

# ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

## Arquitectonica's Columbia Memorial Space Learning Center to Break Ground This Month

March 12, 2007

A shimmering skin cladding a curved form that juts forward to a prow-shaped entry characterizes Arquitectonica's design for the Columbia Memorial Space Learning Center in Downey, California. The 18,000-square-foot building will break ground later this month, the architect announced today.

Designed four years after the Columbia Space Shuttle disintegrated on reentry into the atmosphere, the new center is intended to honor the memory of the seven-member crew by supporting science education and scientific literacy. This \$6 million project forms the linchpin of the Downey's Landing project, a 160-acre mixed-use redevelopment of a former Boeing aerospace testing facility.



Image courtesy Arquitectonica

"The center will look like it is taking off towards the sky," says Bernardo Fort-Brescia, principal of the Miami-based design firm. "Our vision is to communicate the spirit that drove a century of aviation and space exploration achievement."

Fiber-optic lighting incorporated into metal panels within the facade will simulate constellations of stars. Inside the building, a two-level lobby connected by a large open stairway will feature exhibits covering the history of spaceflight and astronauts.

"We were inspired by the experience of moving through space and the combination of glass, metal, and curves encourages feelings of the freedom of spaceflight," Fort-Brescia says. The building is expected to open in 2008.