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Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Waste Water Treatment Plant [The Inhabited Landscape:
An Exhibition]

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Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Waste Water Treatment Plant

Jury Comments

The Cold Spring Harbor Waste Water Treatment Plant makes a mechanical necessity an environmental asset. It is also an example of the strategy of merger in a cultural landscape.

The problem was to accommodate a waste treatment facility for a biological laboratory. The site also possessed one of the best views of Long Island's Cold Spring Harbor, and therefore the site itself was quite visible from the harbor and demanded sensitive treatment. The solution was to build a park over the treatment facility. The spaces of the park are of an intimate scale in keeping with the residential context. The mini-park, outlook terrace and gazebo yield images of the tended landscape that merge with the traditional character of the place. A harmonious, limited palette of plant materials and a turf ground plan of simple geometry reinforce the sense of tranquility.



A

Architect's Statement

As Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory had expanded since the 1890s, its need for sewage treatment expanded as well. The various waste products generated at a biological laboratory are complex and need special treatment before they can be returned to the ground water system. In 1973 and 1974 the sand-filter system that had been used by the laboratory in the past was determined to be inadequate. Because of the location of the sand-filter plant, all pipes from the various laboratory buildings ran to one location on the site. This location happened to be one of the most beautiful places on the site with the best view overlooking lovely Cold Spring Harbor. The site also happened to be directly

between the administration building and Cold Spring Harbor. Engineers who were engaged to design and construct the waste treatment plant had proposed a fairly large building to be placed on the site to house the waste treatment equipment. Our job was to incorporate this sophisticated equipment into some kind of a structure that would have the least impact on the visual surroundings of the laboratory. The solution was to bury the building as deeply into the hillside as possible, staying above the high water line, and to make the building a visual asset rather than a liability.

The building is constructed of reinforced concrete with the top being concrete plank on which has been placed a

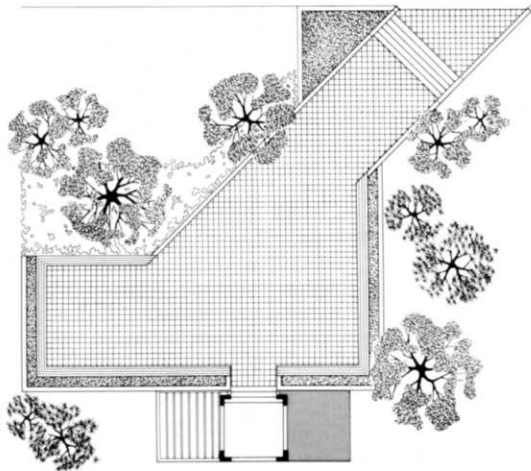
A Cold Spring Harbor Waste Water Treatment Plant
Photograph by Centerbrook

B Cold Spring Harbor Waste Water Treatment Plant
Photograph by Norman McGrath

C Cold Spring Harbor Waste Water Treatment Plant, site plan

D Cold Spring Harbor Waste Water Treatment Plant, terrace level plan

brick terrace. The existing hillside was replaced around and on top of the building and extensive planting and landscaping has been done. On the eastern side of the building facing the harbor has been located a wood shingled gazebo topped by a copper finial made by the architects. The finial was made to represent an adenovirus molecule as a documentation and celebration of the type of molecule currently being studied at the laboratory. It is our hope that when visitors come to Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory they will be impressed by the beauty of the landscaping and the site and the gazebo and be completely unaware that a sewage treatment plant exists beneath it.



TERRACE LEVEL PLAN



C



SITE PLAN



D