

structurally
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STEEL REVOLUTION



THE MONMOUTH BATTLEFIELD STATE PARK Visitor Center in Monmouth County, N.J., welcomes visitors to the site and educates them on the Battle of Monmouth. The June 28, 1778 battle is considered a critical turning point in the American Revolution and is cited as one of General Washington’s brilliant political strategies, one that led to the eventual colonist victory and his ascension to the presidency.

The landscape of the battlefield is its most powerful and enduring artifact, and the building sits atop Combs Hill, which overlooks the area where the battle took place. However, the existing concrete and brick brutalist building effectively blocked the view of the battlefield from visitors, so ikon.5 architects designed an adjacent, visually open steel-framed renovation that frames the views and sits delicately on the historic site.

Conceived as a modern-day primitive hut, the visitor center is a simple one-story flat-roofed structure that orients visitors toward the battlefield and features an exterior “steel sky” of exposed wide-flange members and metal mesh that creates a solar shade for reducing heat gain and protecting the exhibits inside. A portion of existing 1976 structure was removed to make way for the new structure, and another section was converted into a multipurpose classroom and archeological lab space.

Designed by structural engineer Thornton Tomasetti and fabricated by AISC member and certified fabricator Arnold Steel Company, the framing system consists of thin columns and cantilevered beams; the columns are custom-fabricated structural tees that are set back from the exterior enclosure to give the feel of a floating building. ■