

Earth & Elm Restaurant

Philadelphia Zoo

DAROFFDESIGN

The Philadelphia Zoo Earth & Elm Restaurant, a current work in progress, will be a new 20,000 sq. ft., 700 seat, LEED Silver dining and event facility to be built as the cornerstone of the Zoo's ambitious and transformative new campus master plan. Located on a sloping site with views of Bird Lake and the historic Treehouse, the restaurant design is organized as a tall, glass-enclosed dining pavilion set against a long, lower Wissahickon schist-clad service bar that also acts as a retaining wall. The dining room opens to outdoor dining terraces on three sides, providing views of the lake, surrounding groves of trees, and nearby exhibits. The broad, overhanging green roof shades the terraces below while providing space for

an elevated beer garden and outdoor event space with views to the nearby tree canopies and University City beyond. A double-height entry pavilion with glass elevator, sculptural stair, and organic-patterned facade screen acts as a landmark by day and softly glowing beacon by night, guiding visitors from the main promenade through a landscape of rainwater gardens that support and illustrate stormwater management strategies. Inside, a modern, functional palette of polished concrete floors, exposed structure, glass, and blackened steel is complemented by warm-toned woods and a floating ceiling plane of decorative pendant light fixtures inspired by bird nests and woven fibers.

