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Local firm designs Texas State rec center

By [Jennifer Hiller](#) - Express-News

This is not the fetid, fluorescent-lit gymnasium of your youth.

San Antonio architecture firm Marmon Mok has designed a 94,000-square-foot, \$31.2 million addition to the Student Recreation Center at Texas State University in San Marcos.

The recreation center, which held its grand opening last week, includes a 54-foot rock-climbing wall, lap and leisure pools, running track, boxing room, weight and cardio rooms, indoor soccer courts and a golf simulator where students can try their swing at famous courses from around the world.

The lap pool is deep enough for kayak training and synchronized swimming, while the leisure pool can accommodate water volleyball and basketball, with benches so students can hang out and relax next to water jets.

“Students are growing up with the expectation that they'll have this kind of facility,” said Greg Houston, partner at Marmon Mok. “It's important for recruitment and retention.”

Marmon Mok has something of a specialty in recreation sports design.

The firm has done student recreation centers for Texas A&M University in College Station and is working on centers for Abilene Christian University and at Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

The three-story addition doubled the square footage and includes a vaulted lobby area where students are greeted by a view of the climbing wall, pool, weight room, gym and exercise room.

“We opened the building up in the lobby so students have a visual experience of seeing many activities at once,” Houston said. “It's like a visual menu: What am I going to do today?”

The center also is the first new building on campus to follow new design criteria that hopes to move Texas State's architecture back to its Spanish Colonial roots. “In the '80 and '90s, they did more modern buildings with mixed results,” Houston said. “They wanted the campus to have a more cohesive appearance.”

But the structure the new center was attaching to was more horizontal and modern than Spanish. To tie the buildings together, Marmon Mok designed a colonnade that extended across both to tie them together visually. The building's exterior is of brick, cast stone and plaster with a red barrel tile roof.

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