

Twist Light Tower creates an iconic destination for San Jose. Located on the western portion of Arena Green this addition to the park is a lantern, observation tower, history museum, and café combined into one. People are welcome to visit the observation deck at the top of the 200' tower with panoramic views of downtown. The unique design of the tower enables it to transform from a solid sensuous sculpture by day to a lacy light filled lantern at night. The pattern of light on the tower changes with the seasons and local events making it a visual spectacle. An innovative structure utilizes the latest advancements in mass timber and photovoltaic technology to create a sustainable net-zero energy building.

Twisting is a corporeal experience to which we can all relate. Even without understanding the definition and its geometric implications, people intuitively understand the meaning of twist especially when it comes to dancing a particular dance that bears its name. Classical sculptors understood the importance of twist through the compositional technique of contrapposto that rotated upper and lower body parts of a sculpture bringing a sense of life to a lifeless piece of marble. Likewise, a 20° rotation in twelve increments brings the Twist Light Tower to life. It appears different from all angles due to this simple maneuver. The 240° rotation of the tower enables it to align itself with the park and adjacent streets below while at the same time aligning diagonally with the dramatic view of downtown San Jose from the observation deck above.

The technological innovations of Silicon Valley have found their counterpart in the structural daring and innovative use of materials in the Twist Light Tower. If built, it would set a new record for observation towers through its use of mass timber. The unique hybrid structure has a core of concrete and an exterior diagrid of glu-lam timbers with steel hoop rings and tensile cables all sheathed in a sustainable wood screen. To achieve the goal of net-zero energy usage, strategies for on-site power generation as well as passive strategies to heat and cool the building will be employed. A photovoltaic array will be installed around the base of the tower. Solar energy will be used to power the LED lights that light up the exterior of the tower at night and the entrance, café, and Hall of History on the interior during the day.