

Profile

By Patti Martin Bartsche





one-of-a-kind Design

'Our Lady of Hope' Mausoleum

When the Diocese of Hamilton in Ontario, Canada, decided to construct a new mausoleum, it didn't want a traditional structure. By turning to Young + Wright/IBI Group Architects for the design and Carrier Mausoleums Construction for the construction, the diocese was able to see its vision come to light – in an astounding and unprecedented way.

The new mausoleum, called "Our Lady of Hope," is located at Resurrection Catholic Cemetery in rural Ancaster, just 48 miles southwest of Toronto at the western-most tip of Lake Ontario. Completed in mid-2012 was Phase 1 of a master planned cluster of three buildings, which will ultimately house more than 3,800 crypts.

Phase 1 has 1,300 crypts and 1,600 glass-front and stone-front niches.

The theme of the building is to represent and celebrate the concept and importance of light. "Light and visual elements were definitely an architectural priority," said John J. O'Brien, director of cemeteries for the Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Hamilton. "if you look at the Catholic faith and belief in the Resurrection, it is about light.

Light is symbolic of understanding and truth, so having the design of the building let in as much light as possible was very important."

The design objective was to create a beautiful and inspirational interplay between the organic light, the physical structure, the human experience and the divine while paying tribute to the mourning ceremony, the spiritual character of space, and the structure's overall relationship to the environment.

"It's absolutely breathtaking, an architectural gem," said O'Brien. "It is unlike any mausoleum structure that exists anywhere. Everyone is quite astonished at its presence at the cemetery."

Designed by Andrew Baczyński, an associate at Young + Wright / IBI Group Architects, this 17,500 square-foot building is highlighted by a cantilevered concrete canopy raised on both ends as a dramatic

welcoming gesture. As you move from the cantilevered entrance, the structure is bisected by a large arterial skylight with two diverging building segments that curve outward opening itself up and creating a visual invitation to the exterior garden as seen through a central and expansive one-and-a-half story south-facing window. This dramatic design and arterial skylight floods the mausoleum with a soft diffused daylight highlighting the sacredness of this space.

The mausoleum is symmetrical with curved segments. One of the challenges, according to Luc Vallee, vice president, Architecture and Estimation for CMC, was making sure the building, with all its angles, curves and shapes, would fit together perfectly. "One of the most interesting aspects of the project is that the building was basically built in two different pieces and joined



Above: A nighttime view of Our Lady of Hope mausoleum. Right: The mausoleum's design features curves, angles and abundant light.
(Photos courtesy of Carrier Mausoleums Construction)

together by the translucent glass skylight," Vallee noted. The translucent glass, he explained, was



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inserted into a precisely engineered aluminum structure that is tied to a steel structure that links the two parts of the building."

With more than 90 percent of the walls curved, "installation required precision engineering and careful craftsmanship," Vallee noted, adding that individual pieces were laid out on the ground onsite before being installed so that proper fit was executed. "While each wall appears to be a straight segment, it's not," Vallee said. "In actuality, they were installed in precise segments to compensate for the expansive curves."

The structure of the building is entirely cast of in-place concrete with some areas of exposed concrete including the front porch, exterior and interior round columns and the canopy along the south walls. The exterior cladding includes Arristcraft stone, Indiana limestone and exotic marbles.

The plans for this mausoleum were on the drawing table for about 18 months. The construction process took roughly 16 months.

O'Brien also points to the front of the building, which resembles the design of many contemporary airports, as another design element that sets the Our Lady of Hope mausoleum apart. "There are many elements of the design that remind you of aerospace design," O'Brien said. "The design is unlike any other mausoleum building in North America."

Richard Verrier, vice president of Construction, Central and Western Canada for CMC, said he has never seen a more complex mausoleum construction project. "The intricacy of the way the reinforced steel was tied together was quite a feat of engineering," Verrier said. "CMC performed 3D modeling of the steel frame to make sure everything would come together with precision. "We

wanted to look at it from every angle as there were a number of challenging components with no room for error."

Our Lady of Hope, Verrier said, was a "chance of a lifetime" construction project. "This is a sensational building. The CMC team worked together to create this magnificent architectural marvel," he said.

The building is designed to be energy efficient and embody the principles of sustainability. A geothermal heating unit was installed as well as LED lighting throughout. "Our goal is not only to offer our families a beautiful final resting place but also find a way to reduce costs and environmental impact," O'Brien noted.

"Our goal was to create a place of reverence that was warm, inviting and respectful," O'Brien said. "We think we have." •

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The screenshot shows a memorial page for Joyce E. Carlson. At the top, there is a large photo of Joyce Carlson holding a small bouquet of flowers. Below the photo, her name and birth/death information are displayed: Joyce E. Carlson (March 16, 1923 – January 1, 2009). The page features a "Life Story" section with text about her life, including her work as a painter and her involvement with Walt Disney. There are also sections for "Photos Gallery", "Obituary", and "Links". On the right side of the page, there is a map showing the GPS location of her grave. The overall layout is clean and modern, designed to be viewed on a computer screen.