

Best Building Project – Specialty Contractor (Under \$2 Million)

Colorado Hardscapes

Project: Center for Character and Leadership Development

Gracefully rising out from of the Air Force Academy campus, just North of the iconic chapel, the tail of a jet seems to make a new subtle statement for the campus. The elegant structure created of steel and glass serves as a skylight to the courtroom for the Air Force Academy's Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD). The accused sits in the chair of justice with the North star shining down through the opening, to guide in their quest for character and leadership development. The mission of the new Center for Character and Leadership Development is "Advance the understanding, practice, and integration of character and leadership development in preparation for service to the nation in the profession of arms" (www.usafa.edu). The new building is a one-story building with a popup ceiling/skylight nestled between mirrored courtyards. Due to the challenging access and high-end design, the construction of these courtyards also put the crews of Colorado Hardscapes to the test.

Matrix Design Group worked with Colorado Hardscapes in the design phase to create a custom mix of concrete, utilizing white cement, white rock and white sand, to coordinate with the building, surrounding finishes, and create a clean and refined finish. Through the process of sampling, the team decided on the custom mix design and Colorado Hardscapes' Sandscape finish for the concrete.

Iicon Construction hired Colorado Hardscapes to install the specialty decorative concrete, oversee the granite installation, install the memorial benches and work closely with the light and water feature installers.

Working through high winds, rain, and snow all in a recessed plaza created many construction challenges. Because of the location of the plaza, all materials either had to be brought through a narrow opening and staging space was limited. This took creative thinking as well as planning ahead and careful coordination. Because of the special mix and access restraints, the concrete pours were small and done via buggies or pump to cater to the site's restraints. Being on the Air

Force Academy also created timely risks for the batches of concrete. Because of the security, the lead-time to get a concrete truck to the Academy, through security, to the location and conveyed to the plaza created a narrow window of success for the expensive custom mix of concrete.

The Air Force Academy is particular about their layout, so the crew of Colorado Hardscapes worked carefully to ensure every band, sawcut, drain, and bench lined up perfectly with the surrounding structures and elements. The symmetry of the individual courtyards and how they related to each other, the surrounding buildings and the upper plazas epitomized the space and the campus' high standards. The level of detail and perfection created two pristine courtyards worthy of developing the Academy's leaders.

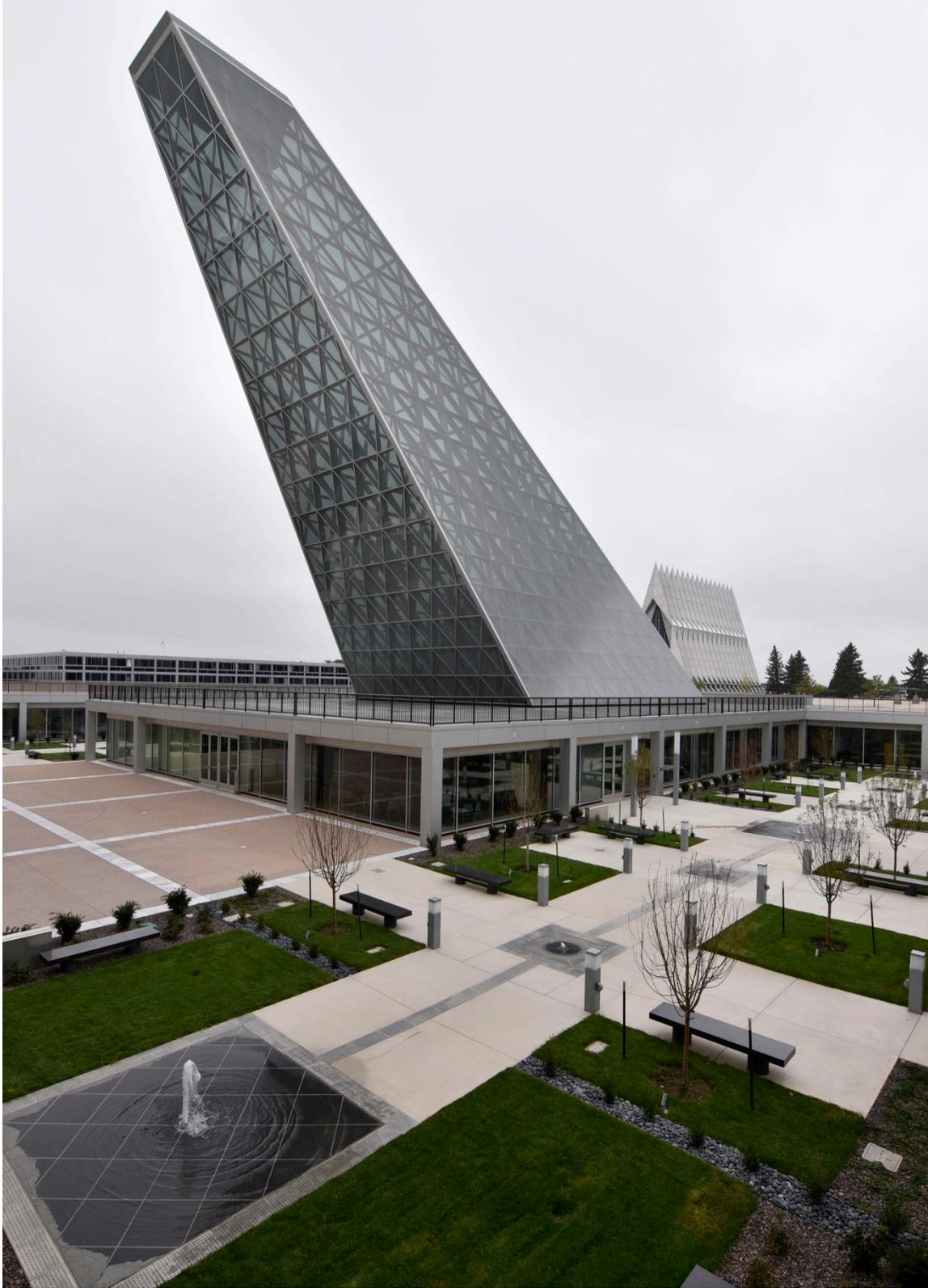
Colorado Hardscapes worked for the general contractor, iicon Construction, for the concrete construction, as well as careful cooperation with the site electrician, plumber, mason and landscaper. Due to the limited access and tight quarters, the entire team had to integrate character and leadership to ensure a successful project. The end result created serene space enveloping the new iconic skylight for the Center of Character and Leadership Development.



Western Terrace Courtyard



Pouring small loads of specialty concrete via buggies



The new iconic skylight by the pristine chapel and the new terrace courtyards with specialty concrete



The Eastern Terrace Courtyard





The symmetrical layout of the plaza – even the bands align with the bands on the building



At nighttime the plaza and perfect layout look pristine