



Universal Builders Supply debuts the Canopy

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New Rochelle, NY When the Center for Architecture in Greenwich Village learned that upcoming façade work on its building would require overhead protection, they looked to Universal Builders Supply (UBS) for an innovative solution. Traditional protection systems used in construction are typically fabricated from metal posts, braces, plywood, and beams creating a dark walkway and often blocking visibility of the building from the street. The new Canopy system designed by UBS is an option that combines a more open, minimalist construct that incorporates unique design and lighting, while maintaining structural soundness required to protect the public. The luminous white structure was installed in just two days and immediately drew the attention of passersby.

“Our vision for the Canopy product line is to offer a stylish and functional solution for construction projects that elevates both the project and the customer’s image,” said Chris Evans, president of UBS. “We have been installing high-end overhead protection systems with unique finishes, lighting, and signage since 1931, but the Canopy takes it to another level. We appreciate the Center for Architecture giving us the opportunity to showcase the Canopy, as it represents how beautiful

design can blend and enhance a traditional construction project and provide more ‘architecturally finished’ overhead protection without sacrificing public safety.”

This is not the first time that UBS and the Center for Architecture have teamed up. In 2017 they partnered to create the center’s Scaffolding exhibit—a show that explored the history and extraordinary applications of scaffolding and demonstrated how this utilitarian system could become a compelling installation. Canopy is a case in point.

“The Center for Architecture is honored to debut the Canopy, the stylish new overhead protection system recently developed by Universal Builders Supply. In order to accommodate necessary facade repairs to our building, we turned to UBS. Working closely with the Center for Architecture, UBS agreed to provide us with their Canopy system instead of a basic sidewalk shed. The Canopy exceeds our expectations; its elegant white structure, transparent ceiling, and dynamic lighting have brightened and enhanced our entryway,” states Ben Prosky, assoc. AIA, executive director, AIA New York and the Center for Architecture.

While UBS has been offering variations of more upscale overhead protection solutions for decades, increased customer demand for more aesthetically pleasing options drove the entire UBS team to develop a formal product offering. Members of the engineering, fabrication, project management, and execution departments collaborated to come up with the unique Canopy concept that offers multiple benefits including a more appealing contemporary look, better sight lines of the building under construction, wider openings, more spacing for pedestrian traffic, colorful, customizable LED lighting as well as dramatic night lighting, durable weather resistant finish, and the option to include laser engraved signage on the structure itself, all while meeting code and maintaining structural integrity.

The UBS Canopy has a 300 per s/f rating, the most stringent in North America, enabling the Canopy Protection System to be deployed throughout the country for new construction, façade restoration, and maintenance projects. Frame components are made from aluminum which is a high-strength, lightweight, and durable material and the 4-layer painted finish is resistant to all weather conditions, enabling it to maintain a clean appearance for long periods of time. The open mesh parapet is also designed to accommodate custom signage, and the deck construction is available in a variety of materials.

While new construction projects are the main users of protection systems and scaffolding, the NYC Facade Inspection Safety Program (formerly Local Law 11), requires that buildings taller than six stories have their facades inspected and repaired every five years; those inspections require that protection systems and scaffolding be in place. Ensuring that the retail establishments and restaurants at the street level are still visible during the inspection period is critical and the Canopy offers that opportunity. The system also offers flexible design options since every project presents a unique set of challenges.