

DanielStathamArchitects

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INSTALLATION/SECURITY WALL, UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK, USA

The proposal is to be part of the refurbishment of the 1950's, Wallace Kirkman Harrison designed building which will be equipped with much needed new technology for it's high profile status. Rather than announce a competition for the design of the facilities for the headquarters, the UN decided to commission a collaborative effort among a multinational team of leading architects. American architect Wallace Harrison was named the director of planning, and a board of design consultants were nominated by member governments and included Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer.

The brief was to develop a screening system that would provide security for the presidents entrance of the United Nations Headquarters in New York. We collaborated with Industrial designers Billings Jackson to propose a series of designs to the client based around a reflective stainless steel wall that curved in plan to relate to the existing approach road which acts as a drop off point in front of the Presidents canopy/entrance.

The intention was to make the 'wall' more like a piece of art and soften it's pragmatic function of protecting the stationary vehicles from higher view points around the site, therefore providing a high level of privacy and security. In order to provide screening from above the fold out wall unfolds a Kevlar roof membrane with it which is made structurally rigid by being connected to peripheral wall elements. This concept allowed a simple opening/ closing process which could be operated by two individuals or power driven mechanically.

The membrane canopy fans outwards as the two hinged doors rotate into their open state creating a temporary structure that contains and conceals the space within. The 'mirror' like finish of the external face of the closed wall attempts to blend into it's environment by reflecting the transient and urban fabric of 1st Avenue, Manhattan.