

Cordova Stone™ Earns Ovations for Form and Acoustic Function of Modernized Amphitheater

Wheaton Memorial Park Amphitheater



Background

Although Wheaton, Illinois, is considered a suburb of Chicago, the city of more than 50,000 residents has a distinct character and vibe of its own. Ranked the "#1 Place to Live in Illinois" by Money Magazine, the vibrant downtown includes a variety of retail shops, salons, day spas, and more than 130 restaurants. The adjacent Wheaton Memorial Park recently underwent vast park improvements along with the debut of the park's long anticipated new amphitheater.

The Challenge

As a result of its long-standing alliance with the Wheaton Parks District, Itasca-based

Williams Architects, a national leader in Park and Recreation design, was chosen to oversee the configuration of the new performance venue along with other improvements. Key decision makers had quickly determined that a new, more expansive, modernized structure was needed to replace a weathered bandstand.

Andy Dogan, Principal and Project Executive, and Steve Mihelich, Principal and Director of Design, headed up efforts for conceptualizing the new venue. The multi-faceted amphitheater required all-hands-on-deck for the Williams group with structural, aesthetic, and sound quality aspects to be integrated into facility plans.



ECHELON®

The Solution

Echelon Masonry's Cordova Stone™ was selected to complete the inner walls of the 2,600 square foot stage. The high-density, pre-finished architectural stone cladding mimics the look of natural stone by incorporating all-natural aggregates and recycled content. In addition, the

mold and mildew resistant product was an ideal choice for withstanding the heavy usage and harsh Illinois weather patterns that the venue will endure. The design blended Cordova's Ground Face and Rock Face textures in Buff and Alabaster colors to create an ashlar pattern.

Mihelich noted, "The amphitheater backs up to the southwest corner of the village district, so being on the edge of that business center and within the heritage of the park, we found the look of Cordova to be a very appropriate complement to the materiality of the of those surrounding buildings with the design of a curved stone wall to complement the public plaza at this location."

In addition, the architectural units were customized to achieve specific acoustical results.

Dogan explained, "The standard shapes and textures available in Cordova Stone really helped enable us to achieve our acoustical goals. The modularity of Cordova worked very well with the sound quality profile as far as articulating each of the back and side walls. We were able to create different patterns to achieve the right blend of absorption and reflection.

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— *Andy Dogan, Principal and Project Executive*

"Brad Moser, our Project Architect, worked on the detailing of materials to match and coordinate masonry products to the specific acoustic characteristics we were trying to achieve," he continued.

Fortunately, the custom angles of the Cordova units were pre-cut at the manufacturing plant, which was a huge time saver when it came time for installation. The masonry work was completed by Piazza and Mannerino Masonry, a Homer Glen, Illinois-based firm with a respected reputation in large commercial projects.

Tony Mannerino commented, "It was such an intricate project, but thankfully we had basically no cutting to do on this job."

The Result

"The venue is extremely successful," Dogan commented, "and has become very much in-demand in the musical community. Performers love playing here. Not only does the sound project out to the audience, but it is equally important for a large ensemble of 80 or 90 musicians be able to hear themselves, which is much harder to do in this type of open-air venue. The positive feedback has been incredible. The Cordova Stone ended up being a very good match for everything we were trying to achieve."



About Echelon® Masonry

Echelon Masonry is North America's largest manufacturer of the highest-quality masonry products for the architectural and masonry industries. As the consolidated masonry brand for Oldcastle APG, a CRH Company, Echelon offers the widest masonry portfolio in the industry, from trusted brands like Trenwyth to innovative product solutions like the InsulTech System, as well as the localized, one-on-one support needed to bring the most ambitious projects to life. Since 2015, Echelon Masonry has been committed to supporting the time-honored tradition of masonry and advancing the craft for the 21st century and beyond. www.EchelonMasonry.com

Project Details

Project Description:
Wheaton Park District
Memorial Park

Location:
Wheaton, Illinois

Product:
Cordova Stone™

Color:
Buff & Alabaster in
Groundface & Rockface

General Contractor:
Frederick Quinn Corporation

Architect:
Williams Architects

Masonry Contractor:
Piazza and Mannerino
Masonry, Inc.

Manufacturer:
Northfield, an Oldcastle®
APG Company