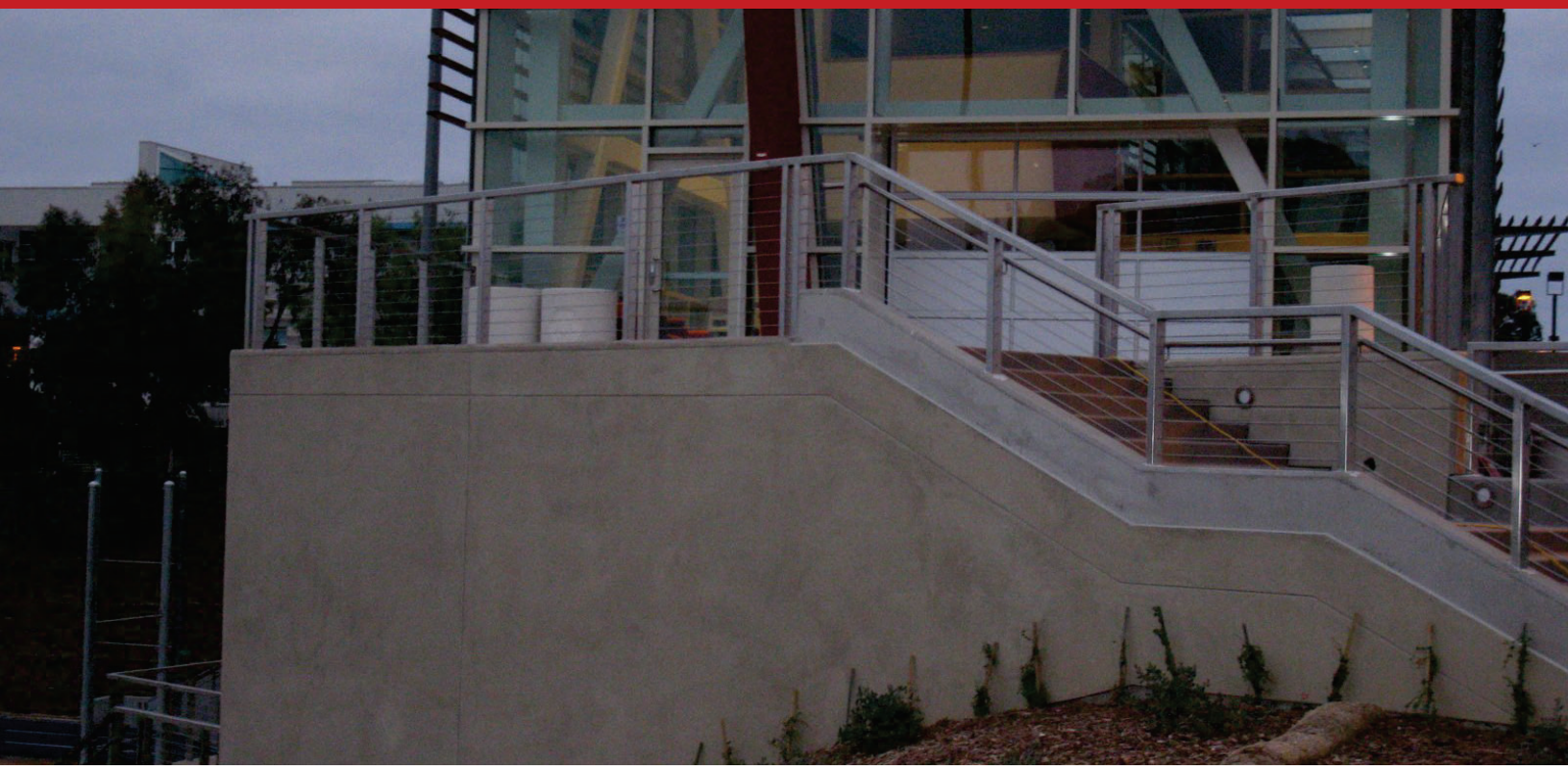
PROJECT CASE STUDY / UNIVERSITY · ARCHITECTURAL STAINLESS

UCSD RIMAC Annex Building & Ball Field

La Jolla, California · University of California, San Diego

Architect: Bauer and Wiley · Prime Contractor: Soltek Pacific Construction



The RIMAC Annex at dusk. Brushed stainless cable railing on the stair runs, the landings and the balcony guard — grain running true, terminations at eye level, not a mark on any of it.

OWNER
University of California, San Diego

PRIME CONTRACTOR
Soltek Pacific Construction

ARCHITECT
Bauer and Wiley

STAINLESS RAILING
1,176 LF total

CONTRACT VALUE
$329,252

MATERIAL
#4 brushed stainless, 3/16" cable

THE PROJECT

The RIMAC Annex is the athletic heart of UC San Diego — a glass-fronted building on a hillside in La Jolla, seen by every student who crosses that part of campus. Its railings were specified in architectural stainless steel, and In-Line built all of them.

Three scope items, bid 31 January 2008:

830 LF
Stainless steel cable rail ·
$255,062

210 LF
Stainless railings at stairs ·
$33,390

136 LF
North stairs cable rail, alternate ·
$40,800

$329,252 in stainless steel railing — cable guard, stair rail, landings and balcony guard, fabricated in Ramona and installed in La Jolla.

WHY IT WAS HARD

We priced 2,500 feet of polishing for 1,176 feet of railing

That single line in the estimate is the whole project. More than twice the length of the railing itself, bid as finishing labour — because on **#4 brushed stainless**, the grain is the product.

A #4 finish is a directional satin grain, fine parallel lines running true along every tube. Two components that meet must match in grit, direction and depth or the joint announces itself. There is no touching it up: match the grit but not the direction and it shows; match the direction but go a shade deeper and it shows. In-Line put over **1,100 shop hours** into this package before a single piece went to site.

Then we had to keep it perfect on a live construction site

Every finished component was wrapped before it moved and stayed wrapped through transport, staging and installation — protection maintained, repaired and replaced as it wore, until the building was ready to be seen.

The threat is not just carelessness. Grinding sparks and steel dust from ordinary carbon steel work nearby embed free iron in a stainless surface; weeks later those particles rust and the railing develops orange freckling that looks exactly like the stainless has failed. It has not — it has been contaminated. Keeping that off 1,176 feet of railing on an active university job site is a discipline, not a hope.

A scratch is a replacement, not a repair

And the owner does not care which trade caused it. They see a marked railing and a railing contractor. So In-Line protected the work as though every mark would be ours — because in practice, it would be.

Stainless meeting other metals

RFI 200 on this project dealt with the stainless handrail landing on a **painted structural embed** — the point where an architectural stainless system meets the building's carbon steel. Getting that connection right matters for the look, for the anchorage, and for what happens at the junction of two dissimilar metals over the life of the building. It was resolved on paper, before fabrication.

WHAT IN-LINE DELIVERED

- **830 LF of stainless steel cable guardrail** — balcony, landings and terraces.
- **210 LF of stainless railing at stairs** — stair rail and guard, following the runs.
- **136 LF of additional cable rail at the north stairs**, taken as a bid alternate.
- **3/16" stainless cable infill**, tensioned, with every termination detailed for eye-level viewing.
- **#4 brushed finish throughout**, applied and matched in the In-Line shop.
- **Complete shop drawings** including the stainless-to-embed connection details.
- **Full protection programme** — wrapped from the shop to handover.

SCOPE AT A GLANCE

Stainless cable guardrail | **Stainless stair rail** | **Balcony guard** | **#4 brushed finish** | **3/16" cable infill** | **Swage terminations** | **Painted embed connections** | **Shop drawings** | **Finish protection**

1,176 LF
Architectural stainless railing

2,500 LF
Of polishing, priced and performed

1,100+
Shop hours before site

0

Acceptable scratches

Fabricated in Ramona, finished in the In-Line shop, wrapped, delivered and installed in La Jolla. Why stainless is a different trade →

THE RESULT

Students cross those stairs every day of the academic year. The cable runs still read as clean horizontal lines, the grain still runs true, and the building still looks the way the architect drew it — which on a stainless job is the only measure that counts.

It remains one of the finest pieces of architectural metalwork In-Line has produced.

We spent more on making it look right than most contractors spend building the whole railing. That was not overrun. That was the job.

WHY UNIVERSITIES AND ARCHITECTS CALL IN-LINE

Architectural stainless gets specified when a building is meant to look expensive. It only looks expensive if it is perfect.

- **We fabricate and finish it ourselves.** One shop, one set of hands on the grain, consistent across every component that ends up next to another component.
- **We install what we build.** No handoff, no argument about whether it left marked or arrived marked.
- **We price the protection.** Wrapping, staging, sequencing and trade control are in the bid, not discovered halfway through.
- **We work in every other material too.** Hot-dip galvanized, powder coat over galvanizing, aluminium, ornamental tube steel and chain link — so we recommend stainless when it is right and say so when it is not.

- **We know this campus.** UC San Diego has brought In-Line back repeatedly — the RIMAC Annex, the Mesa Housing pedestrian and bicycle bridge, and work contracted directly with the Regents.
- **We are certified, bonded, signatory, and safe.** DBE · SBE · SLBE · SB · HUBZone · SBA 8(a). Union affiliated, Local 89 & Local 12. CSLB C-13, C-51, C-32. Bonded through Old Republic Surety, rated A+ XV. **EMR 0.68.**

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