Sustainability

SALK STYLE

Since its inception in 1960 by the developer of the first effective polio vaccine, Jonas Salk, and world-renowned architect Louis Kahn, the Salk Institute has been a monument to science and innovation for the ages.

SUSTAINABLE RESTORATION

Since 2003, the Institute has incorporated sustainable design strategies for renovation and construction projects. The Institute’s iconic teak window-walls, which needed attention after 50 years of exposure to the elements, were painstakingly restored in 2017 in collaboration with the Getty Conservation Institute, preserving 75 percent of the original hard-to-source wood.

GREEN ROOFS

What looks like lawns on the north and south sides of the Institute are actually green roofs over Salk’s central plant and other underground facilities. Green roofs offer many environmental benefits, including preserving roof materials from life-shortening exposure to sunlight, reducing rainwater runoff (which can pollute waterways and burden sewers) and improving air quality by trapping dust and other airborne particles. They also provide spaces for picnics, volleyball, soccer and other activities.

LIGHT

Kahn’s ingenious design included large windows and “light wells” to take advantage of natural daylight and reduce the need for artificial illumination. Today, the labs are additionally fitted with efficient, motion-sensing LED lighting, so that electricity is not wasted illuminating empty spaces whether day or night.