

Exploring the Legendary Process and Projects of KPF

Design and architecture firm Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF) whose projects include the world's tallest buildings, longest spans, and most inventive forms, has been working with clients and communities around the world for nearly 50 years. For architectural metal design elements, the firm has collaborated with Zahner on iconic projects such as Hudson Yards, IBM Headquarters, and the Petersen Automotive Museum. Learn more about KPF's legendary design process, and why Zahner has become a preferred partner when custom-engineered metal design, fabrication, and installation services are required.

KPF



20 Hudson Yards in New York, New York
Photo by Connie Zhou

At the dynamic intersection of architecture and urban innovation, KPF stands as a towering presence, reshaping skylines, reimagining airports, and redefining cityscapes worldwide. With a legacy spanning nearly five decades, this globally renowned architectural firm has left an indelible mark on the built environment, characterized by iconic designs that blend innovation, functionality, and sustainability.

Founded in 1976 by A. Eugene Kohn, William Pedersen, and Sheldon Fox, KPF has evolved into a multidisciplinary firm with a diverse portfolio spanning commercial, residential, cultural, and hospitality sectors. With offices in major cities including New York, London, Shanghai, and Singapore, the firm's reach extends across continents, reflecting its commitment to the design of buildings of all types and scales, in all geographic regions.

At the heart of KPF's ethos lies a deep-rooted passion for pushing boundaries and challenging conventional thinking. Each project is driven by a profound understanding of context, culture, and community, from soaring skyscrapers that redefine urban skylines to thoughtfully crafted mixed-use developments that promote connectivity and inclusivity.

One of KPF's defining characteristics is its collaborative approach with clients, consultants, contractors, and all stakeholders in new designs and builds. When facades, rain screens, or other architectural metal design elements are involved, KPF has successfully collaborated with Zahner on landmark projects over the years, including

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– **Marianne Kwok**
Design Principal

The Petersen Automotive Museum, led by design principal **Trent Tesch**, and Hudson Yards, led by design principal **Marianne Kwok**.

"We worked with Zahner on one of the most complex projects in New York City history, Hudson Yards, to execute a very specific idea



Petersen Automotive Museum In Los Angeles, California

for the façade of 20 Hudson Yards," said Kwok. "There were design and technical challenges to overcome, and the team at Zahner was in lock step with our designers in terms of the goals for the project."

KPF Associate Principal Michael Kirschner served as project liaison for the most recent collaborations involving massive perforated metal rain screens at **20 Hudson Yards**, and a **custom terrace canopy at 50 Hudson Yards**.

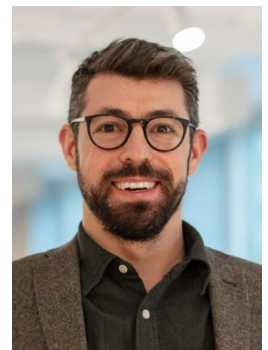
"The perforated metal rain screens produced by Zahner at 20 Hudson Yards were some of my first experiences with such large, precision pieces and that went incredibly well," Kirschner said. "These custom panels turned out great thanks to Zahner's design, engineering and fabrication expertise."

Kirschner's area of expertise lies in combining design and construction details into a single set of construction drawings. He said Zahner's involvement was crucial at this stage.

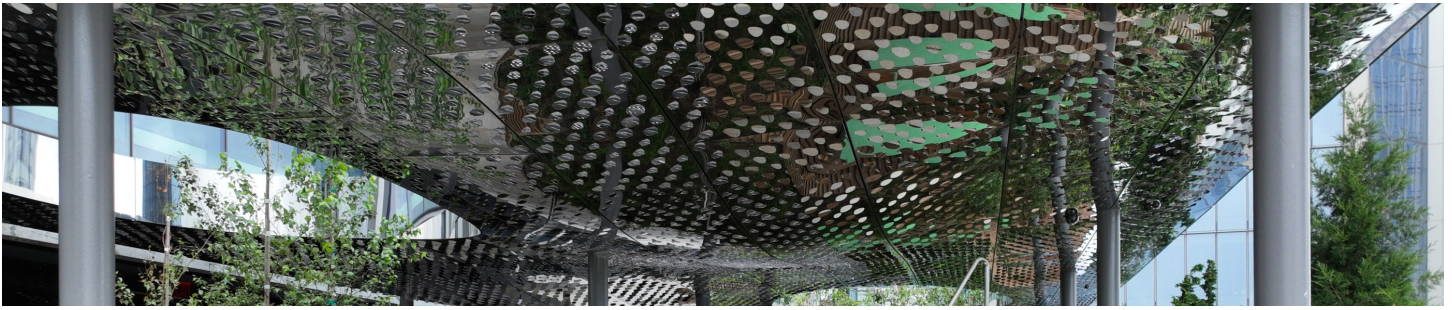
"What I think made this an interesting collaboration was Zahner's ability to understand stainless steel and how it's going to work on this scale, and how we could also retain the designer's vision," Kirschner said. "What I appreciate most about Zahner is being able to handle both sides of this conversation."

From high-concept designs, to fabrication, to installation systems, KPF has come to rely on Zahner for design assist services that are always tempered with the considerations of fabrication and installation limitations.

"Zahner brings a positive outlook and reality to the design and fabrication process which enables the designer as much as possible, yet always keeps feasibility and constructibility in mind," Kirschner said.



From top: Trent Tesch, Marianne Kwok, and Michael Kirschner



The Terrace Canopy at 50 Hudson Yards in New York, New York

KPF Advises on Custom Metal Canopy with Close Support from Zahner

KPF also brought in Zahner to support its design assist role for a new Meta offices rooftop canopy. Designed by kdA (Kevin Daly Architects), this stainless steel canopy located on the 51st floor of 50 Hudson Yards, also required a unique combination of stainless steel expertise, engineering considerations, and installation know-how.

"The highly-polished specifications were pushing the stainless steel to its limits, plus we also had to account for strong building downdrafts," Kirschner said. "Zahner rose to the challenge of constructing a support system for our undulating canopy soffit, an effort complicated by its mirrored finish and multiple

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Associate Principal

louvers designed to mitigate building downdraft. The end result benefits the user by creating a comfortable outdoor space in the middle of a high-rise."

Kirschner said Zahner was also brought in to supervise the installation process to ensure precision and safety.

"Zahner is one of those rare partners that can think like a designer, fabricate and build like an engineer, and install it all with precision finishing skills," Kirschner said. "Zahner has proven their worth on our large scale projects and with complex metal fabrications. We'll be looking to continue challenging them with our designs on future projects."

"One of my biggest take aways from working with Zahner was their deep understanding of our design vision as well as the needs of our clients," said Kwok. "That, and their expert ability to deliver high-quality solutions for a custom design. Zahner's attention to detail through the entire process was unmatched."