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State University of New York at Albany

Administration and Admissions Building

The new Entry and Admissions Building is a small, unique campus element, a pavilion placed within a tree-lined outdoor room. It is located off-center, as a counterbalance to the campus' signature carillon. Its square plan is twisted off the rectangular order of the late-modernist campus buildings to address the arrival of visitors as they approach. This rotated orientation of the building allows views from existing building spaces and highlights its contrapuntal relationship to the backdrop of the campus podium. It is a discrete sculptural object in the formal, landscaped foreground.

Counterpoint to the existing monumental peristyle buildings by Edward Durell

Stone and breaking any connotation of an average, small, office building are critical aspects of the design. The uniform, serpentine glass curtain wall and the curved, metal-clad entry piece establish these contrasts and heighten the sculptural distinction of the concept.

The concrete, repetitive, three-dimensional grid of the existing building is opposed by a new strategy of shifting reflections capturing the changing colors of the seasons and sky. Rotating the building off the existing grid amplifies the reflective dynamic of the wall.

Anchoring the center of the building is a full-height, cubically proportioned atrium. Interior offices for the university president, executive administration, and building cir-

ulation are organized around — and illuminated by — the 50-ft.-high atrium and its skylight. The 100-seat Visitors Center opens directly to the atrium and has a multi-video presentation screen above its main doors.

A concentric progression of scales is established from the broad campus landscape, to tree-lined quadrant, through the serpentine envelope to its destination in the stable, grand public atrium space. It serves a variety of functions: visitor orientation, advancement events, exhibits, and press conferences.

Gwathmey Siegel and Associates Architects designed the 45,000-sq-ft. pavilion that now serves as the primary point of orientation and entry and provides a strong identity for the campus.