

INTERIOR SYSTEMS AND CIRCULATION SECT 001

Field Research Assignment



HEC Montreal

3000 Chem. de la Côte-Sainte-Catherine, Montréal, QC H3T 2A7

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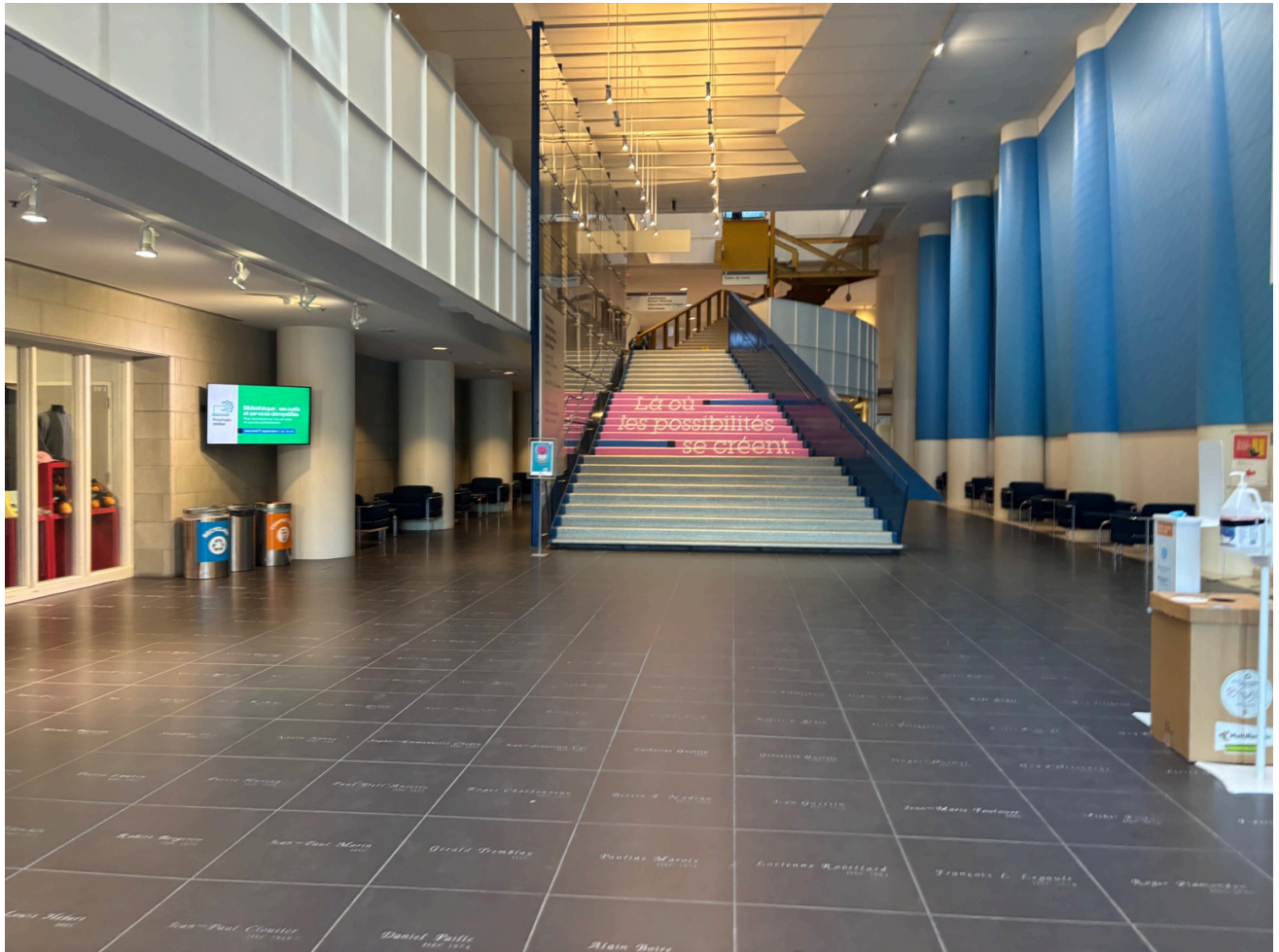


Introduction

HEC Montréal is a renowned French-language business school that is part of the Université de Montréal. Founded in 1907, it was the first school of management in Canada and has since become one of the country's leading institutions for business education. Although primarily francophone, HEC Montréal is also bilingual, offering programs in both French and English to accommodate a diverse student body. The school is located in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood of Montreal, where its campus stands as a four-storey institutional building that combines modern architecture with functional design. Its facilities include lecture halls, libraries, computer labs, and collaborative areas that support learning, research, and professional development. With its strong academic reputation and its integration into the Université de Montréal network, HEC Montréal offers students a stimulating environment within a vibrant urban setting.

Main Entrance

By Johanna Sonokpon



Feeling of the space

The main entrance feels very open and public. On its own it feels quiet, but once there's people, the sound resonates and makes it feel lively. It does feel bright due to the natural lighting and the artificial lighting feels a bit cold and formal. The large stairs at the entrance make me feel rushed to go up the stairs and to leave the lobby. There are some seats on the sides of the space which adds a little cozy touch to the space.



Fire requirements

I believe that this space has fire requirements, because it is a public university building. The basic fire requirements I think this main entrance has are:

- Fire rated doors, floors, stairs, walls and finishes
- Sprinklers
- Fire extinguishers
- Smoke detectors and fire detectors
- Manual and automatic fire alarms
- Exit routes and signs
- Occupant load limitations
- Push exit doors that swing outwards

Lighting



Lighting in the space is delivered through a combination of natural and artificial sources. Large windows, skylights and openings allow natural daylight to brighten the atmosphere throughout the day. This is complemented by track-mounted spotlights, recessed fixtures, and integrated ceiling panels, which together provide an even distribution of artificial illumination. There is a particular emphasis on the staircase, which ensures that it is clearly visible.

Wall finishes

The walls are finished with painted drywall in some areas, exposed concrete in others, and accented with blue vertical panels. This mix of materials adds visual variety while maintaining a neutral and professional palette. All finishes must comply with fire resistance standards, ensuring that they limit flame spread and smoke development. The colour scheme relies heavily on neutral whites and greys, accented by bold blue, which adds some vibrancy to an otherwise restrained interior. The finishes are smooth and semi-matte, emphasizing durability and easy maintenance while reinforcing the institutional character of the space.



Fixed furniture



Fixed furniture is present in the form of seating and tables along the sides of the lobby. These consist of dark blue cushions supported by metal frames and metal coffee tables. The materials were likely chosen for their durability, ability to withstand heavy use, and ease of maintenance. Although simple, they provide necessary seating while matching the institutional aesthetic of the space.



Orientation and wayfinding



The design of the lobby makes orientation and wayfinding fairly intuitive. The grand staircase immediately acts as a focal point, leading visitors upward. There are suspended signs that provide information about the spaces on each floor. Clear sightlines throughout the space reinforce circulation patterns and ensure that movement through the lobby feels natural and unforced.



Fire equipment



Fire equipment is subtly integrated into the space. Sprinkler heads are clearly visible in the ceiling, fire alarms are visible on the walls, illuminated exit signs are placed near the exit.

Sound Control



Acoustically, the lobby has some challenges because of its large size, the hard tile flooring, and the tall ceiling. These elements make sound bounce around a lot, which can cause echo. The acoustic ceiling panels help reduce some of that echo, and the upholstered benches probably absorb a little bit of sound too, but not very much. Even with these features, the space would still get pretty loud when it's busy, so the sound control feels only partly effective.



Design critique

The interior demonstrates a strong institutional design strategy that prioritizes durability, circulation, and safety. The open atrium and central staircase create a focal point and make orientation intuitive. The material palette reflects practical concerns such as durability, fire safety, and maintenance. However, the space feels cold and impersonal due to its dark flooring, minimal textures, and large scale. Acoustics remain a challenge despite ceiling treatments. Overall, the design is effective for a public transitional space, but could be improved by introducing more warmth, furniture, human-scale details, or softer finishes to enhance comfort.



Hallway

By Alston Alwinappan



Feeling you get

It's a bright place with plenty of natural lighting because one of the facades is a glass curtain wall. It's a public space so students come and go but there are desks along the side of the hallway which gives students some privacy. I feel comfortable to walk around and even sit anywhere.

Fire requirements

There are plenty of sprinklers around the place. There's also an emergency exit.

Flooring Material



It certainly must have had a selection requirement. The flooring must have a high durability because hundreds of students will pass on it every hour, it must be easy to clean as well. I believe it is vinyl.

Ceiling and Lighting



It's the same ones as in our class, acoustical tile of 2x6ft and very light grey color.

I spotted a variety of lighting. It's not very effective during the day since the sun takes care of the job.

The color schemes are shades of grey with primary colours such as red blue yellow green.



Furnitures

Some of the furniture isn't fixed but they're placed in a way that doesn't get in the way of traffic(along the side of the wall). The chairs and tables are a combination of wood and metal for the stands.



Orientation



Each floor is a mezzanine. It's open in the middle all the way up to the roof. It's a public place but having that open space enables the sound to just go up and be muffled. The space helps to orient me, the hallways are wide, but there is a direction to it.

Design critique



I think it's a good interior design, the hallways are easy to navigate through. It's aesthetically pleasing throughout the entirety. There are numerous places to take breaks from walking along the side of the corridors.

Library

By Alston Alwinappan and Johanna Sonokpon



Use

The space in the library is used for research, studying, borrowing books, thus it includes reading and there are sound proof cubicles and spaces used for group work.



Feeling you get

Despite being a public space, it's very quiet since everyone there comes with the purpose of studying or reading. There are parts of the library that are well lit and bright such as the study areas around the perimeter near the windows. The parts that are darker are located in the middle, the lighting is dim, the furniture is dark and the space is surrounded by book shelves. The atmosphere creates a cozy and productive environment.





Fire Requirements

The library definitely does and should have requirements because there are many flammable objects, the main being books. There are sprinklers, manual and automatic fire alarms, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers for emergencies. The emergency exits and means of egress are visible and easily identified.

Flooring Material

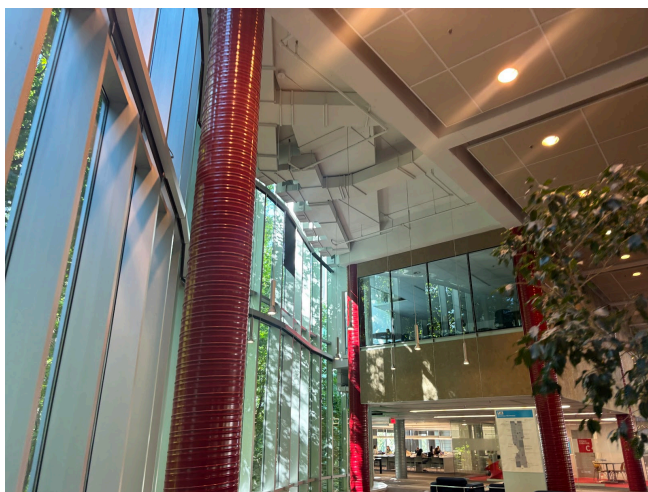
The chosen flooring material is carpet. It's intended to muffle out the sounds of footsteps to provide a quiet space.

The carpet has two shades of grey rectangular shaped pattern throughout it and it goes well with the other color used which is red for the columns. The carpet seems easy to clean and maintain since there weren't any visible stains.

It's carpet flooring. It's to make sure footsteps and sudden movements are as quiet as possible.



Ceiling and Lighting



I observed 3 types of lighting. Fluorescent tubed lights for places more hidden away such as between the aisles of book shelves because they aren't aesthetically pleasing. For parts of the ceiling that are lower, LED lights are used. And the third one, for high ceilings, a sort of led with powerful lighting is used.



Interior Finish

There are a variety of interior finishes for the walls. There are light grey metal panels, dark brown panels, panels that resemble oriented strand boards and curtain walls.



Fixed Furnitures

The furniture is made out of wood and it's dark brown. There are also cubicles where one student can study and sound proof conference rooms. The bookshelves seem to

be made of steel and can be moved mechanically to maximise spacing and storage.



Orientation

The library is very spacious and there are hanging signs indicating where everything is located. The pathways allow for intuitive circulation and the more private/quiet spaces are made more obvious with the layout. The more public areas with the reception booth are at the entrance of the library, the study rooms are in circulation paths, and the more quiet spaces are in the corners of the floor space.



Design critique

The interior is well laid out as it is designed to divide the space into sections with the book shelves and conference/ group study rooms. It creates a sort of checkered design from plan view. This design strategy makes the library easy to navigate and gives order and rhythm to the space.