

AOTEAROA RETREAT CENTRE PROJECT

Key themes from Ren Xue community feedback

Design Features:

Open. Spacious. Bright. Practical.

Simple but still comfortable

Using as many environmentally friendly options as possible. Eg natural lighting; recycled, second-hand and local materials (eg. walls from old palettes can be very beautiful); recycled grey water, composting toilets and there are many more depending on vision, size, budget

-south side with solar panels

-insulated, natural shading and built in ventilation

Does it need a semi-covered walkway between dining and practice hall?

In-floor heat, heat pumps (water heated?)- for comfort, cost and enviro. Reasons

Natural, low maintenance landscaping - I believe we have some teachers who know a lot about permaculture

A larger practice hall so there is room for growing numbers

several smaller teaching rooms. Whiteboards? Flip charts? Portable tables and chairs? Screens for video? Storage space for these?

Designated still practice area so those needing quiet may have quiet-can be used outside of retreat time

A lounge with comfortable seating, light conducive to reading, an RX library and tea. This could also be a comfortable small teaching space/rental space/meeting space

Professional input on the kitchen with thought on whether it will all be catered or if it needs to accommodate volunteers as well

A few extra places to fill up water bottles outside of kitchen-(built in not catered to)

Extra fridge for special needs food and/or medicine

Food plan so that all those little plastic containers are not used :)

Composting, Recycling, Environmentally friendly cleaning products and hand soaps

Opportunities to volunteer

Sound insulation so group discussions are much, much easier and it is more comfortable
-for practice hall and dining hall

Gender neutral toilets

Scent free facility

Family friendly accommodation options

-play space for children (can be simple like hill with built in slide, tire swing)

Designed in a way that future expansion is possible/easy (eg building additions)

Outdoor practice space/teaching space/meeting space with sun shade

A proper first aid station/supplies -Does NZ have occupational, safety and health requirements for something this size? Other health and safety requirements for public centre?

Wheelchair accessible- ramps, paths, doorways, washrooms, some sleeping areas etc

Electric car charger(s)

Maintenance shed

-cubbies or ample hooks to hang all that wet outdoor clothing!-with some heat so that it actually dries! -this also saves some space in the practice hall

-more toilets at/near practice hall-maybe this would help people get back on time?

-a shelf with a few emerge

Location

Can it be accessible by public transport? Will it have a shuttle service? Will it be quite remote or closer to a large centre?

Ideas Inspired By Other Centres

-opportunities for lunch

-spaces to rent

-short classes and workshops outside of retreat time

-touring environmental stewardship

-gift shop: the gift shop did contain books from the Ashram of course, but it also had a large selection of what I would call "brining books and CDs"-the things many RX students were reading when they came to RX that may

attract others. It also had relevant local art work, cards, bookmarks, and a plethora of items with relevant sayings. A good way for people to walk away with a small piece of RX. I also noticed an large children's selection. If I had access to those kinds of children's books when my children were that age, I most definitely would have gone for the drive to access them. Interestingly there were not a lot of teen books. RX teen books could fill a gap...:). The purposes include spreading RX info as well as finance stream

-beautiful walks

-a modern temple with incredible architecture-I'm not advocating for a temple-just mentioning things people are interested in coming to see. Creating beautiful buildings may serve the same purpose.

Other ideas

A 5 Xin walk. A natural path,(perhaps heart shaped?) with 5 stops representing each of the five Xin. The stops could have a piece of art, a plaque with some information, a quote or a little hut for still practice etc.

Questions

Will audio visual equipment and set-up include live-streaming or will that stay in US only? -might want these answers before designing the space

Does it need accommodation for full time staff?