricular and architectural concepts modeled after Reggio Emilia principles. Multifunctional, flexible spaces allow for exploration and discovery while the biological forms and sacred geometries encourage self-guided learning. Bright colors and dynamic shapes engage students in a three-dimensional textbook they enthusiastically liken to Disney World.

The feature space is the double height Studio where colorful volumes and a reading loft are nestled beneath a canopy of undulating wood elements, suspended lights, and painted ductwork. Learning labs arranged around a "Town Square" create an educational village while movable partitions and sliding barn doors enable reconfiguration for different activities. The lobby includes color changing lights and functions as a gallery for student artwork. Outside, a new entry tower and drop-off pavilion reference architec-





“This school is so much fun. There is an indoor playground called the Studio.”

—Elly J., Kindergarten



tural elements of the historic campus.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from teachers, students, and parents testifies to the project’s success in pro-

viding a stimulating, enriching learning environment and demonstrates the value of user engagement during the design process.



“Our new building is beautiful! All the big girls want to come play in it.”

—Kaitlin L., Pre-K