**Category: 4 – Best Building Project – Specialty Contractor (Under $2M)**

**Specialty Contractor: Heartland Acoustics & Interiors, Inc.**

**Project Name: Dawson School Dining Hall**

On July 20, 2017, over 150 people gathered around Dawson School’s campus to celebrate the groundbreaking of the new Dining Commons, a 12,000+ square foot facility that will be the center of the campus. The community celebration brought together faculty, alumni, students, and families to commemorate the beginning of an extensive campus improvement. This building is the first new building on campus in 20 years.

Dawson school, founded in 1970 as the Colorado Junior Republic, brought together “Nothing Without Labor” and “Love of the Land” in order to give students a chance to learn by doing. This could be on the farm, in a classroom, around campus, or on the athletic field. Throughout the years, the campus has transitioned from boarding to day school, from all-boys to co-educational, and from upper school only to grades K-12.

**Solutions of Special and Innovative Projects**

Perhaps one of the most crucial aspects of installation on construction sites is the schedule. Together the general contractor, Haselden, and Heartland Acoustics created a schedule to install the ceiling grid in all areas first and then move on to the dining room wood ceiling. The ceilings in both the kitchen and serveries were completed on time with no kinks in the schedule. Heartland Acoustics planned duration for the install of the wood ceilings in the dining room was originally set at eight weeks. Due to unrelated scheduling issues, the eight-week schedule was reduced to six weeks. This change in time frame called for some additional planning and coordination with other trades.

In conjunction with the general contractor, Heartland Acoustics worked out a plan to finish the wood ceilings on an area-by-area basis. Once the suspension system and insulation were installed, our crew moved in to complete the ceiling in small portions. After our crew had finished that particular area, a different trade moved in to install their ceramic floor tiles. Because we were able to coordinate and work together with another trade, we saved overall time on the already shortened schedule.

In addition to the teamwork among trades, our crews worked additional hours, ten-hour days, and weekends whenever possible. We were dedicated to meeting this shortened schedule and in the end, we were able to do so, all while completing a clean wood ceiling installation.

Aside from coordinating to meet the scheduling needs, there was an issue in the wood ceiling design in regards to installing return air registers. Heartland Acoustics came up with an original design, which was adopted by the owner and design team and was ultimately installed per our design. Parts of the ceiling were sloped, which allowed a view of the empty space above the wood ceilings in the openings for the HVAC system. We brainstormed and created a design where a suspended ceiling would extend beyond the opening in the linear wood ceiling. Along with this, we had wood trim upturned at the openings. This design allowed for the necessary function of the HVAC system while creating a smooth and aesthetically pleasing look to the Dining Hall ceiling.

**Excellence in Project Execution**

Heartland Acoustics & Interiors prides itself on customer satisfaction, and because of this, we are always looking out for the customer. There were several instances during the project that we made different recommendations to the GC and the client for several different reasons.

One of the original designs included installing batt insulation over the wood ceiling in the dining room. We recommended using 2” thick Select Sound insulation board. Not only did this insulation board delivered better acoustical treatment compared to the batt insulation and we saved the general contractor and the client money.

We also ran into a slight hiccup with the exterior metal soffits. The client was indecisive about the exterior color scheme, and there was a long lead-time for this product. Due to these factors, by the time a decision was made on the color scheme, the specified exterior metal soffit was not available in time for the schedule. Heartland Acoustics suggested using Berridge Metal V Panels instead, which were cheaper and obtainable in time to make the general contractor’s schedule. We were able to use this material and offer a credit back to the general contractor and client.

One of the largest installs of this project was the wood ceiling in the dining room. In order to ensure that the wood panels could be installed properly and then continue to stay in proper condition, Heartland Acoustics made sure that the general contractor provided the correct temperatures and humidity levels that were required of the manufacturer’s warranty requirements.

**Contribution to the Community**

Heartland Acoustics & Interiors takes great pride in our contribution to the Dawson School project, knowing that our unique ceiling applications provide acoustical and aesthetic value throughout the Dining Commons. As a company always pushing for innovation, learning, and growth, the chance for us to work at a school that follows the same principals is just natural.

Throughout the years, Dawson has created an environment for innovation and exploration, encouraging its students to grow and create life-long memories. The Dining Commons creates an additional space on campus for relationships and community to develop and thrive. From the groundbreaking to the ribbon cutting, hundreds of people gathered to celebrate, showing just how much this school has affected its community. Providing a crucial element to this building and having the opportunity to showcase our own innovative ideas was an honor.

**Safety**

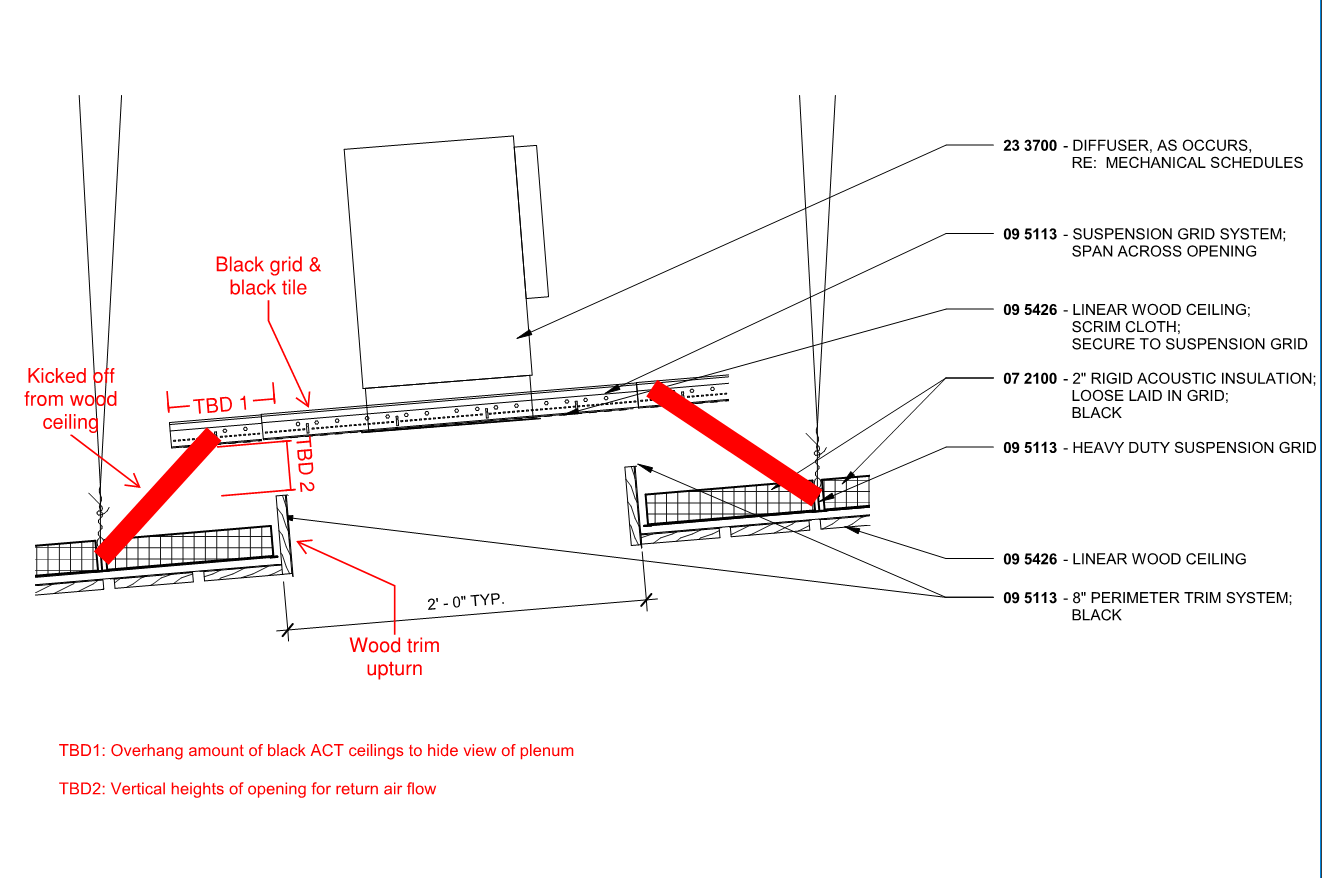
Heartland Acoustics & Interiors views safety as a number one priority. Our in-house safety manager inspected the site before our scope even started to research if there were any specific hazards that we needed to be concerned about during our install. After his inspection, he provided a job specific written safety plan for our installers to follow. Job walks were also a frequent occurrence, making sure the job site remained safe and follow all safety standards.

Heartland Acoustics recently rolled out new hard hats to our crews. The primary new feature is the chinstrap that we now require all employees to wear. As ceiling installers, people are usually working above their heads. These new hard hats with chinstraps ensure the hats stay on instead of falling off when looking up, a vital thing when people are working on stilts. If there is a fall, the hat will stay in place and protect the head of the installer. Additionally, these new JSP hard hats allow for greater comfort with a 6-point suspension system, wheel ratchet for adjustability, and vents for cooling. Heartland Acoustics & Interiors is proud to be leading the industry with this safety innovation.

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