

# Children's Beach House

Lewes, Delaware

Architect: Anderson Brown Higley & Associates

Photo Courtesy of Image Source Photography



The Children's Beach House, a year round camp for children with special needs, has operated at their building along the Delaware Bay for over sixty years. After much deliberation, the development committee decided to raze the original structure and construct a new facility in its place. The original structure was demolished as a controlled burn conducted by three local fire departments.

The design endeavored to recreate the spirit of the much beloved but antiquated original building. This was accomplished



## MANUFACTURERS/SUPPLIERS

**Exterior Walls** — Wood Windows: Andersen Windows; Cedar: Delaware Cedar Co.; Metal Doors: Steelcraft.

**Roof** — Asphalt Shingles: CertainTeed "Hatteras".

**Floors** — Ceramic Tile: Dal-Tile; VCT: Azrock; Carpet: Shaw Industries.

**Interior Walls** — Drywall:

United States Gypsum; Acoustical Treatment: Armstrong; Paint: Sherwin Williams; Operable Partitions: **Panelfold**; Toilet & Bath Accessories: Bobrick.

**Elevators** — Columbia Elevator Co.

## EXTENDED PRODUCT INFORMATION

**Interior Walls** — Operable Partitions: **Panelfold**. See advertisement on page 25.



primarily by use of natural materials and a floor plan that was open and breezy while maintaining a child friendly character.

The new main building and staff quarters are built in approximately the same location as the original Beach House and stretch along the entire beach frontage. The existing swimming pool, gazebo and garage were maintained while the pool house and beach showers were renovated. A new play area was developed between the building and the multi-purpose space. The site configuration allows the building to take full advantage of the pristine views of the Bay. It also creates a narrow building that allows for enhanced natural ventilation.

The two-story activity and orientation space is a focal point within the building for circulation on and between both floors. The design of this main space gives the feeling of the interior of a sandcastle. The round open stair tower echoes the historic watch-towers that are visible at nearby Cape Henlopen. As a gesture to the original building, the built-in reading alcove was restored and reinstalled in an enlarged library. The dormitories, infirmary and staff housing are located in a quiet area at one end of the facility with offices, kitchen/dining and support functions at the other. Educational activities are located on the second floor, where windows open to the view and decks invite outdoor activity.

The exterior of the building uses residential detailing and roof forms. The rooflines are varied to reduce the building's scale and follow the crest of the dune. The materials and subdued colors blend comfortably with the beach cottages that surround the camp. Interior colors are keyed to the activities of each space and to the spirit of the original Beach House.

Functions and durability were top concerns in the evaluation of systems and building materials. The structural system is a simple residential wood frame built on a larger scale. From the wood friction piles up to the exposed multi-ply wood trusses above the second floor, the building employs an economical structural system built by local residential trades. Given the environmental nature of the programs, deference was also given to the use of recycled and composite materials where appropriate, including decking, railing systems and millwork. Special attention was given to ensure that building components would resist the corrosive salt air environment.

The building is equipped with a hydraulic elevator and is fully sprinklered. It is heated and air conditioned for year round use but is designed with passive heating and cooling techniques to optimize its unique location and minimize the need for supplemental cooling.

