



The Architectural

Mesh Creates Beautiful Solutions for Hotel and Airport Parking Structures

By Heather Collins

In today's hospitality and transportation markets, forward-thinking parking structure design is top-of-mind for both architects and building owners. New architectural materials and methods are constantly raising expectations in parking to meet the needs of modern hotels and airports. What once were simply utilitarian buildings are now fully integrated structures that contribute to high-end architectural designs and themes.

One innovative material contributing to this new generation of parking design is architectural mesh. Mesh is becoming an increasingly popular trend in U.S. building design. Flexible, woven stainless steel fabric perfectly marries unique visual appeal and extreme functionality.

Woven exactly like a fine fabric, architectural mesh is one of the most durable exterior claddings available. It requires minimal maintenance and far outlasts alternative finished facade products. Mesh also provides a user-friendly fall protection, unlike traditional steel bars, opaque louvers or screen systems. When used in parking structures, rainwater will wash the metal fabric clean. The inherent nature of mesh allows it to visually inspire, ensure excellent ventilation and provide security, safety and visibility throughout parking structures.

One of the newest and most exciting visual and functional mesh applications is integrated LED. Strips or squares of LEDs are inserted or placed throughout the metal fabric, allowing mesh to wash a parking structure in spectrums of vibrant color, display animated graphics or use its façade as an HDTV for broadcasting video or television commercials. This is especially exciting for hotel parking facilities looking for new visual elements, or for any parking garage looking to transform its exterior.

Tourist

Mesh Benefits

Both airports and hotels are, first and foremost, concerned with better serving their customers' needs; providing a safe and secure area for vehicles, and getting travelers parked and to the terminal or lobby as quickly and smoothly as possible.

As far as safety and security are concerned, architectural mesh more than fits the bill. Stainless steel mesh meets fall protection requirements and, when used with crash barriers, eliminates the added cost of handrails. The open, yet closed nature of woven metal fabric also shades vehicles and pedestrians by day while permitting security personnel a view into all levels of the structure at night.

The durability of architectural mesh is unparalleled. It is virtually indestructible, and capable of enduring even the most extreme temperatures and high winds. In fact, Cambridge Architectural, a manufacturer of architectural mesh systems, offers a product called Velocity™ that releases tension on the mesh and then re-tensions it automatically after wind conditions have passed. This attachment can withstand gusts up to 176 mph, and can also be specified to protect parking structures from materials that are propelled at it during high wind conditions.

While primarily focused on improving the patron experience, parking facility owners, leaseholders, managers and supervisors must also optimize the functions not seen by patrons – building performance characteristics that save energy and return revenue.

When used as an exterior cladding material for airport and hotel parking structures, architectural mesh provides an innovative and cost-effective

solution for screening without blocking necessary airflow. In fact, the use of mesh allows for enough fresh air to enter the garage that forced-air ventilation is no longer necessary, reducing HVAC requirements and ultimately saving on energy costs.

As an added environmental benefit, architectural mesh is manufactured using a cold forming process, which generates less environmental impact than the process for heat treated products. Woven metal fabric and its corresponding attachment hardware are also readily recyclable and can be manufactured from recycled materials.

Mesh Takes Off

As more and more airports expand and renovate to meet the ever-increasing needs of 21st century travelers, architectural mesh is helping to create high-performing parking structures which serve airports like never before.

Security is always a primary concern for airports, so architectural mesh is employed to provide the utmost in protection from human and environmental threats. Mesh acts as a barrier and has very impressive blast-resistance characteristics. When airport parking facilities require blast mitigation as part of their design, the flexible qualities of the woven metal panels, combined with the ability to offer a wide range of open areas, allow for many possibilities.

Whether it's extreme heat, cold or high winds, metal fabric sustains and shields vehicles and people in airport parking structures. For effective wind protection, mesh tension systems can be mounted and will withstand extremely high wind conditions.

Woven metal systems can be developed to almost any security and safety requirement or application. Architectural mesh is an aesthetically

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pleasing method of protection for people and property. Architectural mesh is also commonly installed in parking facilities for “people moving” purposes. In other words, mesh very effectively manages and directs pedestrian traffic to connecting terminals. Metal fabric installed around stairwells, parking areas and on pedestrian walkways provides a sophisticated and safe method of foot traffic management for both entering and exiting the parking structure.

Modern airport parking facility executives are focused on streamlining — whether it’s operations, people movement or exterior aesthetic. Architectural mesh meets all of these needs.

Flash and Function for Hotels

Hotels are constantly looking for materials that deliver striking aesthetics without sacrificing performance or function. Facility executives strive to create a pleasant environment while optimizing the operations of that environment. Parking structures in hotels now have the exact same expectations. Architectural mesh meets these expectations, increasing ease-of-use and reinventing parking structure design on hotel properties.

The unique aesthetic characteristics of architectural mesh make it an ideal material for high-end hotel parking structure design. Depending on its application, metal fabric can look elegant and refined or modern and edgy. It provides a “wow” factor unlike any other material — a brilliantly streamlined and eye-catching cloak for parking facilities. Mesh offers a great number of design possibilities, and new methods are regularly being discovered. Here are a few of the most popular applications:

- At night, colored light can be projected onto mesh, creating a dazzling exterior effect which compliments the hotel’s signage or color scheme.

The beauty and design versatility of architectural mesh is supported by supreme functionality.

- Mesh can be etched for corporate branding, or other purposes, creating a personalized and sophisticated design element.
- Metal fabric can be painted any color imaginable.
- An integrated LED system can be used as a revenue-producing sign and communication tool. The combination of mesh and LED is a must-see artistic focal point, and makes a striking urban centerpiece.

The aforementioned beauty and design versatility of architectural mesh is supported by supreme functionality in hotel parking structures. Metal mesh with flexible open weaves shade and screen parking garages, allowing for daylight and fresh air to pass through, reducing the need for pricey HVAC and exhaust systems. Durability is also a key concern for hotels, and mesh easily outperforms most alternative materials — resisting corrosion, atmospheric conditions and lasting for decades.

Much like airports, hotel parking facilities use mesh for “people moving” as well. The seamless transition of guests from parking garage to hotel lobby is incredibly important, and foot traffic management is always a key consideration in the design phase of hotel parking structures. Architectural mesh outfits pedestrian walkways and barriers to provide a safe and logical transition into the hotel, while adding matching visual appeal.

Hotel executives can rely on architectural mesh to beautifully dress their parking structures, and behind its glamorous appeal, improve building efficiency and performance.



A Material of Versatility

Airport and hotel parking facility executives, now more than ever, must find materials that provide exceptional functional benefits while contributing to the design and theme of their buildings. Green building and energy savings often drive material selection, but certainly cannot force aesthetics to be sacrificed. Architectural mesh does not require any such sacrifice. Mesh has the flair of a unique design element with the functional characteristics to back it up. ↩

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