











Adler Planetarium Sky Pavilion

Chicago, Illinois, USA

The Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum, a national landmark originally built in 1930, required expanded exhibit space and reorganization of existing support space to increase interest and attendance. As part of Chicago's lakefront museum campus, the Adler Planetarium needed to maintain architectural significance and convey a world-class presence as an astronomy museum that celebrates the magic of the sky.

After studies of six options were considered, an above-ground addition at the back of the original building provided the best functional solution to the program requirements. A dynamic circular building form that radiates outward from the existing planetarium dome was created. The addition was needed to house expanded exhibit spaces and a new state-of-the-art planetarium theater while preserving the Adler's historic architectural features and relief sculptures. Existing public spaces needed qualitative improvements, resolution of circulation problems, and a sense of inspiration supportive of Adler's mission to communicate the wonders of the universe.

Historic preservation work included preparing historic conservation reports, researching and designing the return of the historic entry procession, and research and planning for the restoration of the 1930s roof structure.

Radiating from the original structure, the addition opens the sky to visitors with spectacular views of Chicago's lakefront and the stars above. The reorganization of existing support space greatly improved operations, efficiency and visitor services. The replacement of an existing parking ring with a promenade expanded pedestrian activity and linked the Adler Planetarium to other museum campus improvements. The addition and upgrades became a catalyst to creating excitement and reinforcing Adler's mission to educate the public about the universe.

Project Data

SIZE

64,000 sf addition
96,000 sf building renovation

FEATURES

Digistar skyrider planetarium – 190 seats
Exhibition galleries
Education center
Winter garden cafeteria

CLIENT

Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum

Recognition & News

RECOGNITION

1999, Distinguished Building Award – American Institute of Architects, Chicago Chapter