

NPS Eielson Visitor Center
LEED NC 2.1
ID Credit 1: Innovation in Design

Preservation of Viewshed

Intent of Credit:

Denali National Park and Preserve is the home to panoramic vistas that draw visitors from around the world. The National Park Service is dedicated to preserving park resources so that future generations may benefit. The intent of this credit is to protect and preserve this viewshed as a unique and limited resource, pivotal to the sustainable design of the facility.

Proposed Requirements for Compliance:

Minimize the impact of the design on the viewshed experienced from the building site

Proposed Submittals to Demonstrate Compliance:

Photographs of the site prior to construction of the facility, drawings and photographs that demonstrate how the new building will minimally impact the viewshed.

Please note that the photographs provided were taken near the end of construction and though they demonstrate the surrounding views, they do not reflect the final hardscape and landscape that is currently being installed.

Design Approach Used to Meet Requirements:

It was critical in the approach to the design of the Visitor Center to preserve or restore the views of the surrounding landscape vistas and mountains including Mt. McKinley. There is a deliberate hierarchy of experience which places natural systems first, and manmade elements in a secondary supporting role. The design team was able to preserve and improve the viewshed by demolishing the existing building and replacing it with an underground building and landscape walls of modest height. Visitors are no longer presented with a "first impression" building that obscures the views when they arrive at the site. Instead they arrive at the roof plaza that facilitates natural and panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. After a period of contemplation and decompression, the visitor is enabled to journey without vehicular assistance to the next level of understanding. It is only after walking to the lower plaza that visitor focus shifts to the manmade elements and programs of the Visitor Center.

Demolished visitors center:



Old visitors center parking



New visitors' center, lower level:



New visitors center from behind, showing underground building with unimpeded views:

