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11 local projects win ASLA awards for landscapes

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Last week, the Washington Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects held its annual WASLA Professional Awards at the Georgetown Ballroom.

These awards recognize outstanding achievements by landscape architects in Washington. A total of 11 projects were recognized across four categories. The categories are Research Analysis and Planning; General Design — Public; General Design — Private; and Residential Design.

The Heights District, in Vancouver, designed by GGLO, received a merit award in the Research Analysis and Planning category. This forthcoming project encompasses 63 acres in the Tower Mall area within the 205-acre Heights District neighborhood. The future Heights District is envisioned as a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood center, strategically located in the heart of Vancouver. The plan calls for a mix of residential, commercial and office spaces, connected to downtown Vancouver by public transit. The Heights is organized around a walkable mix of uses and building types with a system of urban parks woven throughout, connected by complete streets. A main strength that the jury noted was the approach to stormwater management within the community plan.



Photos courtesy of ASLA Washington [\[enlarge\]](#)

Weber Thompson won an honor award in the General Design category for private projects for Aurora Bridge Swales.



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Anchor QEA won an honor award in the General Design category for public projects for Dickman Mill Park.

In the General Design — Public category, Dickman Mill Park, in Ruston, designed by Anchor QEA, won an honor award. The jury said that “Tacoma’s waterfront history comes to life through intentional placement of artifacts, interpretation, and improved access to this shoreline park.” The public park incorporates authentic historical artifacts relating to the area’s mill history and mechanical processes, public art, native plantings, and coastal resiliency design strategies “to create an evocative and accessible visitor experience.” Visitors can explore a massive head saw and carriage, placed in its original location with a backdrop of Commencement Bay views, and the “Ghost Log” sculpture that represents old-growth timber alongside traditional basket weave and cedar boughs, sacred to the Puyallup Tribe. As the sun sets, Ghost Log illuminates the park at night.

A few strengths the jury mentioned in Dickman Mill Park include its comprehensive presentation, incorporation of ADA accessibility, clear before and afters, good diagrams, effective ecological restoration, and engaging educational component.

In this category, Kiwanis Methow Park by Site Workshop, University of Oregon Knight Campus for Accelerated Team Impact by Place, and Redmond Downtown Park received merit awards.

Aurora Bridge Swales, designed by Weber Thompson, won the honor award in the General Design — Private category. The primary goal of this project was to clean the bridge's runoff water, which is the most toxic researchers have encountered, creating lethal conditions for the five salmon species that swim below the bridge during annual spawn runs. The first-of-its-kind Aurora Bridge Swales incorporate terraces of native plants and soils on three sites along the public right of way. It functions as a natural filter and serves as a powerful example of private development's ability to deploy a large-scale environmental response, approaching 100% effectiveness at reversing pollution's impacts in a replicable model. This multi-pronged solution beautifies the urban environment, improves biodiversity, mitigates heat-island impacts, and improves air quality, while raising public awareness through community outreach and interactive educational elements.

Aurora Bridge Swales' strengths noted by the jury include excellent detailing, great planting choices, and thoughtful incorporation of educational materials. The jury said that it was great to see an area that is typically wasted in an urban environment instead provide stormwater filtration in a very beautiful way.

Arbor Blocks, designed by Hewitt, and the Living Legacy at Seattle University: Creating Space for Generations of Students by Honoring the Past project designed by Mithun, won merit awards in this category. The Seattle Street Sink, by the Clean Hands Collaborative, received a special mention.

In the Residential Design category, the honor award went to The Berger Partnership for Sitka, a South Lake Union apartment community inspired by the San Juan Islands. Key program elements and goals include a regionally native plant palette with species often not deemed suitable in the urban realm, gray water for irrigation, incorporating urban agriculture, and using local materials. The hope is that this didactic case study would inspire more people in Seattle to connect with nature without needing to leave the city. The design captures the essence of the local San Juan Island ecology.

The jury complimented Sitka on its nicely executed design, great use of unique elements, and how the plantings feel well established. The jury stated that it certainly appears to achieve the goal of building a strong connection between the site and the Pacific Northwest's ecology.

Hewitt won a merit award in this category for the Jackson Apartments.

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