

AIA

Committee On Design

Northwestern Arkansas Spring Conference

2024 Key Takeaways

1

Innovative Revitalization:

What's Being Done Right: Arkansas showcases innovative revitalization efforts. For instance:

The Momentary: Wheeler Kearns Architects transformed a defunct Kraft cheese factory into this contemporary cultural space in Bentonville.

Arkansas Arts Center Extension: Studio Gang and SCAPE Landscape Architecture are extending this 104-year-old institution in Little Rock.

Attention Needed: While revitalization is commendable, ensuring a balance between preservation and modernization is crucial.

2

Timber as a Resource:

What's Being Done Right: Arkansas's abundant forestland supplies high-quality timber products.

Adohi Hall: The University of Arkansas completed the country's largest mass timber building, emphasizing sustainable materials.

Attention Needed: Responsible forest management and sustainable practices are essential to maintain this valuable resource.

3

Community-Driven Design:

What's Being Done Right: The Walton Family Foundation invests in public buildings and community spaces.

Population Growth: Walmart's influence has driven population growth in cities like Bentonville.

Attention Needed: Balancing community needs, economic development, and design excellence remains a challenge.

4

Architectural Education and Research:

What's Being Done Right: The University of Arkansas fosters architectural innovation.

Anthony Timberlands Center: Grafton Architects' upcoming research complex demonstrates the potential of timber

Attention Needed: Continued investment in architectural education and interdisciplinary research is vital.

5

Cultural Context and Identity:

What's Being Done Right: Arkansas's diverse landscapes inspire context-sensitive design.

Thorncrow Chapel: Its harmonious integration with nature exemplifies this approach.

Attention Needed: Architects must continue to honor the state's cultural heritage while embracing contemporary design

Arkansas has a thriving architectural scene that thrives on innovation, sustainability, community engagement, and respects its unique cultural identity. Architecture and design have played a significant role in the growth of the workforce and enterprise at the local and state levels.

"vernacular is what you do when you can't afford to get it wrong." - Marlon Blackwell

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