

2017 ACE Awards

Douglass Colony Group

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

Project: 28th & Canyon

Nestled in the Foothills below the stunning Flatirons, Boulder's first settlers came in search of gold. Today, however, they would be greeted by a sophisticated city hardly reminiscent of a mining town. Boulder now boasts a wealth of recreation, startups, and culture that attracts not only college students and their families, but also a wide variety of entrepreneurs, businessmen, and people seeking new adventure. Such popularity boosts new construction and calls for architecture striking enough to rival the natural landscape. Answering that call are two new hotels at the highly visible corner of 28th & Canyon.

Selected by Milender White Construction Co., Douglass Colony designed, installed, and performed quality control for its massive scope on this hotel project, which covers much of the building's exterior and more, including: vertical wall insulation, sheet metal flashings, sheet metal wall panels, pavers, and roofing. Despite being constructed on an extremely tight central-Boulder lot with strict noise ordinances and restricted work and delivery schedules, Douglass Colony was able to invent strategies and work efficiently to complete this challenging project on-schedule without sacrificing quality, safety, or architectural vision.

Developed as full service hotels housing a total of 375 guest rooms on a 114,007 square-foot site, the Embassy Suites and Hilton Garden Inn offer a pool, fitness centers, three-meal restaurants, 8,200 square feet of meeting spaces, a ballroom, and a business center for their visitors. Combined, these two buildings are approximately 270,000 total square feet with an additional 216,440 square-foot underground parking garage.

Before experiencing all that these hotels have to offer, guests are sure to be mesmerized by the unique exterior pattern of the building, with metal wall panels of various shades of grey placed to create a seemingly random—yet meticulously planned and designed—arrangement. Carefully detailed, these panels add another level of complexity to this already rigorous project.

Solutions of Special Projects

With the extremely aggressive schedule outlined by the general contractor and the owner, Douglass Colony had to rely heavily on internal coordination between its own crews and superintendents, as well as coordination with the other trades and the general contractor. Three superintendents were assigned to the job to maximize efficiency and improve lines of communication.

However, despite what was originally believed to be ample staffing, coordination, and planning, the projects intricacies demanded even more, and crews fell behind the prescribed timeline early into the project. Douglass Colony takes its commitment to the highest standards of customer service seriously, and promptly took the necessary actions to turn the project around. By increasing manpower, Douglass recovered—meeting the ambitious aforementioned timetables and, at times, even exceeding it.

Similar to the extraordinarily tight schedule, the job site itself was restrictive. Access to the site was severely limited, with zero parking available for crew members or delivery trucks. As a solution, Douglass Colony phased all of its stocking. All sheet metal and composite metal materials were brought out to the site on an as-needed basis through careful systematization with the metal shop at Douglass's headquarters in Commerce City, the company's drivers, and the personnel and crews on-site. Enough material had to be delivered and stocked to maintain productivity and prevent down time due to lack of materials, while also being cautious not to overcrowd the site and impede the progress of the numerous other trades working on the project.

Despite this, no amount of strategy could prevent trades from having to take some liberties with their storage methods with such a tight job site. This meant a great amount of material was stored on the roof – one of Douglass Colony's many active working areas. Proper and planned sequencing was used to plot out the roof installation to free staged allotments of space for storage, ensuring that all trades were able to work as efficiently as possible.

Excellence in Project Execution & Management

Stored materials were not the only things Douglass Colony had to work around while installing the EPDM roof. The five-story buildings create a “donut shape” with a common courtyard at its center. Additionally, Douglass faced a multi-leveled roof with mechanical enclosures along the center that the roofing materials had to surround—essentially donut shapes within a donut. This complex layout created the threat of crews trapping themselves on the wrong sides of the completed areas as they worked, thus materials were placed on specific edges and in corners until completion.

Before any of the EPDM was installed, Douglass Colony examined the original project plans and proposals and discovered a way to increase value within the roof installation. Through taking an active role in the design phase of the job, Douglass discovered an opportunity to reduce the roofing insulation—better accommodating those intimidating rooftop mechanical units.

In other areas of the job, Douglass Colony utilized partnering to increase production and ensure on-time completion. Working with other installers, Douglass provided the necessary manpower to install the sheet metal flashings and composite wall panels.

The aggressive schedule created challenges to all trades in meeting its demands, but Douglass recognized the invaluable resource provided in the capabilities of its nearby metal shop in Commerce City. Taking advantage of this, Douglass Colony provided various sheet metal flashings to other trades –the architectural wood soffit installer, porcelain tile installer, and mason – to expedite their work so they didn’t have to wait on an outside manufacturer. With a little bit of teamwork, the project as a whole carried on expediently and smoothly.

Construction Innovations

Dealing with pavers always requires a heightened level of caution—they are a heavy material. To add to this looming challenge, the pavers on the project needed to be stocked in an especially precarious area. Rising to the challenge—and also to the paver area—Douglass Colony designed an extensive scaffold system. This job-specific design provided ramp access to the paver area, allowing for easy transport to materials that would be installed soon.

Most noticeable to anyone passing by the heavily trafficked area, though, are the panels encasing the building and highlighting the windows with a vibrant green and orange. Three shades of grey metal wall panels decorate the building. At first glance, the placement of these varying shades may seem random with a “grab-any-panel-and-hang-it-up” method. However, a second look reveals that they are, in fact, meticulously planned and create an artful, checker-like design. This panel design was created in-house at Douglass Colony where the project estimator worked closely with the architect who took an otherwise standard color palette and created an innovative, eye-catching pattern.

Environmental & Safety Awareness

Safety is always a priority, but when dealing with the fiercely unpredictable Boulder weather rife with high-speed winds, lightning storms, and the occasional Colorado snowstorm, it merits special attention. Both Milender White and Douglass Colony conducted weekly safety inspections confirming that the site-specific safety plan and all safety policies were adhered to. There were many instances where the entire jobsite had to be shut down to wait out storms, making it hard to stay on track. Furthering Douglass Colony’s strong safety culture, 28th & Canyon finished with zero recordable accidents.

Such a highly visible area comes with its own unique environmental concerns, and noise restrictions limited working hours. Working within the regulation-dictated schedule and being mindful of the surrounding area, Douglass Colony worked quietly and scheduled its daily activities accordingly.

Excellence in Client Services

To meet the set out goals of scheduling and quality, Douglass Colony took special measures with its on-site presence. The project manager visited and walked the entire site multiple times a weekly, and the superintendents even more frequently. Regular meetings were held with the general contractor, engineers, managers, executives, and design team to develop a plan for upcoming work within the timeline.

However, Douglass Colony recognized that simply accomplishing schedules was not enough—this project called for accomplishing those schedules efficiently and collaboratively. With the help of Douglass's influence, a rhythm was set among all subcontractors, maximizing overall project proficiency and minimizing human error.

Most of 28th & Canyon's terrific success was due to careful planning, teamwork, and the acumen and sweat of dedicated, talented crews. Building two hotels in a tight, heavily-trafficked area is no small task, but with determined adherence to the strict schedule, personal accountability, cautious stocking and sequencing, and a commitment to completion and proficiency, 28th & Canyon became a project Douglass Colony looks at with great pride. Visitors to the popular town now have a welcoming place to stay that matches the ever-growing sophistication, intrigue, and awe-inspiring nature of Boulder, Colorado.









