



Architectural Overview: Connecticut Convention Center

The 540,000-square-foot Connecticut Convention Center stands ten stories tall on the eastern edge of downtown Hartford, overlooking the beautiful Connecticut River. With more than 140,000 square feet of exhibition space, it will be the largest convention facility between New York and Boston, featuring exceptional highway access at the intersection of Interstates 84 and 91, and only 12 minutes from Bradley International Airport.

The Connecticut Convention Center will offer a 40,000-square-foot ballroom and 25,000 square feet of meeting space, as well as ample sheltered and outside parking for more than 2,600 visitors. The facility will be served by over 6,500 local area hotel rooms, including the new, 22-story, 409-room Marriott Hartford Downtown, currently being built adjacent to the Convention Center.

Designed by the Atlanta-based architectural firm of Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback and Associates (TVS), the Convention Center's bold look incorporates a 468-foot grand concourse, a tree-lined esplanade along the Connecticut River, a 115-foot tall atrium enclosed by a vaulted roof and a spectacular, 10-story glass façade.

Scheduled to open summer 2005, the building expresses a very graceful symmetry and carefully-articulated architectural elements throughout.

Facts at a glance:

- Overall footprint: 1.6 million square feet, including parking
- 540,000 square foot convention center building
- 140,000 square foot exhibition hall
- 40,000 square foot ballroom
- 25,000 square feet of meeting space
- 30,000 square feet of pre-function space
- Public concourse with a 115-foot atrium, enclosed by a 10-story glass façade
- Width of building: 1.6 football fields
- Length of building: 3 football fields
- Non-smoking facility
- Expandability includes 80,000 square feet of exhibition space, additional meeting rooms and a junior ballroom

Architectural Details:

- White, highly-reflective, roof material, often incorporated into urban locations and LEED-accredited buildings to reduce “heat island” effect
- Symmetrical, stacked design creates a WOW factor usually seen in larger centers
- The curved aspects of the architecture suggest movement and a connection to the Connecticut River, which the convention center overlooks
- The center’s riverside view includes an extensive park system, performance pavilion, riverboat cruises and the world’s longest stone arch bridge; a tree-lined esplanade also connects an 8-story parking garage to the center’s riverside entrance
- The center’s city side view includes the growing Hartford skyline
- Flanking the concourse, a terraced plaza stair with ample landscaping extends public access to the center, terminating at the esplanade
- An archway at the northeast corner of the esplanade will provide a threshold to a future pedestrian bridge, linking the center directly to the riverfront
- Remote computerized lighting system the building manager can turn off from home
- Smoke control system engineered to the building’s architecture (takes advantage of height; six smoke evacuation fans on roof)
- Central Utility Plant provides chilled water and steam to CTCC and attached Marriott Hartford Downtown
- Architectural lighting accents the roofline and building design elements
- Low-e, high performance glass keeps radiant heat out with a good shading coefficient without tinting the glass
- Ballroom ceiling design reflects the building’s curves with a filigree pattern that creates a lace-like canopy out of custom-cast, fiberglass reinforced gypsum
- Ballroom carpet design reflects light shimmering on water; both ballroom ceiling and carpet drew on the state’s merchant marine/seaport history
- Tactile appeal of materials such as brick and stone at pedestrian level
- The building’s urban scale is a prominent feature on the Hartford skyline, yet it maintains a human scale for a pedestrian experience at the public level.
- Topography of the city allows the convention center to be viewed and experienced from many different parts of the city

Tom Ingram, project architect, senior associate, TVS :

The Big Idea

“The big idea we’re trying to achieve is a sense of the city’s modern progress. We’ve rendered that concept in traditional materials, traditionally-inspired materials and detailing to set the center apart, yet reflect the best of its surroundings.”

Architectural Design

“The ballroom is flanked by identical meeting room corridors, stacked above the exhibition hall, all connected by one public concourse space – these symmetrical, vertically-connected elements create a design that is extremely intuitive in terms of way-finding.”

Orientation

“You’re really able to orient yourself to Hartford and to Connecticut because the views from within the building allow you to experience the city and a good part of the state beyond.”

The Layout

“With public entries on either side of the ballroom and exhibition hall, you’re able to host concurrent events, each with dedicated exhibition, banquet and registration facilities.”

“The public spaces wrap around the service spaces very efficiently, allowing functions to be served without public conflict. There’s a very short distance for food to travel from the banquet kitchen to meeting rooms and ballrooms with this kind of separation between service functions and public circulation.”

Ballroom Ceiling Design

“The lace-like design of the ballroom ceiling conceals functional ceiling details, like rigging for sound, lighting and banners, for a seamless integration of systems. There is no visual distraction.”

About Waterford Management

Waterford Management, LLC will manage the Connecticut Convention Center. Waterford Group, LLC, is an industry leader in developing, building, managing, and owning the finest in gaming, hospitality, and convention center properties.

Waterford Group is the master developer of a \$775 million, mixed use project in Hartford that includes the Connecticut Convention Center and the attached Marriott Hartford Downtown. The Connecticut Convention Center will be owned by the Capital Region Development Authority, an agency established by the state legislature to oversee Hartford's "six pillars of progress."