UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN,
IMPROVEMENTS FOR MICHIGAN STADIUM

Location: Ann Arbor, MI
Client: University of Michigan
Architects: VSBA in association with Hellmuth, Obata, Kassabaum, Sport, Inc.
Construction Cost: $13,400,000 (Phase I)
Completion: 1998 (Phase I)

The extension of Michigan Stadium at its upper edge was in early design stages when VSBA came on the scene. Working with the steel-frame outer façade, we designed a parapet wall to appear as a floating “halo” -- with lively color and pattern lending a decorative and symbolic dimension to the façade. The maize field and blue figures include familiar and traditional UM symbols, while lettering spells out “University of Michigan,” “Wolverines,” and phrases from UM’s fight song. The graphics’ bold scale read from a distance, acknowledging the importance of the stadium to the University and signifying the entrance to the campus from the south. New scoreboards incorporating electronic and video components designed to adapt to evolving technology.

Elements below the halo and under the frame structure, including restrooms and concession stands, are important to stadium functionality and circulation. Signage and lighting was designed to be bold but not aggressive.