CASE STUDY

UNICEL ARCHITECTURAL

Using Aedicules to Enhance the Architectural Impact of a Cultural Complex

The term "aedicule" is derived from ancient Rome and is typically a small shrine or construction designed in the form of a building. Through the ages, aedicules have been employed by architects as design influences to add form and dimension to buildings for added impact and esthetics.

Place des Arts, Montreal

The Place des Arts in Montreal is Canada's most unique cultural complex. It is comprised of five prestigious and multifaceted halls - Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Theater Maisonneuve, Theater Jean-Duceppe, the Studio-theater and the Cinquième Salle - each with its own distinct technical characteristics, and all interconnected by an underground network of corridors and passageways. In all, the complex occupies a total area of over 100,000 square meters on what is commonly known as the Place des Arts plaza or esplanade. The esplanade is an open-air oasis in the heart of the city, providing the perfect backdrop for countless outdoor shows and celebrated festivals.

The Challenge:

With its vast underground facilities, the Place des Arts wanted to filter daylight into subterranean spaces while enhancing its architecturally significant exterior esplanade areas. Designers came up with an aedicules concept that would consist of a series of small skylight structures created to be visually distinctive while providing effective top-lighting into the underground interiors.

The Solution:

Unicel Architectural was approached to fabricate and install five aedicules of 10' wide x 10' long x 9' high (3m x 3m x 2.8m) and a separate skylight structure for Place des Arts. The insulating glass units used for the aedicules were made of ¼" (6mm) Solarban 60 tempered on the outboard, ½" (12.5mm) argon-filled airspace, ½" (12mm) laminated glass composed of 3/16" (5mm) clear tempered glass / 0.060" (1.52mm) PVB / 1/4" (6mm) clear tempered glass. Unicel integrated into its aluminum frames a gutter system and drainage basin downpipe. These penetrated the 2.5" x 4.5" (63.5mm x 114mm) curtain wall back members and were made of galvanized steel sheet metal and membrane, designed to allow discharge of the water accumulation from the green roofs above.

The Results:

The Unicel aedicules have become part of Montreal's distinctive architectural scene. They allow natural light to enter deep into the underground building and workspaces below, while respecting the outdoor landscaping design.

Participants:
Manufacturer of Aedicules and Skylight & Glazing Contractor: Unicel Architectural Corp.
General Contractor: Gestion SNC Lavalin
Client: Société de la Place des Arts
Architect: Sid Lee Architecture + Aedifica

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