

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES at the Ballard Branch of The Seattle Public Library

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Visitors to the new Ballard Branch of The Seattle Public Library will see a smorgasbord of inventive environmental features – from the planted “green roof” to pools of natural light in the underground parking garage.

Key features include:

- 18,000+ low-water-use plants on the “green roof.” The plants provide insulation and reduce water that otherwise would rush into storm drains.
- “Notch and tab” furniture designed by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson. The tables and chairs are cut from a single sheet of laminated wood to reduce waste. The furniture slides together – no screws, no nails, no hardware.
- Sleek exterior metal chairs. The chairs are formed by bending a single sheet of metal into the right shape, which reduces waste.
- 17 solar panels on the roof and solar film in the windows of the adjacent Neighborhood Service Center. The Seattle City Light Green Power Program, which provided the solar equipment, will monitor how much electricity it produces.
- Rooftop scientific devices that measure wind speed and direction, sunlight and the sound of rain. The artwork – LED (light-emitting diode) displays and an audio composition of Ballard-area sounds – is derived from the weather data.
- Building designed to shade harsh light and take advantage of natural daylight, decreasing need for artificial light. Seven skylights at key points.
- Occupancy sensors that automatically control lights in offices and enclosed spaces.
- Recycled carpet, glass, ceramic and ceiling tiles.
- Environmentally friendly adhesives, sealants, and paints.
- Ventilation systems that monitor indoor air quality.
- Waterless urinals in restrooms.
- Light wells in the parking garage that provide pools of natural light to help with way-finding and security.

More about the “green roof”

The contractor used a big nozzle to blow the dirt onto the roof and work crews moved it around in wheelbarrows. A biodegradable coconut fiber mat on top of the 4-inch thick dirt helps the plants get established. Visitors may view the green roof from a periscope in the Ballard Branch.



Interior furniture.

Photo by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson.



Metal chair.

Photo by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson.



Skylights and anemometers.

Photo by Nic Lehoux.



Green roof and solar panels.

Photo by Nic Lehoux.



Observation area.

Photo by Nic Lehoux.

Plant list:

- Achillea tomentosa* Woolly yarrow
- Armeria maritima* Sea pink, sea thrift
- Carex inops (pennsylvanica)*..... Long-stoloned sedge
- Eriophyllum lanatum*..... Oregon sunshine
- Festuca rubra* Red creeping fescue
- Festuca idahoensis*..... Idaho fescue
- Phlox subulata* Creeping phlox
- Saxifrage cespitosa* Tufted saxifrage
- Sedum oreganum*..... Oregon stonecrop
- Sedum album*..... White stonecrop
- Sedum spurium*..... Two-row stonecrop
- Sisyrinchium idahoensis*..... Blue-eyed grass
- Thymus serpyllum* Thyme
- Triteleia hyacintha*..... Fool's onion

Architect: Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

Landscape Architect: Swift & Co.

Contractor: PCL Construction Services Inc.

Artists: Donald Fels, Andrew Schloss, Dale Stammen



The Seattle Public Library