

SOLARIUM: ACES COMMUNITY CONNECTION CENTER AT THE ARBORETUM

Establishment of the University of Illinois Arboretum began in the early 1990s, when the University approved the 160-acre site bounded by Florida Avenue on the north, Lincoln Avenue on the west, Windsor Road on the south and Orchard Downs on the east. Since its inception, the landscape has been progressively transformed with a variety of wonderful gardens and restored natural areas. The Arboretum is an oasis, much enjoyed for its tranquility and beauty and used extensively by campus and community for relaxation, recreation, research/education, and social events. However, as we contemplate its future and craft options for enhancing its role as the green jewel of campus, several new opportunities have emerged including establishing a community connection center that would serve needs for the Arboretum, the College of ACES, campus, the community, and beyond.



OPPORTUNITY:

- A gathering place for cultivating and translating innovations and strategies that embody our land grant tradition,
- A destination that is locally grounded and globally connected with a focus on enriching quality of life and cultivating the concept of “Seed to Soul,”
- A destination that develops and sustains partnerships that are organic, resonant and have demonstrable impact.

The proposed location for the solarium lies along one of campus's main N-S axes, which bisects the President's House to the north and runs south through the Sesquicentennial and Hartley Gardens.

The solarium will lie adjacent to Japan House, an established campus destination. This area of the arboretum is a keystone location that will serve as a portal to south campus, providing a link between the ACES district to the north and its field-based operations to the south and west. This location sits along the transition between the formal gardens to the north and the natural areas to the south. It is the optimal location for staging ACES, campus, foundation, and community programs and educational events. We envisage a redesign of the existing parking facility to provide a prominent gateway to the Solarium along with adjoining areas of reinforced turf to accommodate overflow parking during large events. Design elements will incorporate features and signatures that resonate with those of the ACES Corridor's campus southern portal.



College of Agricultural, Consumer
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The proposed location is one of the few on campus where options for employing energy-efficient technologies such as solar and geothermal can be readily and seamlessly incorporated into building design and construction. In addition, proximity to South Farms provides potential sources of bioenergy from manure and plant residues.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

The project will require engineering and architectural design and construction that exemplify state-of-the-art sustainable practices. Project components include a multipurpose building suitable for formal and informal meetings/events and educational classes, a redesign of the surrounding landscape that incorporates water features and parking facilities that complement the solarium.



Proposed Solarium Location

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