



WILSHIRE BOULEVARD TEMPLE

WILSHIRE BOULEVARD TEMPLE COMPLETES AUDREY IRMAS PAVILION, DESIGNED BY OFFICE OF METROPOLITAN ARCHITECTURE (OMA), LED BY PARTNER SHOHEI SHIGEMATSU

*In dialogue with the Temple's 1929 Byzantine-Revival Sanctuary,
the Audrey Irmes Pavilion is OMA's first commission from a religious institution,
and the firm's first cultural building in California*

Unveiling in September 2021



Image Credit: Jason O'Rear

Los Angeles, September 1, 2021 — Wilshire Boulevard Temple has completed the Audrey Irmes Pavilion, the 55,000 square foot structure designed by the world-class architecture firm Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). Led by **Shohei Shigematsu**, the Audrey Irmes Pavilion is OMA's first commission from a religious institution and its first cultural building in California. Intentionally designed to be in dialogue with the Temple's historic and stunning 1929 Byzantine-Revival sanctuary, the Audrey Irmes Pavilion is located on Wilshire Boulevard, in the heart of Koreatown/Wilshire Center, creating a bold statement from the oldest and largest synagogue in Los Angeles, and situated in the heart of a vibrant urban center. The Audrey Irmes Pavilion is also home to the Annenberg Foundation's newest initiative, Wallis Annenberg GenSpace, a community space for older Angelenos. As part of the commission, OMA founder **Rem Koolhaas** has designed the mezuzot, affixed to the doorpost entrances of the Pavilion, in recognition of the Torah's commandment to write the words of God "...on the doorposts of your house and upon your gates." (Deuteronomy 6:9).

Named the Audrey Irmes Pavilion for its lead donor, whose \$30 million gift launched the capital campaign in 2015, the gift was among the largest single donations to a temple in the United States. “As a life-long member of the congregation and the lead donor supporting the Audrey Irmes Pavilion, I am elated to see the building come to completion even more spectacularly than it was originally envisioned,” said **Audrey Irmes**. She continued, “This building will be an important gathering space enjoyed by the wider community for years to come, and I am overjoyed to be a part of its beginnings.”

In 2015, OMA was selected from a competitive field to design the building. The Audrey Irmes Pavilion will be a platform for gathering, forging new connections with the existing campus activities while inviting the urban realm in to create a new civic anchor. The Pavilion aims to harness the energy of gathering by simultaneously respecting historic traditions and reflecting modern civic needs.

The design of the Audrey Irmes Pavilion is an expression of respect to the surrounding historic buildings of the campus—the west façade slopes away from the existing landmark Temple sanctuary while leaning south away from the historic school. The resulting form, carved by its relationship to its neighbors, is both enigmatic, yet familiar. The subtle expression simultaneously reaches out towards and embraces the main urban corridor of Wilshire Boulevard to establish a new urban presence.

The Pavilion features flexible spaces that are diverse in scale and spatial characters ideal for gatherings large and intimate. It comprises three distinct gathering spaces that puncture through the building—a Grand Ballroom, a smaller Chapel/event space, and a sunken garden. The three interlocking gathering spaces are stacked one atop another to establish internal vantage points and framed views in and out of each space while creating a series of openings that filter light and reorient visitors to the complex and beyond.

The ground level’s main event space echoes the Temple dome by lowering its arc and extruding it north across the site. The second level provides a more intimate chapel, and the trapezoidal room frames the arched stained-glass windows of the historic Temple. The third void is a sunken garden that opens up to the sky and leads to a rooftop with expansive views of LA, the Hollywood sign, and the mountains to the north.

The unique façade of the structure is crafted from 1,230 hexagonal panels of glass fiber reinforced concrete (GRFC), affixed via cast-in-place clips on all six sides of the panel. The tonality and materiality resonate with the tones and textures of the existing Temple and the larger campus, enhancing the interior moments of color throughout the three main gathering spaces; red seen in the Grand Ballroom, green in the Chapel, and blue notes throughout the sunken garden, while the neutrality in the colors of the façade is enhanced by its texture and dynamic appearance depending on the time of day.

Shohei Shigematsu, OMA Partner-in-Charge, says “The making of the Audrey Irmes Pavilion sustained forward momentum through the COVID-19 Pandemic, a period in which the act of human interaction was questioned and contemplated. Its completion comes at a time when we hope to come together again, and this building can be a platform to reinstate the importance of gathering, exchange, and communal spirit. We assembled a constellation of spaces, distinct in form, scale, and aura—an extruded vault enveloped in wood establishes a multi-functional, central gathering space and connective spine; a trapezoidal void draws tones from the Temple dome and frames its arched, stained-glass windows; and a circular sunken garden provides an oasis and passage to a roof terrace overlooking LA. Three interconnected voids make the solid

form of the Pavilion strategically yet surprisingly porous, engaging the campus and the city. The Pavilion will support both old and new activities, values, and traditions to foster a renewed energy for gathering.”

Rabbi Steve Leder states “We are thrilled to see the completion of the Audrey Irmas Pavilion and with that, the completion of the Building Lives Campaign that included the plan to restore our historic sanctuary, create state-of-the-art early childhood and elementary school buildings and programs, a sports complex, a social services center to help our needy neighbors with food security, dental and vision care, legal aid and mental health services in Korean, Spanish and English at no cost to them, parking, robust security for all, and finally the Audrey Irmas Pavilion. With this modern masterpiece, the Temple brings another stunning, radiant landmark to our community and the entire city of Los Angeles. The Pavilion further expresses our role as a steadfast institution of learning, gathering, and giving. It is amazing to see this come to fruition after so many years and to add the final, breathtaking building to our urban campus.”

Pritzker Prize-winning architect **Rem Koolhaas** of OMA was also commissioned to design a mezuzah for each door frame within the Pavilion. The purpose of the mezuzah is to act as a constant reminder of God's presence, identifying Jewish homes as places of kindness, Torah, generosity and peace. For their design, each individual letter atop each mezuzah called a shin, was meticulously developed, hand-cut, filed and polished before being adhered to the mezuzah crafted from aluminum foam and cast in colored resin. “I was both intrigued and challenged to design the mezuzot for the doors within the Pavilion. It is an unexpected religious object having to answer explicit religious edicts, laws and rules which made it totally fascinating for me and a very good lesson to have at some point in my life.” says **Rem Koolhaas**.

This revolutionary new building is also home to the Annenberg Foundation’s newest initiative of chairman **Wallis Annenberg**, the Wallis Annenberg GenSpace. GenSpace is a new community space for older adults that emphasizes wellness, connection, and lifelong learning through innovative programs, partnerships, and a new national dialogue. “The Audrey Irmas Pavilion is a model for the kind of change I try to bring to Los Angeles: it honors our past, it reinvents our future, and it does so in a way that engages and embraces the whole community,” said **Wallis Annenberg**, founder of GenSpace and Chairman, President and CEO of the Annenberg Foundation. “To work with such extraordinary architects, people who understand how to harmonize the modern and the historic, has been a revelation. To walk through the wonderful new home for the Annenberg GenSpace — where we’re working to reimagine the very experience of aging in America — is to find energy and inspiration in every step. Above all, our goal is to reach and engage everyone in Koreatown with new ideas and creativity. We want this Pavilion to be every bit as dynamic and interactive as the community it serves. I can’t wait for its doors to open wide.” Wallis Annenberg GenSpace is also helping to reevaluate how society views growing older by challenging stereotypes and combating ageism through convenings, partnerships, and events that focus on a new way of looking at and talking about aging.

Positioned on the Temple’s Erika J. Glazer Family Campus, the Audrey Irmas Pavilion will provide a space for the Temple’s members and other organizations and community groups to host events, meetings, and programs in a spectacular and inspiring architectural setting in the heart of this dynamic city.

ENDS

ABOUT WILSHIRE BOULEVARD TEMPLE

One of the country's most highly respected congregations, Wilshire Boulevard Temple has been responding to the needs of the Los Angeles Jewish community since its founding in 1862 as Congregation B'nai B'rith. Today, Wilshire Boulevard Temple's members are deeply involved in the civic life of Los Angeles. The Temple has three locations to serve our communities: the historic Erika J. Glazer Family Campus in Wilshire Center/Koreatown, a modern Audrey and Sydney Irmas Campus in West Los Angeles, and an inviting University Campus in Brentwood, providing worship, adult programs, life cycle events, volunteer and social action opportunities, early childhood, elementary, and religious schools, as well as cultural and educational events.

THE BUILDING LIVES CAMPAIGN

The Audrey Irmas Pavilion is a key component of the Temple's Building Lives Campaign, a three-phase master plan for Wilshire Boulevard Temple's historic campus in the core of Los Angeles. The Temple's Erika J Glazer Family Campus spans the entire city block on Wilshire Boulevard between Harvard and Hobart Avenues in Koreatown, an ethnically and religiously diverse area of Los Angeles.

The first phase of the plan was the 2013 renovation of the 1929 historic Byzantine-Revival Sanctuary, which was entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1981. The second phase included two of the city's most state-of-the-art school buildings housing the Temple's Erika J Glazer Early Childhood Center, Brawerman East Elementary School and the Sunday religious school, a four-story, 500-car parking structure, and a 31,000 square foot rooftop sports complex. The second phase also included the creation of the Karsh Family Social Service Center, through which the Temple and local organizations work together to offer an array of cross-sector, integrated, and co-located social services to the surrounding community in an easily accessible and culturally sensitive manner. The Audrey Irmas Pavilion marks the completion of the third and final phase of the master plan.

ABOUT OMA / OMA New York

Established in 2001, OMA New York is responsible for OMA's operations in the Americas and has since overseen the successful completion of several buildings across the country, including Milstein Hall at Cornell University (2011); the Wily Theater in Dallas (2009); the Seattle Central Library (2004); and Prada's Epicenter in New York (2001). Most recently the office has completed the Faena Forum, a multi-purpose cultural venue in Miami Beach (2016); the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion, an extension to the Quebec National Museum (2016); Manus x Machina: Fashion in the age of Technology, an exhibition for the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2016); an exhibition in collaboration with artist Taryn Simon at the Park Avenue Armory (2016); an exhibition design for Dior's first US retrospective at the Denver Art Museum (2018); and the renovation of Sotheby's Headquarters in New York (2018).

Shohei Shigematsu is a Partner at OMA and has led the firm's diverse portfolio in the Americas for over the last decade. His engagements in fashion include Coach Omotesando Flagship in Tokyo as well as exhibition designs for Prada, Dior and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute. Sho has successfully seen the completion of the Faena Forum in Miami, an extension to the National Art Museum of Quebec and the renovation of Sotheby's Headquarters in New York. He is currently leading the design of the New Museum extension on Bowery in New York, and an extension to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo. Sho has also designed exhibitions for the Venice Architecture Biennale, Denver Art Museum, Dallas Museum of Art and the Park Avenue Armory.

For more information, please visit www.oma.com or on social media – Facebook (OMAAMO) and Instagram (@OMANewYork).

For press inquiries, please contact schoi@oma.com.

DONORS

The Audrey Irmas Pavilion was funded entirely through the generosity of private individuals and foundations. Wilshire Boulevard Temple is grateful to these generous lead donors and to every individual who made contributions large and small:

Audrey Irmas Foundation for Social Justice
Wallis Annenberg
Maurice Amado Foundation
The Bell Family
Allison and Larry Berg
Alan N. Berro
Bunny M. Wasser and Howard M. Bernstein
Adam & Ava Bold
Eli and Edythe Broad
Leslie and Michael Flesch
Diane P. and Guilford Glazer Foundation
Edward and Shari Glazer
Erika J Glazer
Vera and Paul Guerin
The Higgins Family
The David and Meredith Kaplan Foundation
Lilly and Bruce Karatz
Ryan Kavanaugh
Lauren B. Leichtman and Arthur E. Levine Family Foundation
The Trudy Louis Charitable Trust
Lance and Hillary Milken Foundation
Talía and Jason Rimokh
Crown Robinson Family Philanthropy
The Steven F. Roth Family Foundation
Reagan Silber
Shirken Family
Werner Family Foundation
Shirin and Peyman Jacob Yadegar

Website

For more information, visit the website at <https://audreyirmaspavilion.org/> and <https://www.wbtla.org>

Social Media

Join the conversation using the handle @wilshireboulevardtemple

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Lizzie McNamara | FITZ & CO | emcnamara@fitzandco.com | +1 646 589 0926
