



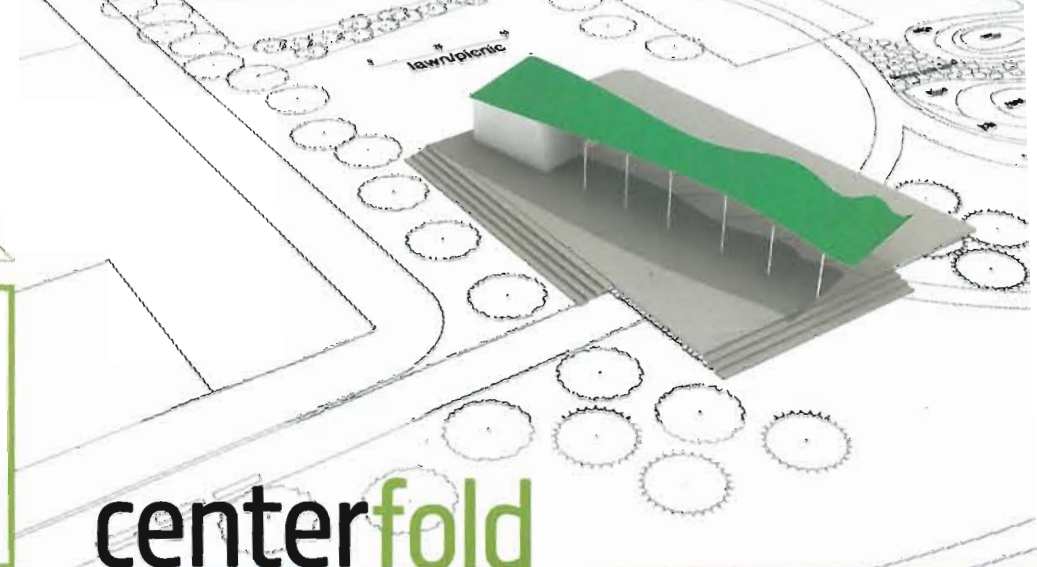
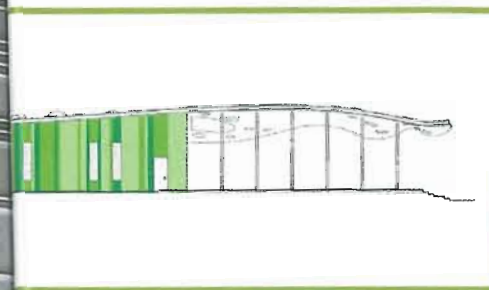
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**catch the wave**

**WXY's undulating canopy makes for a perfect day at a Queens, New York, beach**

*Clockwise from center, far left: At the Beach 30th Street pavilion and comfort station in Far Rockaway, the canopy's concrete was poured in place using circular formwork and a dense mesh of steel rebar. After pouring, the construction crew prepped the concrete for waterproofing. The formwork yielded cutouts ranging from 18 inches to 12 feet in diameter. Inside the women's restrooms, skylights work in tandem with rectangles of translucent glass blocks to minimize the need for artificial light.*

**Despite their name,** the comfort stations built by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation have never seemed all that comforting. Designed above all to withstand vandalism, the average public restroom from the 1930's and '40's, when many of the city's facilities were built, "is a rectangular block with two doors in it, like a bunker," says Mark Yoes, principal of WXY Architecture + Urban Design. He and coprincipal Claire Weisz's recent contribution to the genre—the Beach 30th Street pavilion and comfort station in Far Rockaway, Queens—takes a somewhat different form. The project, Yoes says, "represents an evolution in the city's thinking, toward something more welcoming."

That directive certainly influenced WXY's approach to the restrooms themselves, which are bright, airy, and lined inside and out in green glazed brick that echoes the surrounding dune grasses. But it also inspired the architects to go one step further, creating an undulating roof extension that ripples out toward the ocean, providing shade and "making the breeze of the beach visible," Yoes says. Concrete was the obvious choice for such a canopy, but the designers faced a challenge when municipal authorities requested that it be poured in place rather than precast. "The outcome of precast is tightly controlled in a shop environment," Weisz explains. "But with field-poured, which is done on-site and, in this case, outside, you have one chance to make it perfect." The biggest concern, she continues, was whether "a 1950's construction method normally used to pour slab floors" was capable of producing undulations that looked natural and animated.

WXY made CAD drawings, and then a 3-D model was printed. Yet even after working closely with a structural engineer to develop and inspect the formwork—complete with a rebar mesh as well as post-tension reinforcements that flowed around the circular apertures that dapple the roof—the final pour still felt like a leap of faith. The fact that it exceeded expectations served to validate not only the city's newfound design bravado, but also Yoes and Weisz's belief in old-fashioned craftsmanship. —*Monica Khemsurov*



FROM FRONT CAESARSTONE: VANITY, BACKSPLASH SOLID SURFACING (RESTROOM); A & J WASHROOM ACCESSORIES: SOAP DISPENSERS, WALL-MOUNTED TRASH CAN; SLOAN VALVE COMPANY: SINK FITTINGS; SIKA: FLOORING; GLEN-GERY CORPORATION: BRICK; WASCOPRODUCTS: SKYLIGHTS; THROUGHOUT BABYLON IRON WORKS: COLUMNS; TIGER DRYLAC U.S.A.: COLUMN PAINT; VERSAFLEX: ROOF; DOKA: ROOF FORMWORK, REINFORCEMENT; QUENNELL ROTSCCHILD AND PARTNERS: LANDSCAPING CONSULTANT; TILLET LIGHTING DESIGN: LIGHTING CONSULTANT; MURRAY ENGINEERING: STRUCTURAL ENGINEER; HDR: MEP; LANDTEK GROUP: GENERAL CONTRACTOR.



centerfold

*From top:* Rather than being plastered, the roof was coated in a waterproof membrane, which allows the character of the concrete to be visible. Steel columns support the 60-foot-long canopy, while the variegated shades of the ceramic-glazed brick were chosen to harmonize with the surroundings.

