


Creative COVERAGE

BY ROGER PRYOR



A symbolic,
exposed steel canopy
defines the look of a
Mississippi church
expansion.

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF STARKVILLE has been around almost as long as the town itself.

The church was established in 1839, just four years after the northeast Mississippi college town was founded (Starkville is home to Mississippi State University). In recent years, the church was in need of expansion and in lieu of relocating to the outlying perimeter of town, it elected to expand its facility in the town's central business district. The primary focus was growing the youth ministry space, but the project also called for a sheltered automobile entry to the church campus as well as a goal of connecting multiple buildings into a unified facility via two pedestrian bridges, one of which used a steel Vierendeel truss.

The design team was charged with developing a concept that maximized the use of sheltered outdoor space. Structural steel was uniquely suited to satisfy this need as well as address the issues of a short construction schedule and congested build-

ing site (lay-down area was limited and the adjacent facility had to remain fully occupied throughout construction).

Early collaboration between the structural engineer and the architects was the secret to the project's success. By maximizing the economy of the main building's structural system (thanks to a relatively simple column grid) funds were available for the Vierendeel truss pedestrian bridge and the sculptural auto canopy framing.

In the spirit of the vernacular architecture of Mississippi, the new building offers generous porches and sweeping steel-framed roof overhangs that provide shelter from the hot summer sun and natural locations for chance outdoor encounters.

The new auto canopy includes a series of three-part HSS brackets (the three brackets are a reference to the Holy Trinity) and the expanse of the deep canopy is intended to offer a welcoming gesture to visitors approaching the church on Lafayette Street.



Jim Lytle

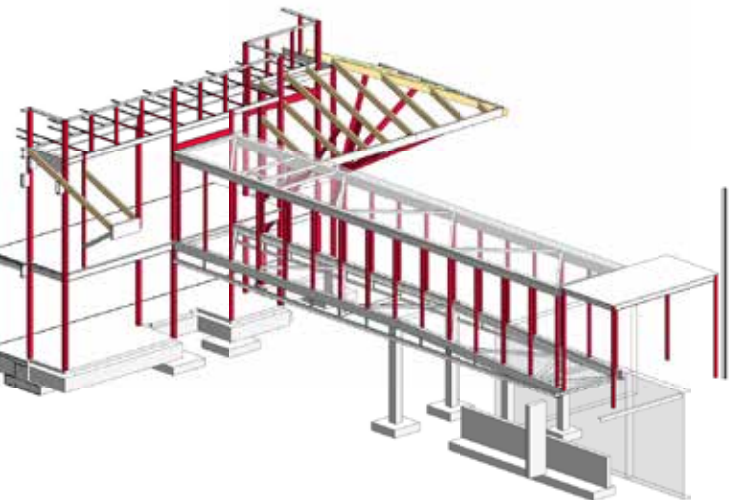
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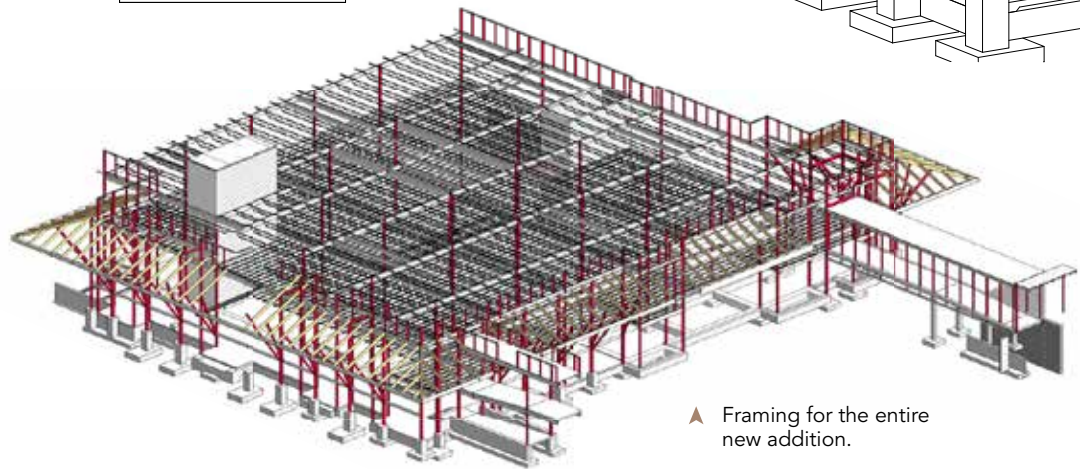
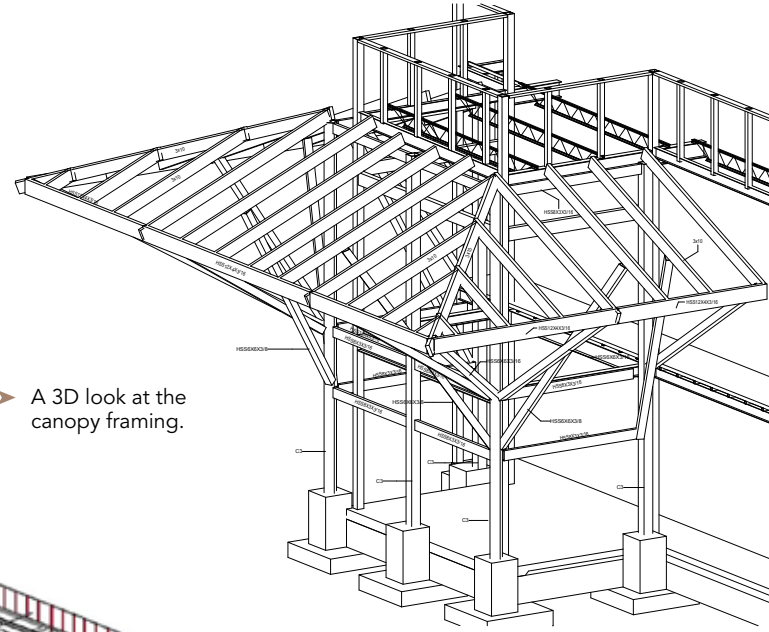
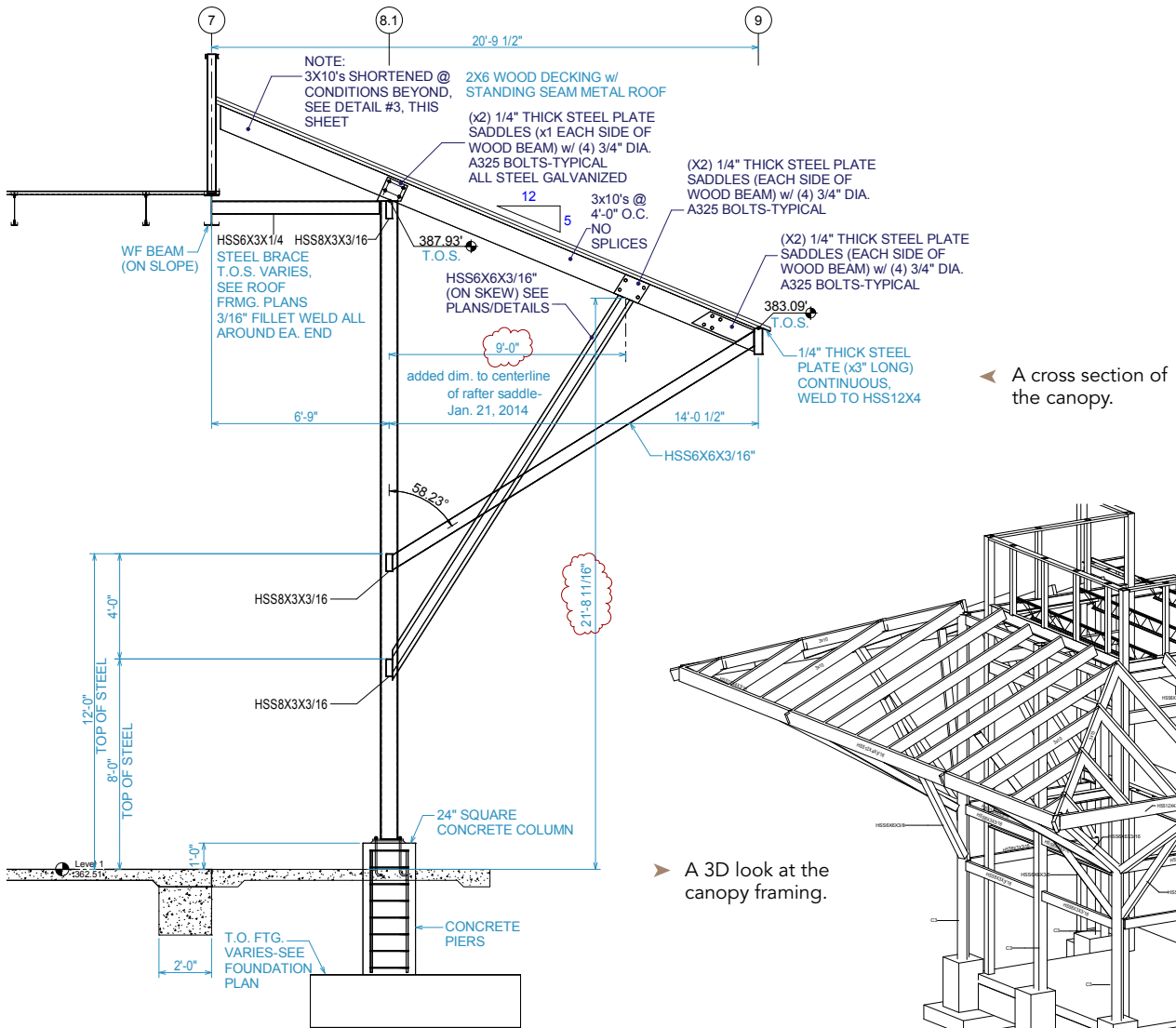
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- ▲ The project uses 150 tons of steel in all.
- ◀ Framing for the Vierendeel truss pedestrian bridge.

Roger Pryor is the founding principal and an architect with PryorMorrow.





The auto canopies were framed with 6-in. and 8-in. square HSS, and the fabricator developed full-scale mockups for the complicated framing.

The Vierendeel truss pedestrian bridge spans the children's playground to connect the new building with existing buildings. The bridge uses 6-in. square HSS faced with curtainwall glazing. The trusses are fully exposed on the interior of the bridge

and clearly express the working structure of the span. The sides of the bridge were shop assembled and the floor and roof planes were field installed piece by piece.

When the project (which used 150 tons of steel in all) was completed, Sunday school records were broken, with the biggest turnout in the history of the church. The project is a welcome addition to downtown Starkville's historic district, and

- Two pedestrian bridges connect the new and existing buildings.

structural steel played a key role in the design, development and implementation of this important community asset. ■

Owner

Starkville First Baptist Church,
Starkville, Miss.

General Contractor

West Brothers Construction,
Columbus, Miss.


Architect

PryorMorrow, Columbus, Miss.

Structural Engineer

Second Moment, LLC, Florence, Miss.

Steel Fabricator

Industrial Fabricators, Inc., 
Columbus, Miss.



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