

First Unitarian Society

Historic Addition
Sustainable Design



LOCATION: Madison, Wisconsin
STATUS: Completed 2008
SIZE: 20,000 square feet
PROGRAM: Sensitive addition on tightly constrained site to Frank Lloyd Wright-designed National Historic Landmark

The First Unitarian Society of Madison has rapidly grown to become the largest Unitarian congregation in the United States. This growth, along with ongoing architectural tours by visitors from around the world, began to place increasing demands on their original Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Meeting House. TKWA was hired to design a sensitive addition to this historic structure, meeting the congregation's needs for new space while maintaining the historic integrity of Wright's design.

The new addition touches the historic building lightly, its subtly curved form continually referring back to the original structure. At just about every point along the Crossing, a line of structure or an architectural feature leads your eye back to the Meeting House.

The project is designed to be not only historically sensitive, but also sustainably innovative. Strategies include the extensive use of recycled and regionally-sourced materials, innovative thermal comfort systems, generous daylighting and natural ventilation, detailed stormwater management planning, and careful sourcing of energy-saving fixtures. We anticipate a LEED Gold rating from the US Green Building Council.



Natural daylight floods the new Atrium Auditorium, and air-intake louvers at the front draw in fresh air from outside, allowing mechanical thermal comfort systems to shut off completely when conditions are favorable.



Extensive green roofs on the new addition absorb rainwater, greatly reducing stormwater demands on the site. Native plantings were chosen for their low irrigation needs, eliminating the need for additional watering.



90% of the new building has access to views outside, and 95% receives natural daylighting.



Low-VOC finishes are used throughout the interior, including venetian plaster wall finishes, chairs, and floors.

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