

THE PRITZKER PRIZE | AN ANALYSIS OF SUSTAINABLE INTENTION

Alex Bow | Caleb Ehly

INTRODUCTION

- The Pritzker Prize is often called the Nobel Prize of Architecture. Its prestige and importance is often lauded, and the annual winner garners incredible amount of attention and acclaim merely by winning. As an enormously high-profile architectural award, a question of its intentionality and consideration is begging to be asked: **does the Pritzker Prize support and further an agenda of sustainability?**
- This study's purpose is not to make any value-claim about what it finds, but merely to answer, as simply as possible, yes, or no.

SITE: The Soulages Museum (2014) | RCR Arquitectes

The most recent (2017) winner of the Pritzker are the Spain based, trio firm RCR Arquitectes. The Pritzker did not highlight any individual work of theirs as prize winning, but instead recognized their full body of work. Because of this, we decided to take their most recent, high-profile architectural work and analyze that for its sustainable merits.



Size: 65,700 square feet

Construction cost: \$21.4 million

Completion date: January 2014

Materials used are Cor-Ten, Glass, Stained-Glass, Treated Wood Flooring, Concrete, and Steel.



Regeneration-Based Checklist for Design and Construction

Project: Soulagues Museum © SBSE @ Tadoussac 1999

	degeneration		sustainability		regeneration	
	-100 always	-75 usually	-50 sometimes	-25 a bit	25 a bit	50 sometimes
the site	pollutes air					
	pollutes water					
	wastes rainwater					
	consumes food					
	destroys rich soil					
	dumps wastes unused					
	destroys wildlife habitat					
	imports energy					
	requires fuel-powered transportation					
	intensifies local weather					
the building	excludes daylight					
	uses mechanical heating					
	uses mechanical cooling					
	needs cleaning and repair					
	produces human discomfort					
	uses fuel-powered circulation					
	pollutes indoor air					
	is built of virgin materials					
	cannot be recycled					
	serves as an icon for the apocalypse					
is a bad neighbor						
is ugly						
	negative score	positive score				
	2200 possible	2200 possible				
	-725	+400				
	final score:					
	-325					

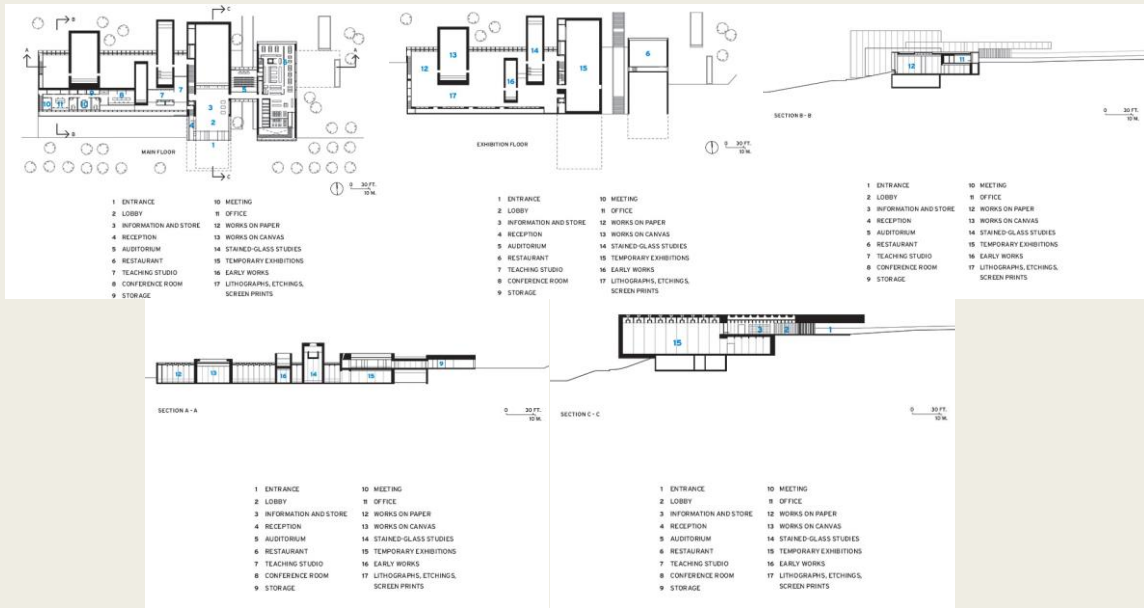
The Regenerative Score

The Museum ultimately has a negative score. Even in receiving perfect positive scores on all the subjective categories such as beauty, neighborliness, and human comfort, the fact is that the museum deploys **no design sustainability strategies whatsoever**.

- The building has **no rainwater catchment or treatment** features, and because the entire exterior is made of Cor-Ten, the rainwater becomes polluted merely from making contact with the building.
- The building deploys **no passive heating or cooling** strategies. The building is a museum, requiring high levels of interior temperature regulation year-round.
- In addition to the lack of passive heating or cooling, the building has **no on-site energy generation**.
- The building is built on a former park, **displacing plant and wildlife with its construction**.
- For the most part, the only sustainability this building considers is through its **beautiful use of daylight**, and its use of **recyclable material use occasionally**.

It is baffling that a high-profile, multi-million dollar project which will go on to win both an **Architizer A+** prize, and a **Pritzker prize** deploys **no discernible concern for sustainability whatsoever**.

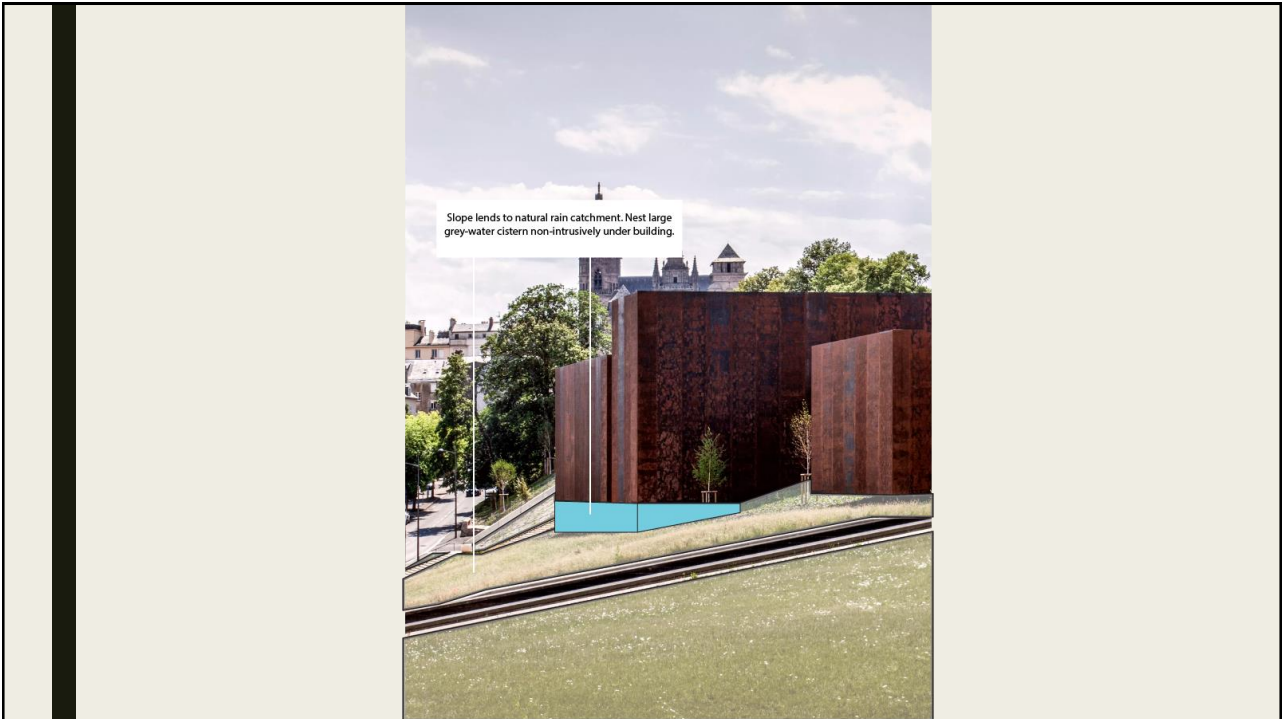
There are no illustrations or pictures of conservation strategies, because, quite simply, **none were used**.



So what can improve?

Let's get a stupid amount of sustainability up in here.





Overhang could be used for bike storage. Encourage non-automobile transportation. Museum is ALREADY IN A PARK



Additional Features

- Low-flow toilets/sinks.
- Automatic blind-systems.
- Grounds implement wildlife friendly habitat zones.
- Protected garden spaces for food generation.
- Institute robust recycling program within shops and café.

- One note: not much can be done about the heating and cooling without a massive re-design, which is unfortunate.

Re-Assessment

With the addition of the suggested systems, there is a drastic change; from a score of **-325** to **+550**, which is a total difference in score of **875 points**.

The bulk of the changes are **site implementations**, not requiring building redesigns in any intensive fashion. These systems could be added today, if deemed suitable.

The difficulty in the redesign comes from the interior environments of the building itself, particularly with its heating and cooling use for the gallery program.

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Project: Soulagés Museum		degeneration						sustainability			regeneration		
		-100 always	-75 usually	-50 sometimes	-25 a bit	0 balances	25 a bit	50 sometimes	75 usually	100 always			
the site	pollutes air												cleans air
	pollutes water												cleans water
	wastes rainwater												stores rainwater
	consumes food												produces food
	destroys rich soil												creates rich soil
	dumps wastes unused												consumes wastes
	destroys wildlife habitat												provides wildlife habitat
	imports energy												exports energy
	requires fuel-powered transportation												requires human-powered transportation
	intensifies local weather												moderates local weather
the building	excludes daylight												uses daylight
	uses mechanical heating												uses passive heating
	uses mechanical cooling												uses passive cooling
	needs cleaning and repair												maintains itself
	produces human discomfort												provides human comfort
	uses fuel-powered circulation												uses human-powered circulation
	pollutes indoor air												creates pure indoor air
	is built of virgin materials												is built of recycled materials
	cannot be recycled												can be recycled
	serves as an icon for the apocalypse												serves as an icon for regeneration
is a bad neighbor												is a good neighbor	
is ugly												is beautiful	
		negative score 2200 possible						positive score 2200 possible					
		-275						+825					
		final score:											+550

Conclusion

To answer the original question of **whether the Pritzker Prize supports and furthers an agenda of sustainability**, the answer is **No**; not if this project is any indication.

However, the site **does have the potential** to have a **positive effect** on its **surrounding site** and **sustainable behavior**.

With a few thought-out additions to the project, it could stand as a positive symbol of (if not regenerative) **sustainable architecture**.