

CLASSICALLY COLLEGIATE, YET STATE OF THE ART CASE STUDY

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL
ANN ARBOR, MI



+ PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Architect

Hartman-Cox Architects
Integrated Design Solutions

GC/Installer

Walbridge

Dealer

Edwards Glass Company

Window Design Consultation

Jim Barbour, GAP Midwest Regional Manager

LEED® Certification

Gold

Product

Custom Series 6800 Windows

Assignment

The project consisted of three parts: Replace the existing “bridge” between two law school buildings, utilizing gothic arch windows; replace existing windows on the law school’s “stacks” – a wing of the building housing stacks of historic books; and design and manufacture windows for the construction of South Hall, the law school’s new, four-story, 98,000 SF academic building.

+ CHALLENGE

The University of Michigan Law School stands as one of the nation's foremost examples of university gothic architecture. With this project, Graham Architectural Products' challenge lay in replicating that beauty in windows that could blend the timeless look of the 1920s and 1930s with today's energy efficient technology.

+ A BRIDGE TO THE 21st CENTURY

The University of Michigan Law School stands like a moment frozen in time. Constructed around a quadrangle more than 80 years ago, the quintessentially collegiate structures are clad in granite and the open spaces shaded by trees.

But growing enrollment, a desire to consolidate disparate offices and departments, and the demands of a new technological era necessitated change. The University of Michigan Board of Regents approved an expansion that would accommodate the school's needs while leaving its historic essence untarnished.

The project included construction of South Hall, a four-story, 100,000 SF academic building; the installation of a new glass and steel pedestrian bridge; and the addition of a new façade – with new windows – on the Cook Legal Research Library collections wing, called “the Stacks.”

According to Jim Barbour, midwest regional manager for Graham Architectural Products (GAP), the architect was looking for an energy efficient window that would be similar in appearance to the existing steel windows in the adjacent Law School buildings. And the bridge would require gothic arch windows, with custom cast aluminum capitols, pillars and bases.

Brought in early in the design process, Graham was committed to maintaining the integrity of time-honored architecture, while seeking ways to customize the design of a standard GAP product to meet the job specific requirements.

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When the architect suggested the sightlines of GAP's 6800 Series casement might be too heavy, GAP created a “short frame” version, along with a custom horizontal stacking mullion to work with the surrounding masonry construction.

Decra-led lead coming tape was applied to surface No. 1 of the insulated units to replicate the lead coming of the existing steel windows. And GAP created custom mull caps to match the profiles of the architect's design.

Graham did well, as did its partners. Not only was South Hall all but completed three months ahead of schedule, it is fully sustainable. In 2012 it was awarded LEED® Gold by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Meanwhile, the new, more architecturally pleasing bridge replaced the old one, offering instead an emphasis on windows with their dramatic arches, as opposed to the previous bridge's emphasis on metals.

Said Barbour, “The Graham windows provided for the project are absolutely beautiful. And the bridge is truly an architectural highlight of the Law School campus.”