

BANKER WIRE CUSTOMIZES METAL MESH AND SUPPORTS INSTALLATION FOR LABORATORY BUILDING ADDITION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Mesh Railing Infill Mimics LED Exterior Facade

MUKWONAGO, WI—JUNE 28, 2016—The design architect of a new building addition and renovation project at the University of Michigan says the firm “pushed the envelope” with the help of Banker Wire.

Banker Wire metal mesh was specified for the railing infill of a new pedestrian bridge, which provides access to the new Center of Excellence in Nano Mechanical Science and Engineering building – an addition to the George Granger Brown (G.G. Brown) Memorial Laboratories building on North Campus in Ann Arbor.

Spanning more than 50 feet, the bridge had a significant impact on the overall design, and as a result needed to mimic the new building’s predominant design feature – a giant LED wall showing abstract samples of active lab work.

The LED wall features a diagonal “fold” that runs across from one corner to another, creating a uniquely textured façade. Design architect Integrated Design Solutions (IDS) called for the bridge’s railing infill to produce a similar fold, but the ambitious design required a custom metal mesh pattern for just the right look and a custom framing system to ensure it would securely attach to the railings. Banker Wire’s manufacturing capabilities, fabrication experience, and installation know-how made the company the only choice for the job.

“We were pushing the envelope with this design, and Banker Wire appeared to be the only company that could make it a reality,” says Mark McPartlin, Project Manager for IDS. “They were able to customize their product to suit our needs, and they were very easy to work with throughout the entire process.”

The custom woven wire mesh pattern that Banker Wire manufactured for the pedestrian bridge was LZ-55 – a simple, high-definition rectangular lock crimp pattern that forms a golden rectangle, where the ratio of the longer side to the shorter is the golden ratio. This ratio is considered very aesthetically pleasing, as it appears in some patterns in nature, including the spiral arrangement of leaves and other plant parts. LZ-55 provides a perfect balance of spacing and diameter for architectural applications where strength and high percent open area is of importance.

In addition to a custom mesh pattern, the project required an attachment method that could achieve the desired aesthetic without compromising strength or functionality. Banker Wire proposed its Versatile Spine frame strategy.

Versatile Spine is a modern framing style that utilizes a three-layer laminate system. The spine is laser-cut to securely receive each individual wire of the mesh material, and then sandwiched by two outer veneer covers.

For this project, Banker designed an intermediate laser-cut diagonal spine that acted as a set hinge at the precise angle required. This allowed two separate pieces of mesh to function as one continuous panel while maintaining the desired angle shape.

“The beauty of our Versatile Spine framing strategy is that we can accommodate a creative project such as this while maintaining the structural integrity of the system,” says Michelle Eastburn, Product Engineering Manager for Banker Wire.

The Versatile Spine frame provides the highest level of woven wire mesh framing precision and can be easily customized to work with a large range of wire mesh specifications while maintaining strength.

“We were struggling to find a clean way to attach the material to the bridge structure, and we were extremely pleased at how we were able to work together with Banker to overcome this challenge,” says McPartlin.

The result is an elegant and sound pedestrian bridge that perfectly complements the LED wall and the overall design of the new Center of Excellence in Nano Mechanical Science and Engineering building on the University of Michigan campus – and ultimately, a more recognizable on-campus presence for the College of Engineering.

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The \$46 million, 62,880-square-foot, three-story Center of Excellence in Nano Mechanical Science and Engineering project was more than four years in the making. It was completed in August 2014.

The project team included owner University of Michigan; architect of record Perkins+Will, New York, NY; design architect Integrated Design Solutions, Troy, MI; general contractor DeMaria, Novi, MI; and fabricator Kirby Steel, Inc., Burton, MI.

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About Banker Wire

Banker Wire is the world's leading manufacturer of woven and welded wire mesh for architectural and industrial applications. With the most modern and productive mill in the U.S., Banker Wire provides custom-woven material for any aesthetic on any scale – from intricate design highlights to expansive building facades. Founded in 1896, Banker Wire's manufacturing expertise has been refined for more than a century, bringing unmatched customization, quality, and service to customers. State-of-the-art grid welding equipment provide a wide variety of wire alloy, spacing and diameter configurations, trimmed or untrimmed. For more information visit www.bankerwire.com.

About Architectural Woven Wire Mesh

Pre-crimped woven wire mesh is constructed of individual wires that are crimped prior to being woven together on a loom. Pre-crimping the wires provides a much higher degree of control during the weaving process. This allows for far more intricate and interesting patterns, as well as unique customization, to meet the vision of the designer. Banker Wire has refined and innovated its crimping process more than any other manufacturer, delivering more than 8,000 different spacing, diameter, and crimp combinations, plus endless customization options. As a result, Banker can make any woven wire mesh pattern imaginable – manufactured to specify for any project type.

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