

Category: 7 – Best Building Project | Specialty Contractor (Over \$10M)

Specialty Contractor: Weifield Group Contracting

Project Name: Country Club Towers II & III Project

Building Denver’s newest landmark luxury apartment buildings, the twin 32-story Country Club Towers II and III—developed by BROE Real Estate Group—demanded a level of mastery and precise execution that most high-rise projects of this scale require, yet rarely achieve. Country Club Towers achieved it.

Centrally located in the West Wash Park neighborhood, the goal of the Country Club Towers II & III development was to provide high-quality housing with innovative design in the supply-constrained downtown Denver market. This project was part of a decades-old master plan; the original Country Club Gardens apartments were built in 1942 and in the mid-80s, BROE carefully inserted the 25-story Country Club Tower I high-rise into the four-block development.

Construction of the twin towers began in May, 2015 and the first units were available to renters in August, 2017. Swinerton Builders was brought on as the general contractor along with numerous other subcontractors, including Weifield for electrical. In total, the two new structures, which share a podium base, house 552 new studio, one- and two-bedroom units; the property’s sawtooth architecture offers Country Club Towers residents stunning panoramic views of Denver via floor-to-ceiling bay windows included in every unit. The total project size spanned one million sq. ft. and at its peak, it was manned to nearly 900 construction workers across all trades. Although successful, Country Club Towers II & III was not without its challenges.

“The scale, competitive market, and cost made this project very challenging,” said Carl Luppens, former member of the BROE Group ownership team. “Thankfully, Weifield made the electrical design and construction very straightforward and efficient. At all stages of the project, Weifield provided design direction, accurate cost information, and value engineering.”

Solutions of Special Projects

The twin towers' shared podium base is eight stories high and contains the seven-story parking garage and amenities deck; the stacked towers begin on the ninth floor and go up to a final height of the 32nd floor. A key challenge to the project's overall schedule was the fact that BROE decided to do a partial turnover to open the majority of the podium and the West Tower, well ahead of the East. Though the plan was to provide partial occupancy of the West Tower (through floor 20), Weifield and Swinerton pushed for full occupancy of all 32 floors within the same timeframe to avoid the challenges of working in occupied spaces.

Just six weeks before the West Tower was scheduled to complete, the fire department surprised Weifield's crew with a mandate to complete the life safety systems in the East Tower in the same timeframe as the West; our team got this done while finishing all 32 floors in the West Tower in the original timeframe and completing the East Tower a month early.

Said Dave Britton, Swinerton Field Supervisor: "Weifield pushed everyone and was never behind schedule. It was relentless, but Weifield was right next to us, every day and every weekend."

Perhaps the biggest hurdle from a construction perspective were factors associated with design delays and changes of all types. Construction documents were complete in April, 2015, however, interior design drawings for the lobby and the amenities level were not complete until September, 2016—well after the rest of the project was finalized, due to interior designer changes. This required Weifield to do some guesswork with respect to rough-in and concrete installation as the towers were being built.

Changes permeated into the building aesthetics, as well, which required Weifield to execute numerous '180's' with respect to a last-minute design of the amenities level and upgrades to everything from rooms, to the garage, to lighting fixtures.

The 1940's-era apartment buildings surrounding the towers had outdated, inefficient boilers and no air conditioning, however, the heating/AC systems in the new towers were being fed by a new

central plant. As part of the design-build process, the team put together a solution in which the central plant would feed the entire campus instead of just the towers.

During the three-year construction period, multiple code changes and amendments were adopted by the City and County of Denver which required Weifield to leverage our relationships with City inspectors and be nimble with our installation processes. The small work site also drove Weifield field supervisor, Scott Buckey, to develop daily plans and communicate them to all partners in order to prevent potential site conflicts.

“The scope of the systems on this job was huge—yet we had the least problems I’ve had on any job, regardless of size,” said Britton. “Problems were found early and fixed within 24 hours. Weifield spent many nights at the project, alone, checking things—the inspections went very smoothly for a project this big.”

Excellence in Project Execution and Management/Team Approach

The owner wanted to complete two concrete floor pours per week (one floor per week, per tower) —an extremely aggressive schedule. Weifield’s prefabrication team pre-built the material for each floor and had it delivered the day before each floor would begin; it was then installed within three days.

“Weifield would often work the night before a pour—we provided them lights and they worked into the night to prepare. We never missed a pour because we weren’t ready,” said Britton.

The project’s high change rate required an equally high level of responsiveness to stay on-schedule; there were 269 scope of work changes and 484 submitted pricings from project inception to completion. Additionally, change approval delays drove the team to make numerous last-minute decisions—an example was Level 5; as the concrete was being poured, changes were still being made as to what was going to be installed and where.

To keep pace, Weifield took control of our own schedule and drove those of other trades, as well. All team members participated in Weifield daily huddles, lead meetings per area, and installation

meetings per phase in order to stay synchronized with the many moving phases. According to Weifield Project Executive Russell Tafoya, it was our leadership and communication that truly greased the productivity wheel.

Said Tafoya, “Many times, we wondered, ‘How can we possibly do it?’ I’m very proud of the fact that we made the first occupancy date despite all of the hurdles. Scott’s team worked 90-hour weeks, at times; we knew we could perform this job under his direction.”

As a direct result of our performance, Weifield received Swinerton’s 2017 ‘Most Valuable Player’ award and our crew was named ‘Crew of the Month’ twice during the course of this project.

Construction Innovations/State-of-the-Art Advancement

Weifield utilized our in-house CAD, BIM, Bluebeam, Trimble Systems®, and prefabrication technologies and teams to design, schedule, and lay out major project phases, months in advance. An example of our technology impact: Weifield had received the drawings for the Podium and Tower 1, but not Tower 2—and we needed to begin laying out the second tower in order to keep to schedule; Weifield utilized our own CAD & Bluebeam software to develop Tower 2 drawings based on the Tower 1 set.

BIM was also instrumental in configuring 10,000 feet of conduit into the amenities deck to support power, lighting, data, etc.—the sheer volume of conduit could not have been installed as seamlessly, without BIM.

Said Luppens: “Weifield proposed many innovative approaches which resulted in great efficiency and cost savings while increasing quality. Due to the project scale, these innovations were very valuable. They were also able to hold their price from conceptual design through final project completion, three years later.”

Environmental/Safety

Weifield designates a trained ‘green vest’ safety representative at every job who serves as the safety point person; for this project, Weifield utilized two representatives. Our crew attended monthly meetings with the Weifield and Swinerton safety managers focusing on specific risks associated with upcoming phases of the project. Additionally, Weifield held a safety huddle each day (the safety huddle time, alone, on this project totaled 12,000 hours).

Weifield also employed external safety consultants from Total Safety to provide continuous random safety site audits and perform third-party reviews.

Despite some fairly significant safety events (such as a placer boom failure—which fell and destroyed some of the West Tower’s first elevated desk)—Weifield experienced no major injuries or fatalities on the project. This was a direct result of the safety procedures our team members performed every day.

Excellence in Client Service and/or Contribution to Community

The best evidence that Weifield has per our quality on the Country Club Towers project is the opinions of our partners.

“I can tell you that out of all the subcontractors we had—which was 60+ subs and a total team of nearly 900—Weifield was far and above my favorite,” said Britton. “They were absolutely awesome to work with because from day one, Weifield said it could be done. They were instrumental in making our schedule.”

“Compared to the other subs, I would use Weifield over any other electrical I’ve worked with in my history at Swinerton—which has been 18 years,” he added.









