

Studio — Saxe

Press Release
The Athletic Center
At The Gilded Iguana
January 2020

The Athletic Center



TheAthleticCenter_Outside_1

COSTA RICA ATHLETIC CENTER CREATES A SMALL VILLAGE AMONG TREE TOPS

As an extension to the Gilded Iguana Hotel in the town of Nosara, The Athletic Center was designed as a small village amongst the trees that creates a public space which integrates locals with visitors with similar interests of pursuing an active lifestyle and wellbeing. The site is situated in an incredibly central location acts as a perfect “adhesive” for retail, sports, and leisure which in turn coexist within the exuberant nature. A surf-shop, bike-shop, gym, and multiple studios (for Jiu Jitsu, yoga, and personal massages) create the perfect atmosphere for those wishing to come to Costa Rica in search of activity and fun.

Location: Nosara, Costa Rica

Date of completion: November 2019

Client: The Gilded Iguana Holdings

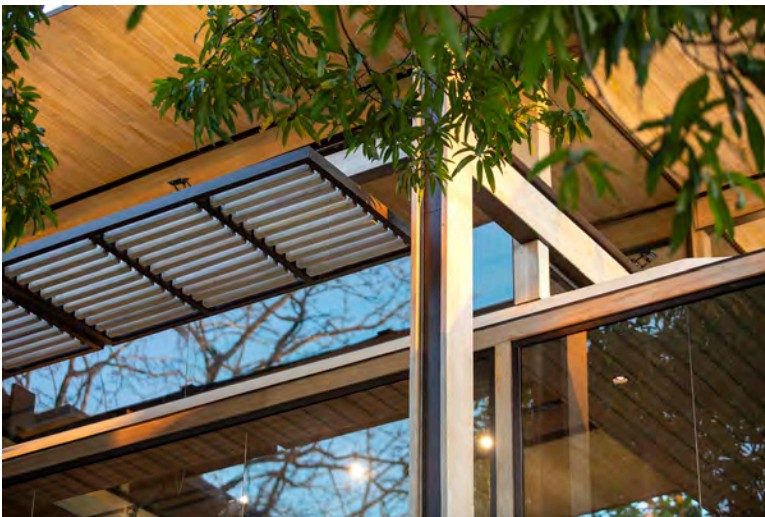
Area: Approx. 615 m2

Design Director: Benjamin G. Saxe

— The Athletic Center



TheAthleticCenter_Outside_2



TheAthleticCenter_Detail_1

Concept

Studio Saxe and the client wanted to explore intelligent ways of adapting a complex and diverse program of spaces within the existing framework of trees and wildlife of the site. Human activity is intended to co-exist in symbiotic relationship with the natural world in order to accentuate the path towards wellbeing.

Design

Studio Saxe decided to break the mass of what could be a large building into separate pieces of program that in turn could fit within the voids around the existing trees, whilst interconnecting them with bridges and paths to create a public realm that is both diverse and

— Guilded Iguana Activity Center



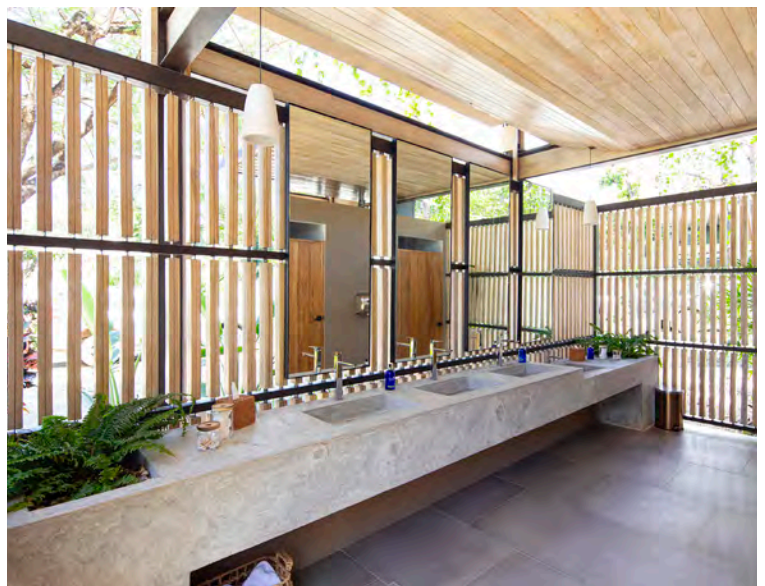
TheAthleticCenter_Outside_3

intricate. The result is a series of interior public spaces that connect people to nature whilst protecting from the intense sun and heat.

Working closely with structural and electrical-mechanical engineers, Studio Saxe managed to coordinate foundations and services around tree roots in a flexible array that allowed trees to keep growing and the buildings to sit very close to the existing vegetation.

Construction

The construction method applied to The Athletic Center is mainly focused on a light-weight steel structure that was prefabricated off site in a controlled environment and assembled quickly to create minimum impact on the property and maximum efficiency of construction.

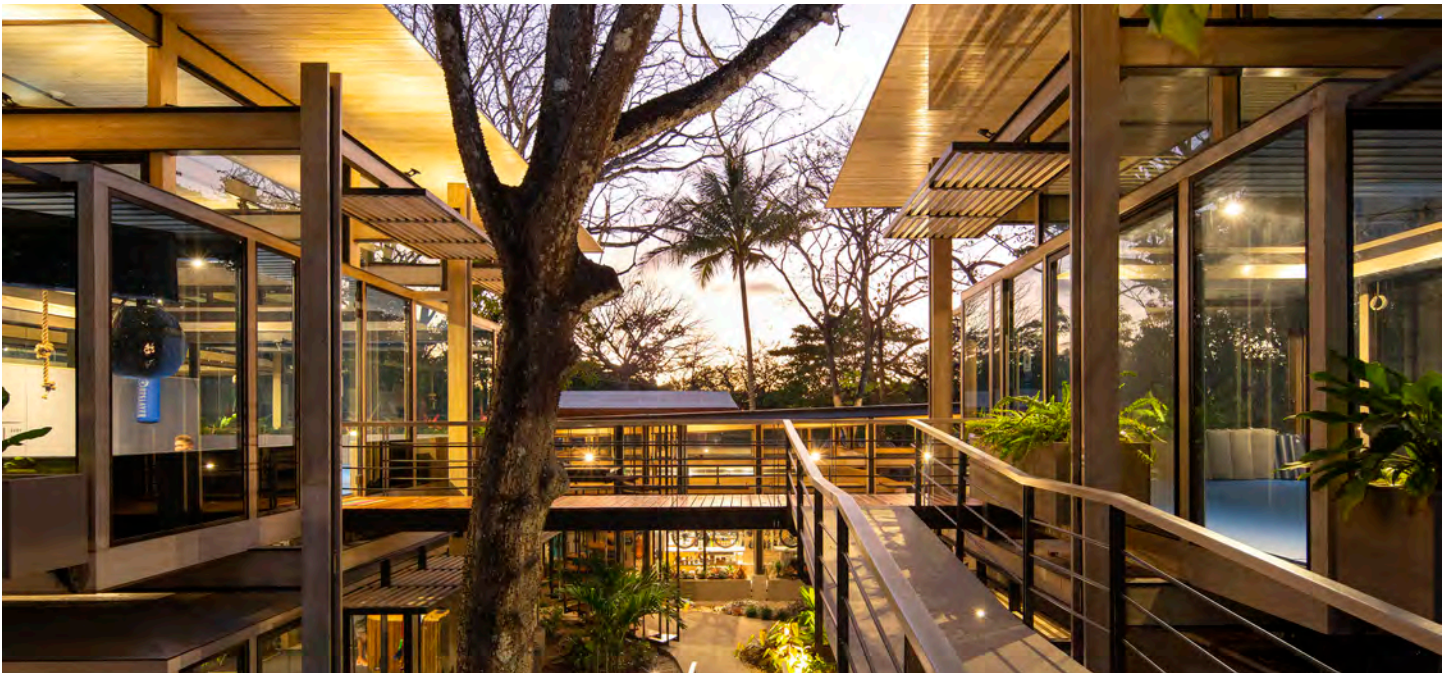


TheAthleticCenter_Detail_2

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TheAthleticCenter_Outside_4



TheAthleticCenter_Outside_5

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TheAthleticCenter_Outside_6



TheAthleticCenter_Outside_7

At Studio Saxe we believe that the process of construction should be as light and as unobtrusive as possible when dealing with a complex and diverse ecological environment. The main steel frame was then clad in teak wood and long overhangs create protection for all faces, while large glass walls create a connection to the outside trees and vegetation.

Sustainability

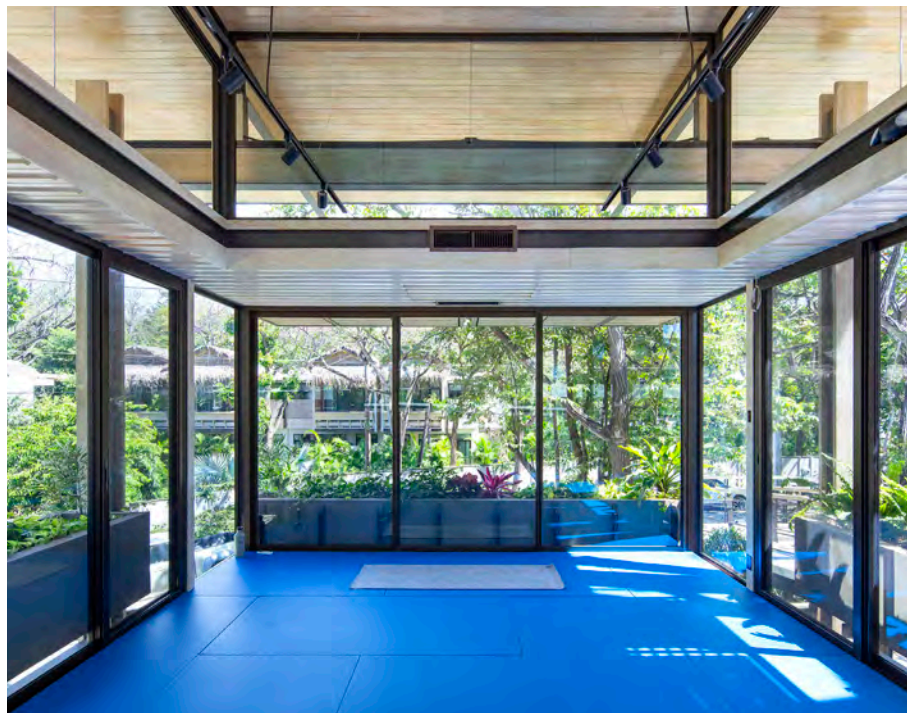
This project was conceived as a modular construction approach in order to have the least amount of impact on the natural landscape. It was designed to preserve and protect the existing vegetation and natural habitat of its surroundings through intelligent engineering

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TheAthleticCenter_Inside_1

by disintegrating the mass of the building into many components to distribute the project around trees and vegetation. Long roof overhangs not only protect the inside spaces from the blazing sun and the rain, but also are used to collect water in order to be re-used it in the building's mechanical systems and for landscaping irrigation. Reforested teak wood is combined with durable materials for the structure to create a long-lasting construction that combines both local materials with modern construction techniques. The orientation and disposition of the elements and the roof lines are designed in terms of bioclimatic strategies where solar orientation, wind patterns, noise, dust, and other factors are considered in order to create efficient structures that work with minimal energy consumption.



TheAthleticCenter_Inside_2

— The Athletic Center



TheAthleticCenter_Outside_8



TheAthleticCenter_Detail_3

Builder: LHC Constructores

Structural Engineer: Sotela Alfaro Ltda.

Electromechanical Engineer: Dynamo Studio

Photography: Andres Garcia Lachner

— About us

Benjamin G. Saxe set up his own practice in San Jose, Costa Rica in 2004, with the aim of exploring our relationship with the natural environment through architecture. Since then, Studio Saxe has grown into an award-winning international practice made up of a multidisciplinary team, creating buildings and spaces by blending technological innovation with handcrafted techniques to form truly sustainable designs. Founded on the belief that buildings must connect to their landscape – whether a tropical paradise or a concrete jungle – Studio Saxe brings a global attitude to solve local problems. Ideas and techniques from around the world can be harnessed to benefit communities, both at home and abroad. Local traditions and identities are explored and developed, ensuring a process whereby we learn from the past and build for the future.

The dedicated architects and designers at Studio Saxe uncover new design solutions for every project, treating each building as an opportunity to improve methods and approaches, responding to specific places. Working alongside clients and collaborators, the studio continually seeks new forms and functions that blur the boundaries between natural habitats and inhabited space.

Latin America

Costa Rica

San Jose

PO Box 206-1225

T: +506 4030 6053

Europe

United Kingdom

London

T: +44 (0) 203 807 6408

North America

United States

Los Angeles

+1 (323) 283 8233

General Enquiries

info@studiosaxe.com

www.studiosaxe.com