

Category: 3 – Meeting the Challenge of a Difficult Job – General Contractor

Contractor: W.E. O’Neil Construction

Project Name: Applewood Village Shopping Center Anchor Building Redevelopment

The Applewood Village Shopping Center Anchor Redevelopment project transformed a vacant 137,000 square foot, 50-year old single-tenant retail building into a welcoming, modern multi-tenant junior-anchor retail building with a cohesive presence reflecting the community it's within. “Not many communities ever get an opportunity to repurpose over 100,000 square feet of abandoned retail, transforming a shuttered big-box retailer into a regional destination of exciting new shops. Working with Regency Centers, W.E. O’Neil, and its subcontractors was a seamless process. All parties worked together to create an opportunity to revision and enliven a center that was slowly becoming obsolete over the years. The City of Wheat Ridge is proud to have partnered with this team, taking an early vision of what could occur into the cutting of a ribbon and the opening of four new retail stores. The redevelopment is a fantastic contributor to economic stability and growth for the Wheat Ridge community.” Steve Art, Economic Development Manager & Executive Director Wheat Ridge Urban Renewal Authority,

Teamwork and open communication were vital for project success due to the complex structural deficiencies of the old building that were uncovered paired with an aggressive schedule for store openings.

The impressive 125,000 square foot revitalization was accomplished within a busy shopping center comprised of 324,000 square feet of open retailers and an adjacent active RTD bus sub-station. The retail anchor redevelopment was completed ahead of schedule without any safety incidents. The revitalized area creates a pedestrian friendly shopping experience that meets the needs of the growing Wheat Ridge community that is an active

business community a part of the greater Denver metropolitan area and the Front Range Urban Corridor.

The team worked in an agile manner navigating multiple obstacles. Exterior work was purposefully scheduled for the spring to minimize weather impacts. For the work completed during the winter, the team installed temporary walls and infilled openings to minimize the impact of winter conditions. “W.E. O’Neil did a great job in managing the scheduling process. Our project was completed ahead of schedule. W.E. O’Neil’s project leadership did a great job of pushing through challenges and unforeseen conditions. They had to deal with winter weather and trades stacked on top of each other to meet our important deadline. Figuring out how to sequence while producing quality was a difficult challenge.” Tom Metzger, Regency Centers Senior Project Manager,

One unforeseen job condition that required close coordination included soil conditions that differed from what was expected during the initial geotechnical observations. The initial foundation design for the large moment frames added within the space called for helical piers. After the piers were unable to be installed, the team worked closely together to re-design a concrete foundation that was compatible with the existing soil and could be constructed within the project schedule.

The depth of the existing shallow foundation had to be increased as well. We retrofit an extension of the continuous spread footing. To successfully complete this scope, the team had to coordinate the sequencing of the work very closely with the requirements of the structural engineer. This sequencing included removing and replacing 1/3 of the foundation at a time in staggered locations in order to not strain the existing structure. The team worked closely with a shoring contractor and with the structural engineer of record to temporarily shore the roof structure in order to open up the entire façade of the building to install and reconstruct adequate frames, columns, and the foundation system to meet new building code structural requirements. To keep the construction team safe during all stages of reconstruction, our team continually worked very closely with the structural engineer. Our team created awareness among our onsite subcontractors of the importance

of the temporary measures taken to keep the building structure safe and what precautions were necessary to maintain safety.

The steel structure required to reinforce the building and bring it up to current building code was part of the critical path for nearly the entire duration of the project. As a result, we began the steel structure procurement process early and started fabrication of the package well ahead of mobilization to make a “just-in-time” delivery of the steel when it was needed on-site. This allowed us to make as much progress as we could before mobilizing the entire project team.

When demolition began, it was unknown what four retail tenants would be occupying the space leaving some design and structural elements that would need to be flexible since the mix and type of retail could affect the final layout and function of the building. Despite these additional unknowns, the Grand Openings of the stores would not be delayed. Construction began before a final set of construction documents were completed. The project team focused on a couple of aspects of this project to make the project scope and construction as efficient as possible. First, after the final landlord phased design drawings were released, the team recognized that the budget was at risk and that value engineering design modifications were required. After multiple team meetings the team agreed to a few significant design modifications that allowed the project to get back within budget, including modifying the architectural steel at the façade, the structural design of the CMU wall, and the screen wall at the rear of the stores. Also, unnecessary insulation and drywall were eliminated as they weren’t needed for the core and shell completion for one of the tenant spaces.

The project’s design called for many different materials and an introduction of trellis and canopy elements that are not typical of a retail center. These elements required extra coordination to integrate the different materials on the façade for the project to accomplish the desired quality of design successfully. W.E. O’Neil worked with Naos Design Group to identify certain “critical elements” of the project. After the elements were identified, W.E. O’Neil held site walks with the design team and their consultants to observe “first

work in place” to ensure that the design intent and quality control standards were established minimizing “non-compliance” issues and avoiding re-work.

The thin masonry stone, Arriscraft Stone, contributed to reduced shipping weights as well as recycled content. In addition, the project utilized Recycled Asphalt Pavement (RAP) to re-use as much material as possible for the project. We also used relatively new technology for stormwater drainage by incorporating Stormtech water treatment devices to maximize the amount of landscaping for the project while meeting the Authorities Having Jurisdiction, AHJ’s, and State of Colorado’s stormwater requirements.

The construction and design team members kept in constant communication to fully understand the design intent while addressing the constructability of the design considering both the future tenants and the adjustments made for the newly designed structural systems and foundations.

The use of similar material palette expressed in diverse ways among each store creates a unique presence within the shopping center and an individual distinction for each retailer. The mix of retail tenants provides the community with a Hobby Lobby, Home Goods, Sierra Trading Post, and Ulta Beauty store. A cohesive shopping experience is created for shoppers through the design aesthetic, pedestrian-friendly walkways, landscape-lined sidewalks, seating, and planters.

There were 25,000 worker hours on the job with zero OSHA recordable incidents and zero lost-time accidents. All personnel who performed work on the job site took part in the project-specific safety orientation program. The project specific safety plan included maintaining a safe construction zone within the retail center of more than 28 active retailers and businesses and an adjacent Regional Transportation District bus “sub-station.” The project’s logistics plan included routes for all RTD bus traffic. The team collaborated with RTD to complete a traffic plan to install access roads and lanes temporarily. The plan maintained all bus routes onsite as needed to avoid any disruption to the bus schedule. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic around and adjacent to the project

jobsite remained active and safe for the project’s duration.

In addition, we worked closely with the adjacent tenants, including the active King Soopers grocery store, to keep traffic lanes and “back of house” delivery routes and loading docks open as necessary for the tenants to maintain deliveries at all times. The three new loading docks were constructed to replace just one loading dock. The delivery trucks for the anchor grocery store, King Soopers, have to pass the three loading docks for the Applewood Village Shopping Center Anchor Redevelopment. Delivery schedules remained intact, and all workers remained safe.

The Applewood Shopping Center has all the essential staples and all the extras for the community it supports and is inviting enough to combat the alternative of online shopping. This retail center is a great location for the neighbors of Wheat Ridge to cross paths, gather, and shop.











