

October 20th, 2022

Diamond Ranch High School - Pomona, California
AE World Map Essay - Jonathan Swallow

The long main corridor takes a spin off the conventional Californian outdoor school space to encourage interaction between students. Reminiscent of a geologic fault line. The single corridor facilitates interaction between everyone in the school by channeling them down a single membrane. The channel mimics a city street, closely packed by the urban architecture of the buildings on either side.

The jagged and inherently unstable forms of the Los Angeles foothills were reflected in the building's sharp and angular form. The designer's organizational design of the school was inspired by the natural topography. The slope of the hillside was turned into an outdoor amphitheater which doubles as a stairway to the sports fields and roof terrace, effectively bridging the academic and athletic portions of the campus.

Morphosis describes it as “three distinct ‘schools within a school’” which integrate with each other to present the “full curriculum” of the building’s high school students, segregated by grade-level to create group learning in a “more intimate educational setting”. Outdoor educational spaces are placed between buildings to create distance and light with views of the mountains and sky around them. Morphosis’ intention with the design was to challenge the conventional design of high schools that routinely stick the youth into uninspiring boxes with little space for interaction between others and the surrounding environment.

Today we can see the parking lot of the school covered with rows of solar panels. Renewable energy is seen as one of, if not the, most effective measures to combat climate change. However, the shape of the buildings do not lend the appropriate roof space and proportions for solar panels, so the space was found elsewhere. The solar panels are not only ecologically viable and space-efficient, but they also provide comfort for students, faculty and staff, and their personal vehicles from the hot California climate.

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References

"Diamond Ranch High School." *Morphopedia*,
<https://www.morphosis.com/architecture/14/>.