Adler Planetarium Sky Pavilion
Chicago, Illinois

The Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum, a national landmark originally built in 1930, required expanded exhibit space and reorganization of existing support space to increase interest and attendance. As part of Chicago’s lakefront museum campus, the Adler Planetarium needed to maintain architectural significance and convey a world-class presence as an astronomy museum that celebrates the magic of the sky.

After studies of six options were considered, an above-ground addition at the back of the original building provided the best functional solution to the program requirements. A dynamic circular building form that radiates outward from the existing planetarium dome was created. The addition was needed to house expanded exhibit spaces and a new state-of-the-art planetarium theater while preserving the Adler’s historic architectural features and relief sculptures. Existing public spaces needed qualitative improvements, resolution of circulation problems, and a sense of inspiration supportive of Adler’s mission to communicate the wonders of the universe.

Radiating from the original structure, the addition opens the sky to visitors with spectacular views of Chicago’s lakefront and the stars above. The reorganization of existing support space greatly improved operations, efficiency and visitor services. The replacement of an existing parking ring with a promenade expanded pedestrian activity and linked the Adler Planetarium to other museum campus improvements. The addition and upgrades became a catalyst to creating excitement and reinforcing Adler’s mission to educate the public about the universe.

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Project Data

**SIZE**
64,000 sf addition
96,000 sf building renovation

**FEATURES**
- Digistar sky rider planetarium – 190 seats
- Exhibition galleries
- Education center
- Winter garden cafeteria

**CLIENT**
Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum

**Recognition & News**

**RECOGNITION**
1999, Distinguished Building Award – American Institute of Architects, Chicago Chapter