Arrive East Austin Hotel – Austin, TX, U.S.A.

Grayson Story

This relatively new hotel on the Eastern edge of central Austin manages to make a statement without completely overshadowing the current architecture in the area. Designed by Baldrige Architects, this building presents a unique approach to following city mandated guidelines with help from structural engineering firm Leap! Structures.

The city of Austin code requires that buildings provide street-side sidewalks with a covering of some sort. This is generally achieved with tacked-on awnings[1] as more of an afterthought, as opposed to a constraint that could create a thoughtful response. Which is exactly what Arrive East Austin Hotel successfully accomplished. The shifting concrete floor plates which are exposed to the street provide both structural integrity and an aesthetically dynamic expression of this building's architecture. These floor plates extend beyond the footprint of the building and essentially create cantilevered coverings for the sidewalks below. Not only does this satisfy building code requirements, it also increases the square footage of the higher floors which is quite useful given that the structure is being used for a hotel.

Another one of the design constraints that affected the construction of this building was the ethos of constructing a large contemporary building in East Austin[2]. This area is heavily affected by rapid gentrification, but this building was constructed in a fashion that would be more open to the public. This started by choosing structural design elements that reflected the local construction without going as far as mirroring it. Resulting in a masonry-infilled concrete structure[2] that adapts to the pre-existing structures while retaining structural integrity within the allotted budget. The design further incorporates the community by physically using a pre-existing, neighboring masonry structure as part of the building's envelope[3].

The design team also focused heavily of the environmental and energy impacts of this new construction. In tandem with Chris Pardo Design, they significantly reduced their carbon footprint by foregoing delicate dry wall interiors. Instead, they focused on embellishing the exposed concrete and brick structures that provide a much more durable interior finish. Another emphasis of reducing energy consumption was the inclusion of thermally broken windows in order to reduce the amount of energy lost to the environment. Lastly, the MEP Engineers at EEA Consulting Engineers chose a series of highly efficient VRF systems in order to keep the indoor climate hospitable in Austin's humid summer heat.

Sources:

1. http://baldridge-architects.com/work/arrive/
2. https://www.archdaily.com/965024/arrive-east-austin-hotel-baldridge-architects
3. https://www.world-architects.com/en/architecture-news/reviews/arrive-hotel-east-austin