

Category: 9 – Best Building Project – GC (\$10-\$40 Million)

Contractor: W.E. O’Neil Construction

Project Name: S’Park Market

As the signature gateway structure to the broader S’Park Neighborhood mixed use development, Market’s innovative architectural design is uniquely Boulder. Market is also part of one of the first LEED Silver projects certified in Colorado under LEED v4 Neighborhood Development.

Market’s massing inspired by mountain sheds and railroad cars, its weathered wood, steel and rhythmic windows craft a dialogue with both the urban and natural context, according to the project architect. A loft style creative office environment with ground floor amenities activate the public connection. The outdoor plaza is “carved open” for outdoor dining around a fire pylon. Additionally, multiple inset event decks with unparalleled views of the flatirons make Market a truly unique office building for Boulder and the Colorado front range.

This innovative and creative angular design also created many challenges the project team overcame. These challenges range from the architectural design itself, City of Boulder height restrictions and approval processes to site challenges, which required intense project planning and precise execution in the field.

Due to the unique planning approval process in Boulder, Market’s building form, shape and materials were all approved at a schematic design stage and prior to the start of General Contractor selection and preconstruction on the project. When W.E. O’Neil Construction was hired as the development’s prime General Contractor, it was discovered that cost saving measures would be needed to make this a viable project for the development team.

The challenge in preconstruction was to find ways to save the project money without changing the building exterior. Significant changes would require additional planning reviews and significantly delay the project start by one year or more. The solution proposed by W.E. O’Neil was to provide targeted savings within the Guaranteed Maximum Price contract and continue the value engineering process concurrent with construction. Through close collaboration with Ownership, design team and project subcontractors, we were able to provide total project savings of nearly 5% without sacrificing the architectural intent.

Typically building a four-story office building is not a monumental task, however the uniqueness of building in Boulder again presented challenges. The project team was challenged to provide the four stories needed for tenant leasing and maximizing ceiling heights all while staying below the city’s firm height restrictions. Structurally this led to multiple innovative design solutions to reduce the depth of steel members, provide beam penetrations, and lower first floor finished slab elevations. Utilizing BIM technology the complex steel structure and architectural steel components were well coordinated and installed to maintain those critical ceiling heights.

Building Information Modeling (BIM) became a critical exercise in understanding how all mechanical, plumbing, electrical, and fire sprinkler systems could be routed and coordinated to

fit within the angular and irregular steel structure. All while maintaining minimum ceiling clear heights and without obstructing the breathtaking views of the Flatirons that help make this such a desirable office location. This was an intensive and collaborative approach which explored and implemented a variety of construction methods to minimize the impact of MEP on the owner's usable space. This process, fit fire sprinkler pipes in between the flutes of structural steel decking and pushed the limits of mechanical design. Keeping the owner's turnover condition in mind during the core and shell construction phase was integral to minimizing re-work and providing the most flexibility for the design and construction of tenant fit-out.

The S'Park Market project was bordered on the north by a very high traffic road as well as an active railroad on the east. The safety of not only our trade partners but the public was taken into account. Due to the building's location and the site constraints, extra effort was put into maintaining safe access for the public along the bordering north multi-use path by ensuring perimeter control measures were always kept intact and in good working condition. All work activities along the north property line of the building were clearly planned out prior to the start of work.

The aggressive project schedule was tough to meet, with a plan of enclosing the building during winter. To counter this challenge, W.E. O'Neil's material procurement plan expedited material delivery of multiple building systems, most notably the glass and window systems required to complete the shell of the building and allow other critical MEP activities to commence. The window systems were prefabricated, having them made in a controlled environment off-site saved time versus constructing them in the field. Enclosing the building faster allowed the critical path components of the interior of the building to begin earlier than anticipated and keep the project on schedule.

The pedestrians, bikers, and neighbors of the S'Park development have already shown great excitement about this addition to their community. The first tenant will move into the S'Park Market office building later this year. They will occupy the entire office portion of the building on floors two to four and will enjoy the advantages of the office building's convenient location and retail on the first floor of their building. Places to live, S'Park Cielo and Timber, are across the sidewalk and are under construction by W.E. O'Neil. The Market building and the entire S'Park development is reviving the old lumber yard that was there and creating a new space for collaboration, work, life, and play. A multi-use pedestrian path was constructed within the project scope on the East side of the project, which will ultimately be an addition to the neighborhood and Boulder pedestrian walkway system, making the development a huge contributor to connectivity in the community and the use of green infrastructure. The S'Park development is one of the first projects to achieve LEED v4, LEED ND Silver status.

The greater S'Park Neighborhood development will ultimately be the mixed-use hub of East Boulder incorporating retail, office, and residential uses with activated outdoor spaces.











