



MAXXIT

CASE STUDY SERIES



YORK UNIVERSITY, MARKHAM CAMPUS

Maxxit ceilings provide the connective tissue for a ten-story modern education facility in one of Ontario's most diverse and dynamic urban communities.

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HIGHER ED REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

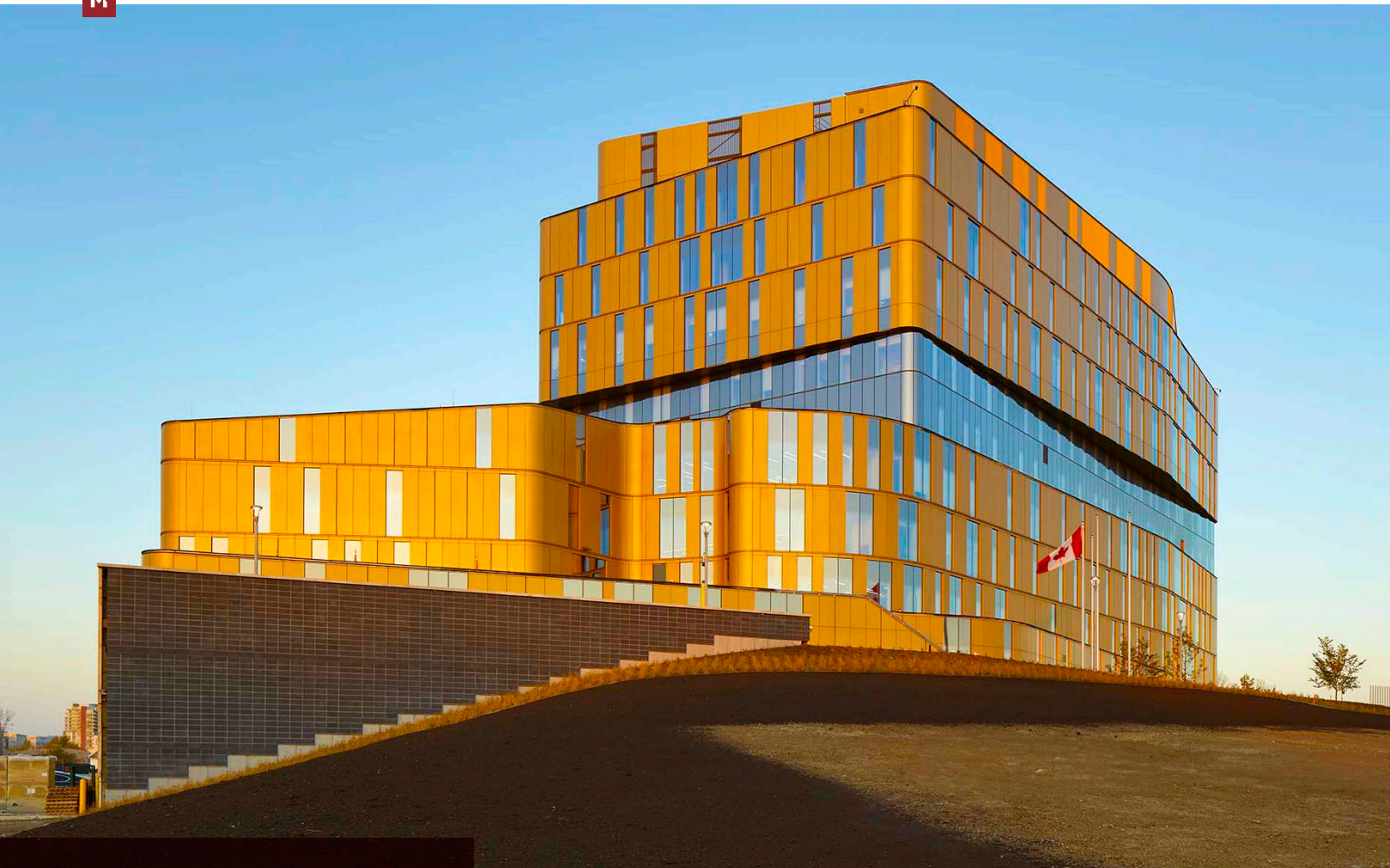
The traditional image of a university campus typically centers on stately stone edifices and manicured lawns dotted with students relaxing under sprawling shade trees. The reality of higher education architecture has moved beyond ivy covered walls to embrace a modern aesthetic better suited to the geography and goals of contemporary academic institutions.

No one knows this better than Diamond Schmitt, one of North America's top 50 university building architecture firms.*

Designing a new core campus in the city of Markham, Ontario for York University had them thinking in a different direction: up.

**Building Design+Construction, December 2024*





Toronto-based YorkU is Canada's third-largest university, with over 53,000 students, 7,000 faculty and staff, and more than 375,000 alumni worldwide. The new York University Markham Campus (YUMC)—a full decade in the making—was developed to expand access to education in the greater Toronto area to one of the most diverse and dynamic urban communities in Ontario.

Markham is home to more than 1,500 high-tech and life science companies, plus hundreds of head offices and startups, making it the ideal location for a university campus focused on connecting students with real-world opportunities as well as classroom learning.

The flagship campus building is a ten-floor structure embedded in the heart of the city. The height of the building and its bold glass and bronze-tone façade make it a highly visible landmark in Markham city center. The innovative interior more than fulfills the promise of the exterior, in large part due to the inspired use of Maxxit ceiling solutions in multiple shapes, colors and materials.

THE CHALLENGE OF A VERTICAL CAMPUS

The design concept of YUMC building is focused on the core theme of connectivity — between the university and the city, between formal and informal spaces, and among all members of the YUMC community. Expressing that theme within a ten-story building presented

a unique set of challenges. Diamond Schmitt's goal was to maintain the overall feeling of connection among the lecture halls, classrooms, science labs, production studios, offices, and casual gathering places.

Associate Architect Marcin Ludwik Sztaba, part of the design team on YUMC, described the complexity of creating a vertical campus. "The challenge lay in how we connected the landscape and spatial experience within the building. The building itself evolves and grows, changing shape as it goes up in elevation. We needed to create a connective tissue within the building that encompassed ease of access, visibility, and wayfinding." Everything had to work together as part of a bigger space, rather than just being siloed on a particular floor.

The combination and arrangement of ceiling products, specifically the Maxxit baffle system and its borders, create a unifying component that carries through the entire building: more than 28,000 sq. ft.

Ultimately, Sztaba and the Diamond Schmitt team determined the ceilings would serve as that connective tissue, accentuating them as a way to lead people through the space. The combination and arrangement of ceiling products,

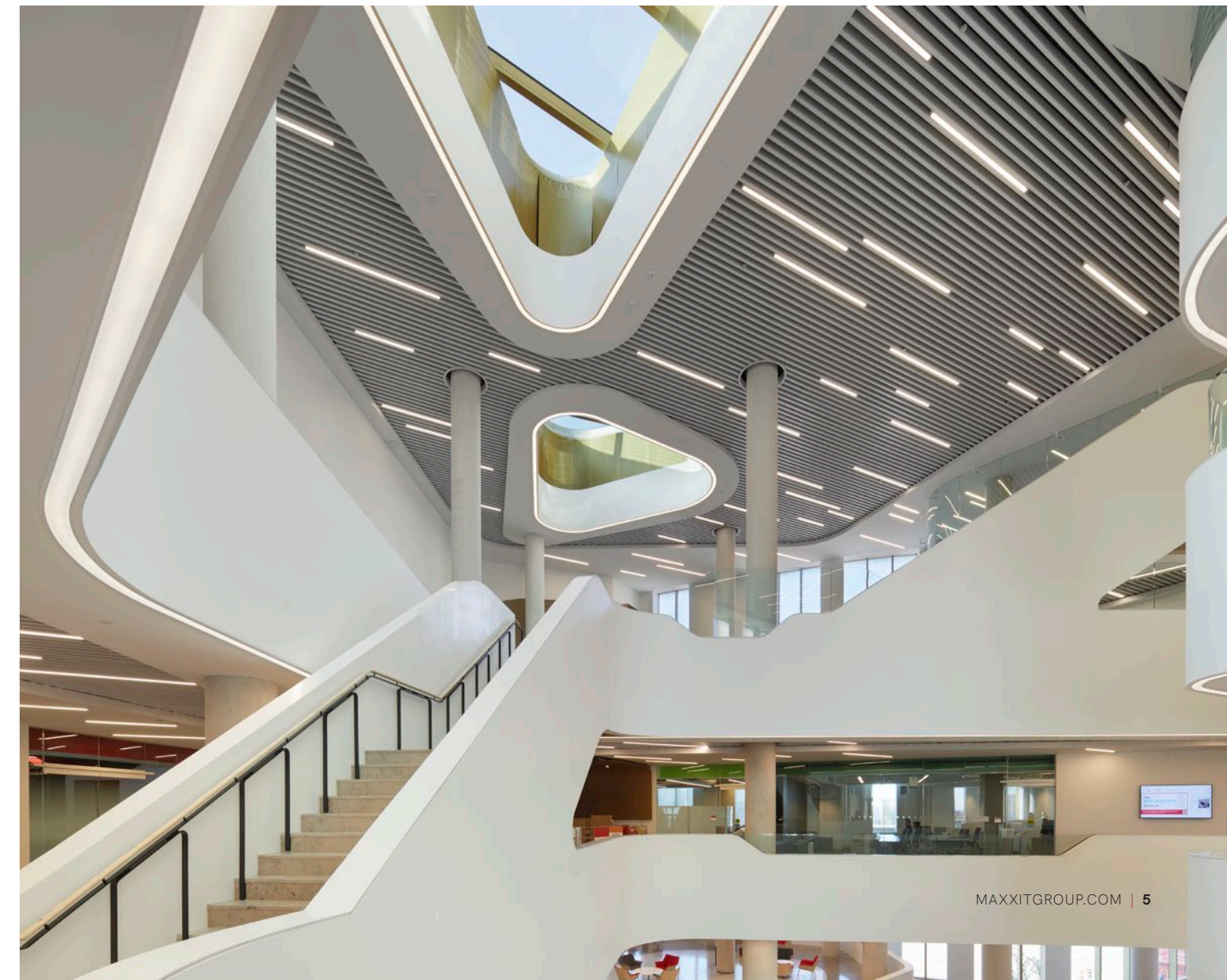
specifically the baffle system and its borders, create a unifying component that carries through the entire building: more than 28,000 sq. ft.

The ceilings also serve practical purposes. Senior Associate Jessica Cheung, Project Manager on the YUMC building, explains, "We chose to use feature ceilings to demarcate public gathering spaces like student lounges, reception, and information areas. They're a marker that students and the community can see at a distance."

Of course, public gathering spaces have specific performance requirements. Cheung continues, "These spaces tend to

be more open and can be loud. So, the ceilings we implemented provide acoustic absorption as well. The baffles were selected because they offer features that are both aesthetic and acoustic to make these spaces successful."

Elaborating on the practical needs of the space, Sztaba notes that the lighting, HVAC and other building system components required flexibility in the ceiling system. As the project developed, it was necessary for the ceiling to allow space and flexibility for all those components to exist without them driving the design.



PROJECT DETAILS

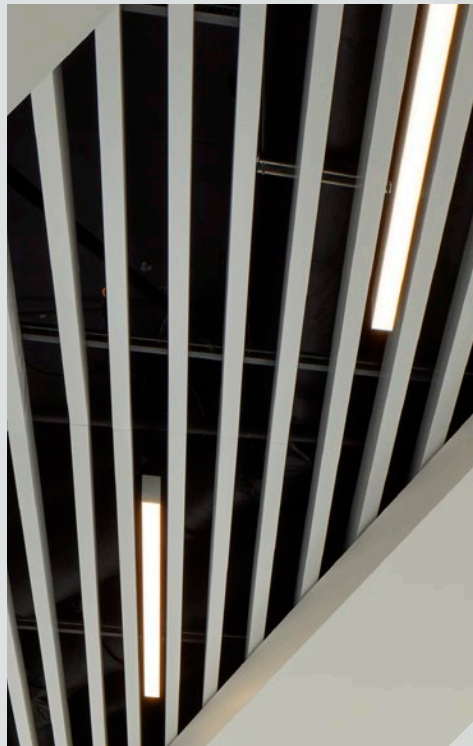
York University,
Markham Campus

Location
Markham, ON

Design Architect
Diamond Schmitt Architects

Installer
Oakdale Drywall & Acoustics Ltd.

Maxxit Products
LINE:Form Traditional Baffle
LINE:Form Wave Baffle

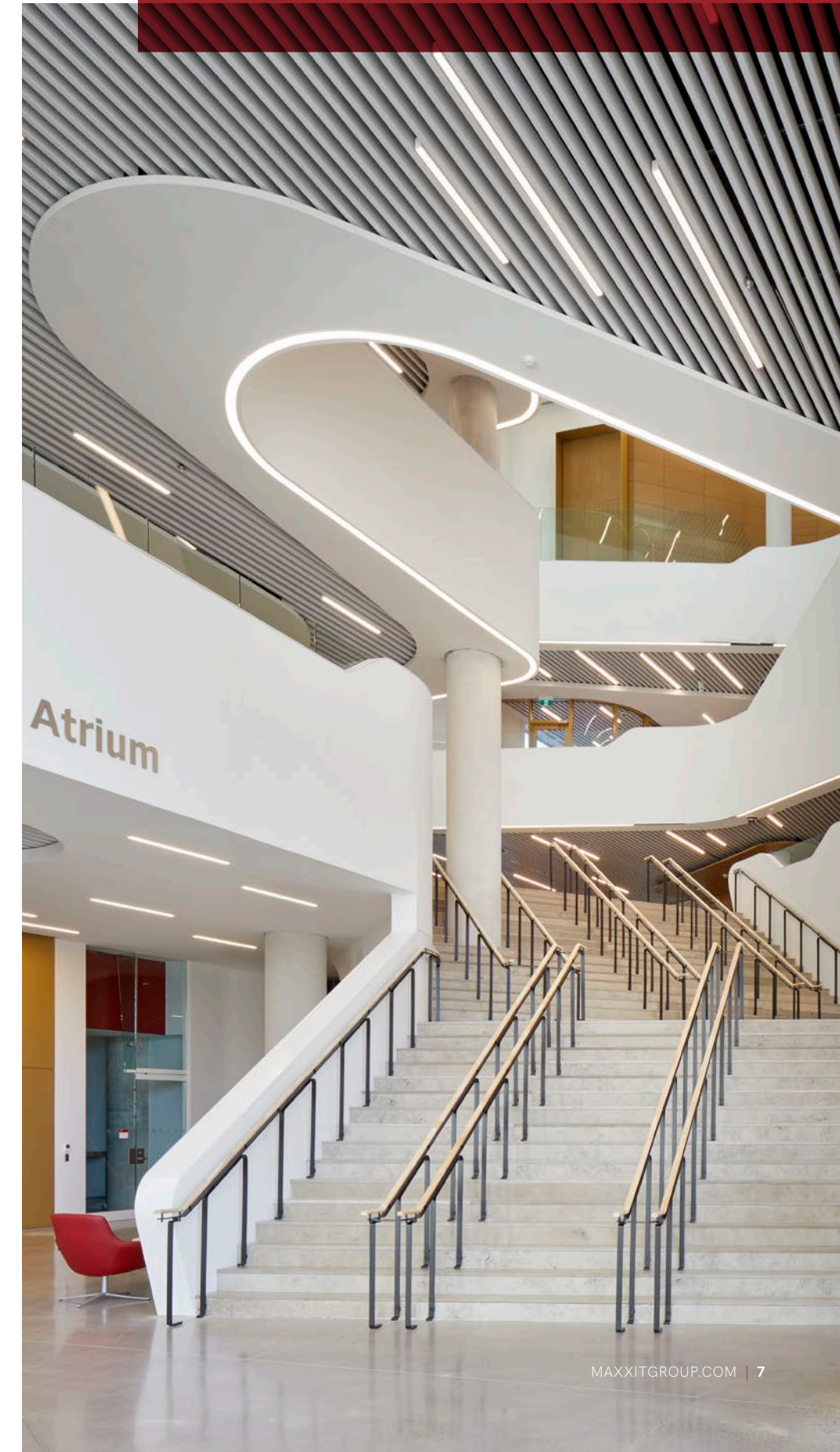


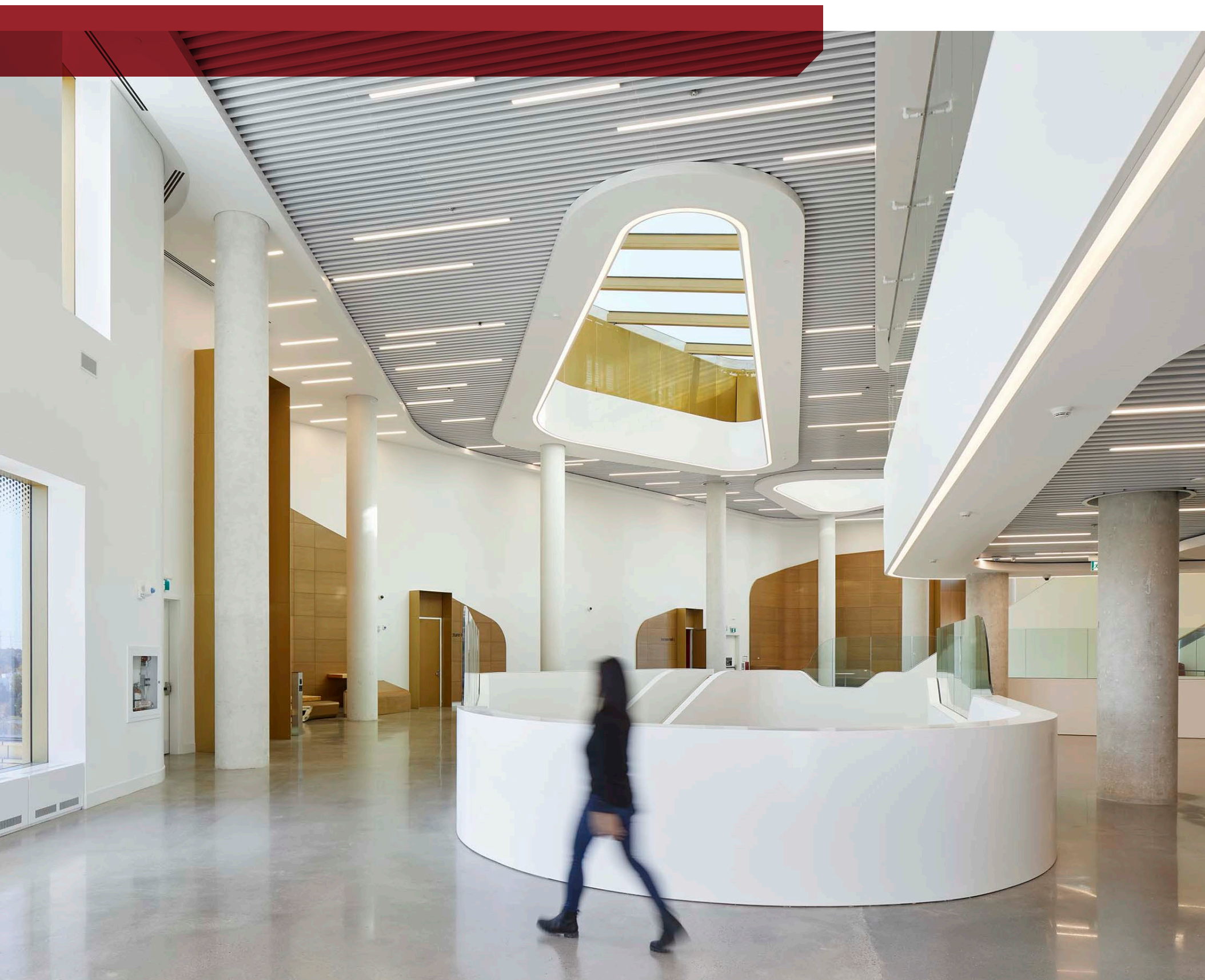
AN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Once the design vision was established, the YUMC project proceeded to a new phase of challenges: implementation. The original ceiling specification for the project didn't include Maxxit. Three separate manufacturers were specified for the three separate ceiling types: perforated metal baffles, undulating metal blades, and undulating felt blades. This resulted in two serious concerns.

The first was logistics. After years of design development, construction of the YUMC building began in September 2020, coinciding with the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many businesses were still on lockdown or working with reduced staff. Supply chains were disrupted worldwide. Unpredictable product availability, long lead times, and elevated pricing were wreaking havoc with construction projects across North America. Coordinating delivery from three different manufacturers to keep installation on schedule under these circumstances would be a logistical nightmare for the ceiling subcontractor.

The second issue was compatibility. Diamond Schmitt had designed a masterpiece of movement and space. The undulating felt and metal blades alternating with perforated metal baffles achieved every design and performance goal. However, the three products specified had entirely different suspension systems. This was more than a bump in the road. Incompatible suspension systems could compromise the entire ceiling design.





Having worked with them on prior projects, General Contractor Bird Stuart Olson knew Maxxit would have solutions to these ceiling dilemmas. In March 2021, they reached out to sales representative Lorne Bryan. And that's how Maxxit got their first opportunity to prove themselves to one of Canada's leading education architecture firms on a very high visibility project.

THE ONE-STOP SOLUTION

Bryan knew what Maxxit was being asked to do was not easy. "Diamond Schmitt had used three separate products to create this beautiful linear ceiling effect with a sense of movement and interest as well as acoustical function," he explains, "But they were trying to achieve that with different manufacturers who had different suspension methods. That's the challenge that was brought to us: How do we actually make this work?"

YUMC was a complex project that relied on unique, organic designs, not step-and-repeat products. The ceiling was at the heart of the design, and Diamond Schmitt had never worked with Maxxit before. Would they be able to execute a design at this level, or would Diamond Schmitt be forced to compromise their vision?

As the project moved forward, Maxxit proved more than equal to the challenge. The **LINE:Form Traditional Baffles** and **LINE:Form Wave Baffles** were virtually identical to what was originally specified in material, finish, and NRC ratings. The

baffles' innovative fastening system also provided easy plenum access and the flexibility needed to easily add or reduce the number of lights, HVAC components, or any other system elements housed in the ceiling.

"Seeing the space itself and seeing what we have imagined it to be becoming what actually is—that spoke to the way Maxxit saw our vision and helped us achieve it," Diamond Schmitt Associate Architect Sztaba says. "It's great to go from virtual to reality without losing the intent and the key features of what we wanted to achieve in these spaces."

Most importantly, all Maxxit systems work with a common attachment method, so they were able to install all three ceiling types on the same suspension system. That technical detail was key to making the design possible.

From a logistical standpoint, Maxxit offered the added advantage of being a Canadian manufacturer. This alleviated concerns regarding product availability, simplified the procurement process, and provided significant cost savings.

A RELATIONSHIP WITH A+ RESULTS

The first-time collaboration among Diamond Schmitt, Maxxit, and ceiling subcontractor Oakdale Drywall & Acoustics received high marks across the board, from the process to the end product.

Located just a half-hour drive from YUMC, Maxxit built a mock-up of the ceiling right in the shop for Diamond Schmitt to review. This enabled Cheung and her team to fine tune the scale of the baffles and finesse the integration and coordination considerations on site, directly with Maxxit. And that was just one of the ways Maxxit ensured everyone was aligned meeting expectations.

Diamond Schmitt was impressed with Maxxit's technological savvy, and the way they were able to translate the architectural models into production and realize a design that ultimately included more than 15 miles of linear ceiling products.

The success of the relationship was evident to all at the November 2024 opening of the YUMC. "Seeing the space itself and seeing what we have imagined it to be becoming what actually is—that spoke to the way Maxxit saw our vision and helped us achieve it," Sztaba says. "It's great to go from virtual to reality without losing the intent and the key features of what we wanted to achieve in these spaces."

Let's build something extraordinary together.

If you're an architect or designer looking to elevate your next project, Maxxit offers the expertise and products to turn your vision into reality. Contact us today to explore how we can support your next high-end commercial design.

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