

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

Yablon Wins Competition to Design Visitors Center on Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston

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Stephen Yablon Architect, a New York City firm, has won a competition to design a 2,500-square-foot visitor center on Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway. The \$3 million building will serve as a gateway to the Boston Harbor Islands National Park, and is expected to be one of the first structures to be completed on the greenway. The pavilion is slated to open in 2007.

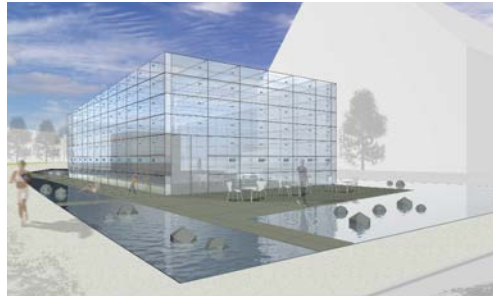


Image Courtesy Stephen Yablon

Yablon's design is a sheer, glass box set on a stone base surrounded by a shallow reflecting pool. It will contain the park's visitor center, a cafe, and bookstore. Display screens, visible from the interior and exterior, will be embedded in the structure's walls.

While packing a complex program into a small space was no easy task, visual and structural considerations also posed a challenge, according to the firm's principal.

"A key issue was how to evoke something of the Harbor Islands environment, with its elemental simplicity of sky, water, and rocky islands," says Yablon. "A powerful, simple design seemed appropriate." Although there are no explicit references, Yablon says the design's influences range from 19th Century glass exhibition halls to the experimental work of Superstudio in the 1960s and 70s. The building site—atop the "Big Dig" tunnel, required a lightweight structure placed on a shallow foundation, he adds.

The Greenway's land was recently recovered by the dismantling of Boston's Central Artery highway. It comprises a 30-acre crescent that runs from North Station to Chinatown. The Greenway's parks are expected to be completed in 2007 at the earliest.

Ted Smalley Bowen