

Category: 4 – Best Building Project – Specialty Contractor Under \$2 Million

Contractor: The Art of Concrete

Project Name: North Wynkoop

Disco Ball Concrete Rocking The Arts District

A new development along Brighton Boulevard is rocking Denver, Colorado. North Wynkoop, also known as Midtown East, is home to The Mission Ballroom and Wynkoop Alley along with planned residential, office and retail spaces. It is a 14-acre project in the River North Arts District and is revitalizing a historically industrial part of town with arts and entertainment. The doors of Mission have opened and they are hosting concerts there weekly. The streets are filled with vibrant activity as the project gets unveiled one block at a time.

When The Art of Concrete opened its doors in late 2017, it had big dreams for decorative concrete in Denver. In 2018 they began negotiations with Mortenson Construction to do all of the concrete paving for their North Wynkoop project – a mixed-use project off of Brighton Boulevard. Original negotiations had the project contract value for the newly founded concrete company at over \$1 million. However, because The Art of Concrete was new, their bonding capacity and the pure infancy of their company threw up red flags for Mortenson's risk department. However, because of Mortenson's commitment to helping small businesses, they worked hand-in-hand to carve out the part of the project that was most valuable for The Art of Concrete to perform and reduced the contract to a more comfortable size for both parties. The Art of Concrete's focus for the project became only the decorative concrete scope. This included pouring and finishing over 36,000 square feet of specialty finished concrete with over 21,600 lineal feet of decorative concrete saw cuts. This was no small feat for a brand new company.

Solutions of Special Projects:

One of the main obstacles at the beginning of the job was for The Art of Concrete to prove to Mortenson that they were worth the risk of bringing on board to complete the work. Prior to this project, The Art of Concrete only had 10 other contracts either in progress or completed, none of which were to the full scale of size and complexity as North Wynkoop. The Art of Concrete

worked with their bonding company to show they could be bonded for \$750k; which took special negotiations and discussions to get to that capacity being brand new. In addition to proving that they could be bonded for the work, they had to show a thorough safety plan and meet with Mortenson's safety team to show them that The Art of Concrete was professional and committed to safety. After those discussions, they met with Mortenson's project team to discuss capacity, quality, planning, safety (again), and scheduling. The Art of Concrete provided them with resumes of the team that they had committed to perform the work. After all negotiations and meetings, Mortenson had enough confidence in The Art of Concrete and contracted with them and even dropped their bonding requirement.

Excellence in Project Execution and Management/Team Approach

From the very beginning, The Art of Concrete and Mortenson went into the project as a committed team, knowing they needed to work together to make the project a success. Like many projects though, this one also did not start on time for The Art of Concrete. Their scope began about 8 months after they had originally planned. However, Mortenson's deadline with the owner was unchanging. This caused pressure on The Art of Concrete's overall duration. Instead of the time-crunch becoming an item of contention between both parties, it became an item of collaboration. The Art of Concrete worked hand-in-hand with Mortenson to meet the schedule. At the beginning of the project, Mortenson provided a couple additional people to help on pour days until The Art of Concrete could bring more people over from another project they were completing. Then, when things were full steam ahead, The Art of Concrete put in overtime and weekend work to help Mortenson meet the aggressive schedule.

Construction Innovations/State-of-the-Art Advancement

Once the project was underway, the owners of the music venue decided they wanted to upgrade the paving in the plaza in front of the venue. The Art of Concrete worked with Wenk Associates, the Landscape Architect, to come up with a unique paving option. Together they designed a concrete pavement which incorporated crushed all-sided mirror glass and crushed rose gold mirror glass that was installed in a gradient across a section of the plaza. Before installing this specialty paving over the waterproofed membrane in the plaza, The Art of Concrete installed a mock-up for the owner and Wenk to review. They both loved it and referred to it as their "disco-

ball” concrete because of how it glimmered in the light. Now the disco-ball concrete greets concert-goers and gives the plaza a little extra pizzazz.

Environmental/Safety

The Art of Concrete’s crew is always safety oriented. Before beginning any work on-site they provide in-depth safety plans and job hazard analysis. With about 4,500 total man hours on the job, they did not have any reportable incidents, near misses or lost days. Mortenson frequently commented about the safety of the crew and how they never had to remind them to wear their PPE. They also completed daily pre-task forms to foresee any potential risks that may lay ahead for that day’s work. Their proactiveness for safety provided a safe environment for them and the surrounding trades.

Excellence in Client Service and/or Contribution to Community

The Art of Concrete proved to Mortenson that even though they are a smaller, start-up company, they are capable of producing excellent work, meet deadlines and work as a collaborative team member to make the North Wynkoop project a success. The Art of Concrete Team met with Mortenson on a regular basis, kept an open line of communication, and worked through every challenge as a team. Even at the end of the project as all of the trades scrambled to the finish line, The Art of Concrete fixed concrete, which got damaged by other trades, quickly and efficiently to help Mortenson reach the deadline they had with the owner. When walking the project towards the end, Mortenson’s superintendent, Chris Bradford, thanked The Art of Concrete’s owner, Karen Keyes, for the excellent work done by the crews and the look forward to working with them again. The music venue opened on time and this Brighton Boulevard Redevelopment began to the next chapter of arts and entertainment, complete with high-end decorative concrete paving and disco ball concrete flatwork in the plaza.











