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Exelon Pavilions at Millennium Park



Top: View of east pavilion from park

Bottom L: View of west pavilion visitor lounge

History: Cyrus Subawalla, while a Principal at HBRA served as the project designer for these two pavilions. The firm was asked by the Mayor's office to create an urban landmark that would showcase Chicago as 'the Green Capital of the United States.' A 24-acre park over a railway station was subsequently planned for public use, with three of the park's buildings being the Music and Dance Theatre and two of the four Exelon Pavilions, all of which Mr. Subawalla was involved with.

Client Brief: The city of Chicago provided several stipulations for the new design and the site upon which it was built. Specifically, the city of Chicago requested that the pavilions be designed with the largest integrated photovoltaic installation in the state of Illinois, which would be perhaps the largest in the entire country at that point in time. Of the two pavilions, one was designed to hold the



Top: View from Michigan Ave.
 Bottom L: View of west pavilion from park

museum and office of the director of the park, while the other was designed as a visitor's center. Because the site was situated above one of Chicago's busiest railway stations and garage parking areas, construction of the pavilions proved notably difficult.

Design: The pavilions were conceived as a confluence of the seminal ideas of several modernist masters. The parti, or chief organizational scheme of the governing plan, was reintroduced in section as a means to further organize the spatial logic of the building. This allowed large double-height glazed public lobbies to be situated diagonally from one another within the interiors. These interior forms—laterally inverted symmetries of public space—also worked well in providing access to the park from the upper level and to upper Randolph Street from the lower level.

The design strategy expresses the interior functions of the building through a rigorous grid of punched openings in the facade that contrast with the large spans of glass elsewhere, a motif intended to reveal a clear distinction between served and servant space. The design also integrates custom mono-crystalline photovoltaic cells into the double-wall system, ensuring that the convective cycle between the outer glazed and inner rated walls



Team
Cyrus Subawalla-As principal HBRA
Rahman Polk-Architect
Consultants
Structure
Thornton Tomasetti Inc
MEP/FP
Environmental Systems Design

will cool the cells, thereby improving efficiency of the photovoltaic panels. Finally, numerous other sustainable design features were integrated into the building, resulting in a success ratio of 95% with regard to the obtainment of LEED points.

Top: Street view of pavilions at Upper Randolph
Bottom R: Site plan

Intent and Recognition: The Exelon Pavilions are components of a larger ensemble of structures that received the AIA National Honor Award for excellence for Millennium Park. The building received a LEED Silver certification. Completed 2005.

Images: Jon Miller - Hedrich Blessing Photographers