

WHITE PAPER

Where Strangers Become Community

The Institutional Case for Biophilic Design

Executive Summary

garden on the wall®

THE ART OF PRESERVED NATURE

gardenonthewall.com

Executive Summary

Trust

Museums, libraries, non-profits, and faith communities are evaluated differently than commercial organizations. They are entrusted with donations, grants, tax dollars, memberships, and public confidence. Every design decision becomes part of that stewardship story, reinforcing - or undermining - the trust that institutions work so hard to earn. Peer-reviewed research demonstrates that transparency directly influences perceptions of organizational performance, while donor confidence remains one of the strongest predictors of long-term institutional success. [1], [2]

Key Statistics:

√ **1 in 4** - Donors walk away over undisclosed use of funds. [2]
√ **66%** - Perceived nonprofit performance is explained by donor trust. [1]
√ **20+ Years** - reserved botanical systems require zero irrigation or replacement.

Material Choices Become Visible Evidence

Visitors may never request an HPD or Environmental Product Declaration, but they constantly interpret the physical environment. Authentic, independently verified materials reinforce an institution's commitment to stewardship, while unsupported sustainability claims can quietly erode confidence. [12]

Connection

Few building types exist primarily to bring strangers together. Libraries foster civic dialogue, museums create shared cultural experiences, faith communities strengthen belonging, and nonprofits unite volunteers around a common mission. Environmental psychology consistently shows that natural environments reduce the physiological threat response that keeps people guarded while encouraging stronger social interaction and civic engagement. [5], [6]

Key Statistics:

√ **3*x*** - People are more likely to gather in green common spaces. [5]
√ **2,440** - Citizens studied linking green space to civic engagement. [6]
√ **30%** - Churches generate community activity through rentals and events. [22]

Connection Begins with Perception

Attention Restoration Theory and peer-reviewed neuroscience demonstrate that restorative responses begin with the visual perception of authentic natural forms rather than biological activity alone. [10], [11] Indoor plant research further supports improvements in attention and cognitive restoration. [12]

Attendance

Institutional success is measured not only by first-time visits but by lasting engagement. Research links the quality of the physical environment to visitor satisfaction, satisfaction to loyalty, and loyalty to repeat attendance. [14], [15]

Key Statistics:

✓ **β = 0.246** - Museum environment significantly influences visitor satisfaction. [14]
✓ **33%** - Cultivation event attendees made unsolicited gifts. [16]
✓ **35%** - Donors credited the event experience with influencing their gift. [16]

Environment Shapes Engagement

Before a visitor becomes a member, volunteer, or donor, they first experience the institution itself. Restorative environments support comfort, encourage longer engagement, and increase the likelihood of returning. [14], [15], [16]

Accessibility

Public institutions serve the full sensory and neurological spectrum of society. Research demonstrates that neuroinclusive design and biophilic design rely on the same evidence-based architectural principles: recovery, refuge, prospect, attention restoration, and sensory coherence. [17], [18]

Key Statistics:

✓ **281** - Survey respondents across 23 countries. [17]
✓ **4** - Shared frameworks connect neurodiversity and biophilic design. [18]
✓ **1** - Sensory coherence benefits every visitor. [19]

Accessibility Through Restoration

Biophilic spaces establish calm, legible, and restorative environments that reduce sensory overload while supporting comfort, belonging, and inclusion for everyone. [17], [18], [19]

"These are buildings the public has trusted with something: money, memory, meaning, or faith. The materials inside them should demonstrate the same transparency, stewardship, and accountability the public expects from the institution itself."

Specification Standard

Garden on the Wall® maintains the most comprehensive third-party verification portfolio in the preserved botanical category: HPD v2.3 at 100 ppm full-system disclosure, Declare Red List Free, CDPH Section 01350, ASTM E84 Class A whole-system without added fire retardants, and a cradle-to-grave EPD with negative cradle-to-gate embodied carbon. The company has completed more than 1,900 installations exceeding 186,000 square feet, serving more than 60 Fortune 500 clients across more than 460 award-winning projects, with a 7-year warranty and 20+ year expected lifespan.

7-year Warranty	Zero Maintenance	EPD Published	Complete Verification
20+ year product lifespan	No Water, light, or care required	Negative cradle-to-grave carbon	HPD • Declare • CDPH• ASTM E84

Download the full white paper with complete research citations, detailed ROI calculations, and implementation guidance at gardenonthewall.com. Request samples through Material Bank · CEU available through Architectural Record's Continuing Education Center (AIA/IDCEC/GBCI accredited).