

## **Category 5: Best Building Project – Specialty Contractor (\$2M - \$6M)**

**Specialty Contractor:** Weifield Group Contracting

**Project Name:** Hilton Garden Inn Project

The 24-month build of the upscale 12-story Hilton Garden Inn, located near Coors Field in downtown Denver, was not as effortless a process as its gleaming façade might suggest. Occupying the last open spot in the Union Station development, the hotel project was initially scheduled to start in July, 2015; Weifield was selected as the electrical partner by general contractor, Alliance Construction Solutions LLC due to our past design-build experience.

Shortly after the existing building was demolished, funding for the project fell through, causing the project to stall for a period of 18 months while financing was determined. In January, 2017, Weifield received an urgent call from Alliance.

“They said, ‘we’re starting next week – you need to be here,’” said Erik Uhernik, Weifield Superintendent. “We immediately started installing temporary power to start construction.”

The high-rise hotel was to reflect Denver’s rich history while simultaneously aligning with the modern downtown development landscape; in addition to an above-ground, multi-level parking structure with 229 guest rooms on nine floors sitting atop it, the hotel was to include a restaurant utilizing space that was once a city historic landmark, one of the first firehouses in downtown Denver.

Although excited the project was reinitiated, the past delay quickly became the least of Weifield’s concerns.

### **Solutions of Special Projects**

The first major obstacle involved ground water – a lot of it. The city’s water survey, completed five years earlier, had not factored in upcoming rapid development; as more area buildings were

constructed, all of the ground water was pushed to the last existing area—the Hilton Garden Inn site.

“We started calling it the ‘Blue Lagoon,’” said Uhernik. “We helped Alliance dewater and the volume pumping out quickly rose from 200 gallons to 1,000 gallons per minute.”

Weifield supplied power to the pumps and worked with RK Water to rectify the ground water issue which took two months, in total. Because the ground water contained contaminants, the team implemented a filtration system to clean the water before pumping it out into the South Platte River per the state’s permit requirements. The next challenge was the drying phase.

“Drying the area put us 1.5 months behind schedule and we left the project for that period – but the completion date never changed,” said Uhernik. “Design also fell behind construction – which helped us when we returned to the job, as everyone was out of our way. We increased our manpower and roughed in all of the guest rooms on nine levels in a two-month period – instead of the scheduled five months. We drove the job at that point.”

The design lag caused Weifield issues when it came to the deck concrete pours—as we couldn’t design the 3D models for some decks until they had already been poured. In addition, due to submittal delays on the mechanical side, we weren’t sure what equipment we were powering or where it would be located.

“We planned for worst-case scenario in the absence of a plan – and luckily, didn’t have to move anything,” said Uhernik.

Weifield’s process focus helped rectify several other issues, including fixture delivery (within two-hour windows on specific days), shutdown sequencing, and the detailed fire alarm testing schedule with process steps and associated timelines.

“Halfway through the project, we were awarded the furniture package – which created a new set of challenges based on electrical rough-in for the ever-changing package,” said Jury. “Weifield

adapted and got the rough-in done in a very short period of time—ahead of everyone else. It was a good effort.”

### **Excellence in Project Execution and Management / Team Approach**

Weifield performed 32,986 man hours on the project and proactively managed manpower, throughout. Uhernik’s morning huddles with his crew kept everyone updated on evolving tasks—and Weifield’s daily reports and three-week schedules ensured the holistic team stayed synchronized.

Through coordination meetings on the job site, Uhernik and his team pushed to bring design misses to the architect’s attention – so they would be added to the drawings and we would have something to build off of. Our project management team continued to push for updates, to get everyone on the same page.

“Weifield always had a good grasp on what needed to happen; they would bring up issues and it allowed us to be proactive and stop them before they occurred,” said Borunda.

Weifield’s lighting package was heavily value-engineered to adapt to a new building ‘skin’ – as well as a redesign of the interior common area spaces. Additionally, because Weifield couldn’t store a lot of material at once at the downtown site, our project management expertise and relationship with partner QED ensured we received materials as we needed them.

Perhaps the biggest achievement was Weifield’s ownership of the smoke control and fire alarm systems build and inspection – with respect to smoke control, Weifield met with the electrical and mechanical engineers numerous times to help them reach a consensus on the design-build scope of work. Our project execution and preparedness with fire alarm partner, Meridian Fire, ensured a seamless inspection process with Denver Fire; the inspectors were thoroughly impressed with our work and testing process.

“Weifield was at the forefront of starting prefunctional testing for smoke control – leveraging Weifield’s contacts and experience at the end was critical to getting it done,” said Jury.

“Weifield helped us achieve Denver Fire’s approval, quickly; their integrity and professionalism led the way in achieving this phase in a timely manner,” said Borunda.

### **Construction Innovations / State-of-the-Art Advancement**

An innovative team approach was needed to accomplish the initial dewatering phase and develop an electrical solution that would support the filtration system.

“Weifield was right there, helping us to determine the process and providing us with temp power when needed,” said Borunda. “Along the way, Weifield dove deep into the drawings and found items that were poorly designed or not included by the design team—always thinking far into the future and planning for it. This gave us time to be proactive and escalate on prioritized phases.”

The project required a lot of BIM coordination from Weifield’s in-house BIM team; Weifield was heavily involved with ongoing clash detection and held regular BIM meetings with the GC and all trades to ensure everyone kept on the same page. Additionally, our Trimble® Total Stations allowed us to locate installation points in a fraction of the usual time.

A critical piece of the project involved a tower bus duct with 80 feet of riser – this equipment eliminated the need for miles of cable, and was initiated by Weifield. We sent our CAD BIM drawings to the manufacturer to have it built, ensuring everyone’s buy-in before we manufactured this pricy equipment.

“Weifield looked beyond the requirements caught things before concrete was poured – because of this, we were more successful at BIM than anyone else,” said Borunda.

This project also had the largest continuous concrete pour the City of Denver had ever seen—4,700 yards of concrete in a single pour (which equates to the load of 450 concrete trucks). The process shut down an entire city block and utilized 250 men and 150 separate concrete trucks to deliver and place the concrete in nine hours—a monumental task by all accounts.

## **Environmental / Safety**

In addition to having our trained ‘green vest’ safety representative on-site who served as the safety point person, our crew attended regular meetings with the Weifield and Alliance safety managers focusing on specific project phase risks. Weifield also held a safety huddle each day (the safety time spent on this project totaled 3,300 hours).

Weifield followed our comprehensive Project Safety Plan (PSP) to help protect our crew and others from potential hazards – and drove safety on the project by holding specific training sessions around tower crane-rigging, building concrete decks at elevation, walking/climbing on rebar, and more. We also conducted regular safety audits with feedback sent to Alliance to help improve throughout the project.

“We were always confident in the fact that Weifield had safety handled on this project,” said Borunda.

## **Excellence in Client Service and/or Contribution to the Community**

Despite all obstacles, Weifield was proud to help Alliance complete the renovation of Denver’s oldest landmarks in conjunction with the brand-new modern hotel in time for its grand opening on April 16, 2019. In order to make it happen, Weifield was instrumental in driving the schedule and truly saved the day with respect to problem resolution.

“We earned our partners’ trust by looking far ahead to anticipate challenges – and then openly communicated potential solutions in our weekly master list, BIM, subcontractor, GC, gross margin, and safety meetings,” said Uhernik. “When we saw the team was going to miss the schedule, we notified them right away and started brainstorming solutions.”

“I was highly impressed with Weifield and look forward to working with them again,” said Borunda. “From the field performance to the supervision, the success of our work was due to Weifield’s leadership on this project.”



















