

San Diego County gets new SST® waterless restroom

El Capitan Open Space Preserve is a 3,200-acre parcel near Lakeside, Calif. The park, popular with hikers, has eight miles of trails offering a rugged route along a granite-ribbed ridgeline with stunning views of both ocean and mountains. El Cajon Mountain—informally known as El Capitan—looms above the San Diego River Valley below.

The parking area and trailhead are near the intersection of Wildcat Canyon Rd. and Blue Sky Ranch Rd. Until recently, the only toilet facilities in the large lot were two small plastic portables near the busy road.

"We needed to replace them with a solid, vandal-resistant building," said Bradley Roberts, project manager for the County of San Diego Dept. of Parks & Recreation (sdparks.org), the agency responsible for acquiring, developing and operating 90 facilities covering 40,000 acres, including local and regional parks, lakes, community centers, special-use facilities, ecological preserves and open space.

"The El Capitan restroom project fits within our strategic plan," Roberts said. "Our mission is to provide opportunities for high quality park and recreation experiences."

Building Design Requirements

Park managers had several requirements for the new structure. It must:

- be waterless (water infrastructure did not exist);
- be vandal-resistant;
- fit with its natural surroundings;
- be an environmentally friendly, sustainable design.

The county chose a pre-engineered Romtec building. "Romtec offered the functional aspects of the building that are most important," Roberts noted. The restroom has been open since May, and response has been favorable. "People love the building," Roberts said. "It really looks like it belongs."

The SST® Aspen Double

The county chose the self-contained SST® Aspen Double Restroom, featuring Romtec's odor-free ventilation design. Custom features include:

- four 12"-diameter Solatube skylights
- large storage room with double doors
- exposed wood truss above restroom entries
- T-shaped privacy wall
- exterior of split-face CMU and manufactured stone.

The two ADA accessible bathrooms are bright and roomy, with a graffiti-resistant interior finish on walls & vaulted ceilings.

"The building is in a staging area set back about a mile from the road," Roberts mentioned. "Storage capacity is very important." Restroom supplies and maintenance equipment are securely stored in the facility.

The county wanted the building to blend with and complement the surrounding environment. For example, the wood truss reflects the preserve's woodland habitat, and as Roberts noted, "The Chardonnay Old Country Fieldstone veneer was selected because it is consistent with the color and texture of the surrounding granite."



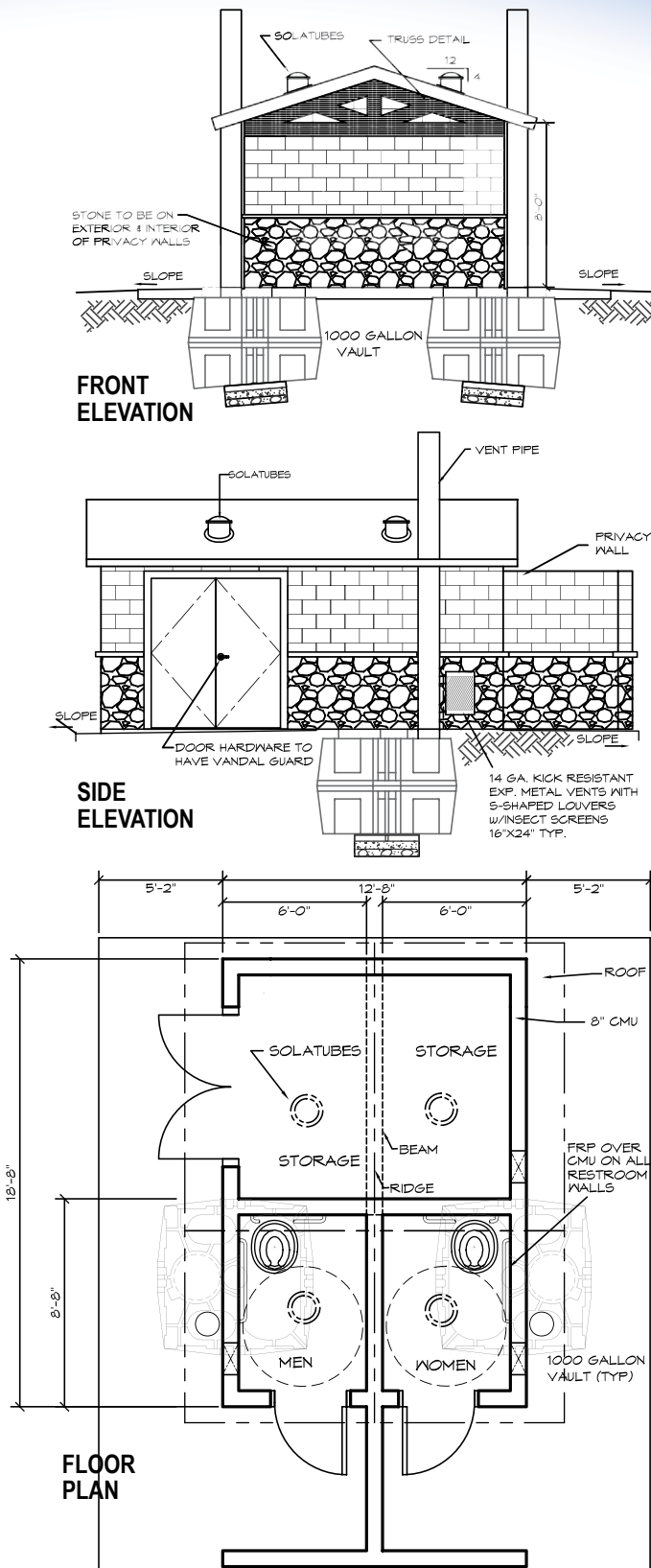
Photos

Top: Exterior walls of Romtec's split-face CMU and manufactured stone veneer.

Middle: Prefabricated wood truss installs quickly.

Bottom: Skylights bring plenty of light into restrooms and storage area.

The planter was added to the privacy wall after the completion of the building.



About the Project

Peter Schultz, owner of Old Julian Company, Inc. of Ramona, Calif., calls himself a "wood frame guy." Schultz's winning bid to install the new Romtec SST® Aspen concrete waterless restroom and storage building at El Capitan Open Space Preserve provided his first opportunity to work with Romtec's modular concrete building system.

The project began in December 2006. Schultz and crew installed the two cross-linked polyethylene vaults first, using the template supplied by Romtec to get the exact spacing. "It was really a snap," Schultz said. "Components are very well crafted, and everything else fell into place."

After using concrete slurry to backfill around the vaults, Schultz poured the building's footing and slab and began building assembly. Although he had "some initial concerns" about working with Romtec's dry-stack interlocking concrete blocks, the assembly went quickly. The pre-assembled wood truss was a high point. "The fit was really precise," Schultz commented. "When it came time to put the roof on, it went together without any problem. We didn't have to tweak or modify to get things to fit."

Schultz did the finish masonry work, too. He commented that the manufactured stone veneer and ledger trim worked well, aesthetically, with the split-face block on the upper walls and the wood truss. Even a field change, made by the building owner, from river rock to fieldstone, was an improvement, according to Schultz. "That building is a gem out there," he said. "Everybody made a contribution."

About the Contractor

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