

Habitat
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Environmental Center Building Wins Prestigious Award

Maine Audubon's Environmental Center on Gilsland Farm in Falmouth was one of four recipients of the 1997 Awards for Excellence in Architecture given by the Maine Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Designed by Portland architects Sam Van Dam, Richard Renner and Carol Wilson, the building was cited by the jury for achieving the most elusive of architectural objectives--"economy without sacrificing beauty."

The use of recycled materials, the effort to minimize impacts on the environment, the emphasis on natural light, the design elements calculated to maximize energy efficiency--all were cited in adding to the building's overall excellence. The center, which is home to the Maine Audubon Nature Store, a gallery for exhibits, a large meeting, office space, and a children's discovery room, is of a modern rather than a traditional style, which the jury thought was a good choice.

"Maine Audubon is a preservation organization, but they chose a modern building, and I like that," said one juror. "I like the preservation/progress combination."

The biennial awards, which recognize excellence in the work of Maine architects, were presented on Dec. 9 at the MAIA's 62nd annual meeting held at Colby College in Waterville. The three other award-winning projects were the Merrill Auditorium at Portland City Hall, the addition to the Camden Public Library, and the Rosenzweig residence in Brooklin.

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