



Bartle Hall

Kansas City, Missouri USA

Improving the appearance of a highly visible loading dock is not an easy task for any architect. On this site, the loading dock was visible from both the street and from viewpoints well above including surrounding hotels and condominiums. As described by nearby residents, office workers and visitors, this site had become an eyesore.

Rather than simply 'box-in' the loading dock to mesh seamlessly with the existing convention center building, the architect chose to employ a modern industrial aesthetic that hinted at the locations actual use. The addition of 43 shade sails, totaling 24,000 square feet of surface area, helped skew the site lines of the loading dock, provide shade and also a reflective surface that would illuminate the space in the nighttime hours. The gridded structural configuration is highlighted with an 'egg crate' effect that is defined by the shade sails.

The structure and the sails are complimented by a sculpted abstract sheet metal façade. Sheet metal cladding is often linear and planar; tensioned fabric membranes are typically free form and sculptural. In this case, the architect effectively managed to switch the two common conventions of the materials to provide a highly dramatic and undoubtedly unique structure.

