

CATEGORY: 8: Best Building Project – General Contractor (Under \$10 Million)

PROJECT: GoSpotCheck Headquarters at 1500 Market Street | **GC:** Hyder Construction

Why This Project Should Win an ACE Award

It's a beautiful summer evening as you drive north up Market Street, approaching Lower Downtown Denver (LoDo). The street lights are just flickering on as you enter this historic neighborhood and are greeted by a low but unique glass and steel building. Its "jewel box" design converts it into a lantern, marking an important gateway into the city.

A project this dynamic is successful for the way it overcomes its challenges, through innovation and teamwork. We had to reimagine the plate steel curtain wall into a panel assembly, cut a hole into the neighboring 137-year-old occupied building, put up a masonry wall inches away from another historic building without impacting it, and protect literally every material installed because of the exposed design. All while maintaining an impeccable safety record on a zero lot-line project with a crane swinging 50' steel panels just inches away from the public.

Project Description

1500 Market is a \$5.5 million, 16,000 square-foot, three-story iconic office building with a fourth level mezzanine at the busy corner of 15th and Market. It connects to the historic Rocky Mountain Seed building, built in 1880. The existing tenant on the second floor of the Seed building, tech startup GoSpotCheck, grew substantially over the past few years and needed more space. 1500 Market was a build-to-suit collaboration between the tenant, Columbia Group (the owner), Hyder, and Tryba Architects. The interior open-office design intentionally exposes the building's inner workings: steel supports, wood beams and decking, and polished concrete floors. The distinctive exterior is a modern structure of steel and glass that lets in ample sunlight and reveals to passersby what's typically hidden in neighboring masonry buildings.

Solutions of Special Projects | Teamwork Excellence | Innovations

The building's essential artistic element, its "jewel box" effect, is achieved through an unusual curtain wall system: a steel frame of various shapes inset with aluminum-clad wood windows. When this steel exoskeleton was initially proposed, the intent was to fabricate it on-site. Because this is such a unique product with large steel fins, rather than a typical aluminum curtain wall,

there aren't a lot of lessons learned in the industry to draw from. However, as the team collaborated during preconstruction, it became clear that on-site fabrication would delay the project by six months and, in such tight quarters and exposed to weather, make the necessary quality control nearly impossible. Working together, the team came up with the solution to fabricate the steel curtain wall off-site in the controlled environment of the steel shop and install it as eight gigantic panels. Fabricating the panels offsite like this was a new process and had a learning curve associated with it. Some of the steel fins were 30' long before even being welded into panels. The Hyder team and the window supplier frequently visited the steel fabricator's yard to inspect the exoskeleton pieces. The first two panels required quite a bit of re-work to meet the 1/8" tolerances needed for final window installation. Although this re-work caused a minor schedule delay, it was nothing compared to the six months we'd be facing if we went back to the old plan. This was our best solution and working as a team we stuck with it, ironed out the kinks, and were able to fabricate the remaining panels without further schedule delay. This significantly shortened the construction schedule and allowed for a high level of attention to quality and detailing in the defining component of the project.

GoSpotCheck's existing headquarters were right next door, on the second floor of the Rocky Mountain Seed building. They wanted to continue to occupy this space, so the plans called for cutting a hole in the side of the building to connect it with the new structure. GoSpotCheck would continue to work in this space during construction. Before cutting the hole, the team devised an air-tight temporary barrier in the existing office. The plan was enacted on a Saturday and GoSpotCheck came in on Monday to business as usual. Some noisy work had to be rescheduled to avoid being too disruptive, but dust was never a complaint; the temporary barrier kept it at bay.

The building's east 50' masonry wall had to be installed within inches of another neighboring historic building, a bookstore. By erecting it in stages alongside each floor of structural steel, we could constantly tie it in and brace it. This unique process, constant monitoring, and communicating to subs the need for attention to detail resulted in a seamless installation, with no damage ever caused to the historic building. However, by design almost nothing in this building gets covered up. Masonry is typically done up-front because it's messy. As the wall went up, the

team implemented usually unnecessary extra protection for the timber trusses and wood decking to prevent costly damage.

Weather also affected these exposed inner workings, many of which had to be installed before the building was dried in. One evening 6” of hail fell on site. The team stayed and worked together to get all the hail off the roof to minimize water damage to the interior’s exposed wood beams and steel. This dedication truly stemmed from the team’s understanding of these pieces as artistic elements of the building and none of the pieces had to be replaced.

Despite all these challenges, the project was on-budget. Although the panelized steel learning curve delayed the schedule by a few weeks, the actual process significantly shortened the construction schedule.

Environmental/Safety

The new GoSpotCheck headquarters sits at the corner of one of the busiest intersections in Downtown Denver. A confluence of vehicles and pedestrians constantly streamed by the zero lot-line construction site. This project saw over 60,000 man hours worked and not one lost-time accident, injury to the public, or OSHA recordable incident.

This project followed Hyder’s typical rigorous safety protocols, including daily huddles, tool box talks, safety audits, etc. However, to work on such a tight site in close proximity to the public also required a strong safety culture, constant monitoring, and daily coordination.

Everyone new coming on to the site was educated in the strict safety culture. Even some veteran trades weren’t accustomed to safety standards this strict...not until they experienced an hour on the jobsite and realized how much was going on in such close quarters.

We had to think about not only the construction workers, but the pedestrians and traffic just outside the site. We had a six-foot fence atop a concrete barrier to keep pedestrians out and on-site security. Even with these precautions, the construction superintendent left the jobsite every day in pristine condition, just in case there was a break-in.

In addition, the site's unique conditions and location mandated closely coordinating the steel exoskeleton installation. Steel panels were set in place with a crane on early weekend mornings, when the area was least active with pedestrian traffic. Crane updates in daily huddles kept teams aware of where we'd be swinging.

Hyder's superintendent summed it up, "It is a daily thing that you can't turn your back on, constantly monitoring to keep things within the bounds of the construction site. If you can work in a spot like this, everything else is easy."

In addition, the minimalistic design produced hardly any construction waste. The wood, windows, and steel were all cut to exact dimensions. Materials that often cause the biggest waste, such as drywall, were hardly used. This project is a true study in building more with less.

Excellence in Client Service | Contribution to Community

Over the past four years, GoSpotCheck has grown from 22 to 150 employees; they now occupy all three floors of 1500 Market. "From the very beginning, we involved GoSpotCheck as the tenant with the architect and with the contractor. We wanted to be sure that we had a building that could accommodate young growing companies," said Jerry Glick, Managing Partner, Columbia Group. Investing in developing this site contributed to a booming local tech startup remaining in Downtown, promoting a prosperous city, while preserving the historic character of the Lower Downtown district.

1500 Market also improves the neighborhood pedestrian experience. It maintains context with its historic LoDo neighbors through similar portions and scale and eliminates a gap in the urban streetscape. The "jewel box" effect created by the modern glass and steel structure reveals the building's inner workings. By stripping away the typical façade and revealing the beauty within, the new building adds visual interest to passersby.

This project was a winner at the 2017 Mayor's Design Awards and the 2018 Downtown Denver Awards both for its unique design and positive impact to LoDo.

Jerry Glick summed up, “We are obviously very proud of this building, but it is a result of a collaboration that we had with Tryba and with Hyder and with the tenant that produced a good project.”









