



Politan Row Food Court



The Challenge

When designing the new Politan Row Food Hall at Colony Square in Midtown Atlanta, the design team from Bell Butler Design & Architecture of New Orleans found inspiration in archival photos from the early 1970s when the space operated as a skylight-covered ice skating rink. “The space was infused with natural light from a large space

frame glass atrium,” said principal architect Lindsay Butler, reflecting on Colony Square’s legacy as the first mixed-use development in the South. “It was a beautiful, textural glass structure with really nice lighting from above. We wanted to recreate that somehow, but in a way that wasn’t exactly the same.”

The Solution

The design team found a way to mimic the original framed glass atrium by suspending a custom WoodWorks® ACGI Cubes Ceiling System from Armstrong above the central bar and lounge area. The 2,000-square-foot wood ceiling was created using 560 standard 2’ x 2’ open-cell panels with four cells in each panel. An additional 212 open-cell panels were customized into 62 different layouts to accommodate the circles, half, and quarter round curves in the ceiling design.

“Archival photos showed that there were a lot of faceted, circular planes in the building,” Butler added. “The ceiling design is a reference to some of those forms from the original development.”

To recreate the natural light that came through the original glass atrium, LED tape lights were attached to the grid for the acoustical ceiling that is installed above the wood ceiling. “We knew we also needed some acoustic help because of the concrete floor,” Butler explained, “so we installed a standard acoustical ceiling and suspended the wood ceiling below it.” Acrylic mirror material was cut to size and put in place above the bar and other circular openings in the ceiling to create some interesting reflections.

Supporting the wood ceiling through the acoustical ceiling grid was a challenge for ceiling installer Acousti Engineering

of Florida. “There was hanger wire to support the grid and then there was hanger wire to support the wood panels below,” said Joe Craddock, branch manager for Acousti in Atlanta. “We had to locate each one of those hanger wires and there was very little room for error.”

With so many different radiuses in the wood ceiling, the challenge for Acousti was to make sure all the custom panels were installed in the right place. “All the panels that had radiuses on them had to fit just right,” Craddock explained. “We were working around all the openings in the ceiling – the circular openings and the columns – so everything had to be completely precise.”

The field measurements the contractor took on site and sent to the manufacturer helped ensure that everything would work out as planned. “Armstrong did a great job fabricating each panel so that it all fit together,” he added.

Pleased with the result, Lindsay Butler believes the wood ceiling and warm LED lighting are reminiscent of the original interior’s framed glass ceiling. “We wanted to create the effect of all these tiny little spaces that light can come through,” she said, “and I think this ceiling gives you that feeling.”

Case Study

Location: Atlanta, GA

Product: WoodWorks® ACGI Cubes Ceiling System

Architect: Bell Butler Architects, New Orleans, LA



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