

Category: (12) Best Building Project (\$40 - \$70 Million - General Contractor)

Contractor: Saunders Construction

Project Name: VF Corp Headquarters

Shift your perspective — every challenging project presents multiple avenues to eventual completion. A project team's ability to see every perspective and set out on a path that the owner, design team and construction team will walk together does more than just set the stage for a successful project, but develops a relationship that becomes important when faced with challenges.

When Saunders' project team built out VF Corporation's (VF Corp) new Denver headquarters, they had to collaborate to overcome challenges and deliver a fresh new look to the interiors of the 1551 WeWatta building — originally built by Saunders in 2002 in the heart of Downtown Denver. The new headquarters' design reflects VF Corp's commitment to environmental sustainability and work-life balance for their employees — as evidenced by the LEED Platinum and Fitwell certifications.

Building a Purposeful Design: VF Corp's new headquarters was designed with the heart and soul of the company in mind. Designing and manufacturing some of the world's leading outdoor, workwear and active apparel brands, the building includes several features that encourage their employees to be active. Features that greet you in the main lobby — like the rammed earth and gabion walls, the video wall and interactive stairway landing with images of nature, to the TVs in the elevators that mimic your ascent through alpine zones as you rise to the top floor — bring an outdoor feel inside the doors of their new headquarters.

Each floor houses employees who focus on each of their major apparel brands, offering unique and welcoming break and kitchen areas, as well as a modern office layout with casual meeting areas, personal rooms, small huddle rooms and conference rooms. The new space offers areas for every team member to work comfortably, while having access to engage teammates and collaborate for the next great thing VF Corp will create.

Delivering Excellence: As employees walk through the main entrance, a breathtaking lobby with eye-catching features await. An enormous audio/video wall catches your attention as the centerpiece of the lobby — the first of many features within the building that immerse you in scenes of nature. Behind the wall, and above a large seating area, a floating staircase with an interactive landing takes you up to the mezzanine level. Nestled behind a small café at the top of the stairs, features a gabion and rammed earth wall. Wrapping around the corner, a one-of-a-kind climbing wall built across from small meeting rooms offers a midday get-away for many of VF Corp’s outdoor-inclined employees. Moving up from the lobby, employees ascend the office levels of the building on an interconnecting staircase, climbing up with views of Half Dome between floors. Descending in the elevators is just as much an experience, with 75-inch, wall-to-wall TVs mimicking the descent through alpine zones. While many more features of this 285,000-square-foot tenant improvement (TI) spark the eye, the details of how it was built engages the mind, and begins and ends with teamwork, leadership and quality craftsmanship to overcome challenges.

Overcoming Challenges — The First Test: The VF Corp headquarters tenant improvement would not have been successful if it weren’t for the dedicated project team, and the depth of organizational support Saunders was able to provide them. Near the end of the preconstruction phase, the team discovered the structural design needed to be changed to allow for a constructible building. This change led to programmatic design changes, which had to be decided after construction had already started. To maintain schedule, the design team and our superintendents worked hand-in-hand to capture a plan on what to build on a daily basis until the design was complete. As design was finalized, five additional team members jumped in to help quickly buy out the job. This gave our superintendents the workforce and materials necessary to build at a critical point in the project.

Quality in Project Execution: During the course of the project, the team constructed countless unique features for VF Corp’s headquarters. Adding to the features mentioned above, unique break area spaces, brand-centered color and design elements, state-of-the-art conference room technology packages and a brand new building automation system, all added into each floor of the 12-story project. Many took an extra level of coordination to construct, especially within

LEED Platinum and Fitwell standards. Saunders' in-house Integrated Technologies Group performed LiDAR laser scanning (LiDAR) of the building to better understand unforeseen issues on the project. The project team also held virtual reality (VR) walks to ensure all operations were completed accurately. These technologies saved time and money, ensuring quality installation on the complex features of the project.

Saunders' project team also relied on teamwork and collaboration between the design team and subcontractor partners to fully comprehend and build the project to the quality and vision VF Corp had for their new headquarters. With the unique features incorporated into design, identifying the right trade partners based on past performance with quality craftsmanship on similar projects brought the project in under budget and constructed with the highest quality. The performance of all Saunders' subcontractor partners truly added to the project team's chemistry, and overall success.

Saunders' unique ability to self-perform work was crucial, after the entire 10-story millwork package was finalized in the late stages of the design process. The project agreement required a certain percentage of union work, and as the employer of Colorado's largest group of union carpenters, Saunders was uniquely positioned to self-perform this highly customized, intricate scope of work. The package was specific to the building's design and relied heavily on the need to fabricate specialized materials after field measurements were taken. In order to manage this level of detail on the timeline needed, and provide a high-quality product, Saunders elected to self-perform this work. Saunders also self-performed the doors, frames and hardware scope — a mix of new and existing doors and hardware throughout the building — in order to coordinate and procure materials compatible for installation. This was an important element to meet the client's schedule requirements, as the door scope was critical in obtaining the access control permit signoff, imperative to the final inspection process.

Safety During a Pandemic: Saunders always strives to provide a safe workplace for all workers, and with the COVID- 19 pandemic forcing lockdowns during the VF Corp project, Saunders implemented new measures to keep people safe. These measures included but were not limited to: limiting occupants in the elevator, using a swing shift to reduce number of people on

the jobsite at any given time, implementing a health screening upon entry, decentralizing break areas, clear communication of new protocols, providing more hand washing stations and increased sanitation efforts.

In addition to ensuring safety during a pandemic, the VF Corp project followed Saunders standard safety measures, specifically curated for tenant improvement construction. This includes a site-specific safety plan, with mandatory training before any work onsite, as well regular safety department checks and daily safety reminders brought up during pre-task meetings. Following these measures, the project had no lost time incidents on-site.

Overcoming Challenges — The Final Test: The VF Corp headquarters project consisted of a remodel of the entire building, and due to this, the Denver Fire Department (DFD) informed the team that it would be treated as a new building. This inspection process put the project through a higher level of scrutiny than is typical for a renovation project. The smoke control system needed a complete rebalance, and door-force validation to bring it up to modern building codes and DFD requirements for air-change needs during a fire event. Adding to the complexity of the system updates, the expanded main lobby and mezzanine addition were combined into a single smoke control zone with a section of the existing level two space. The interconnecting stairway added in levels seven through ten also increased the floor plan and required new air change requirements. All of the building's changes called for varying exhaust fan speeds, adding new controls and programming. With the help of our in-house MEP Department, our superintendents brought the project through the rigorous fire system installation and inspection process, bringing the entire building up to code with the new smoke control system. This took several days of rigorous testing and balancing the building and wouldn't have been possible without the communication and coordination between the project team, DFD, the smoke control subcontractor, design team members, and owner. Ultimately, the VF Corp project team delivered a safe, functional and up-to-code building.

The distinctive features within the new headquarters allow VF Corp to attract highly qualified personnel to their organization, and add a sense of pride and customization to their newly built headquarters.



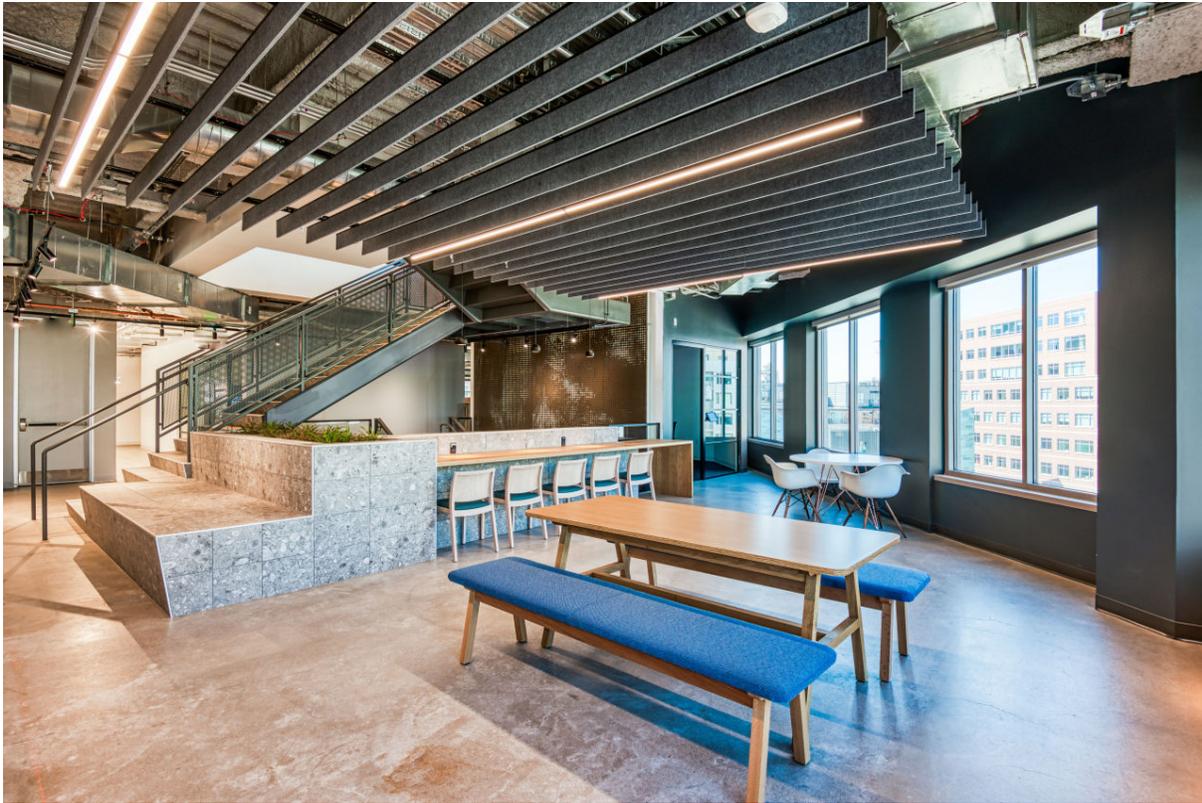
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VF Corp: Photo 2



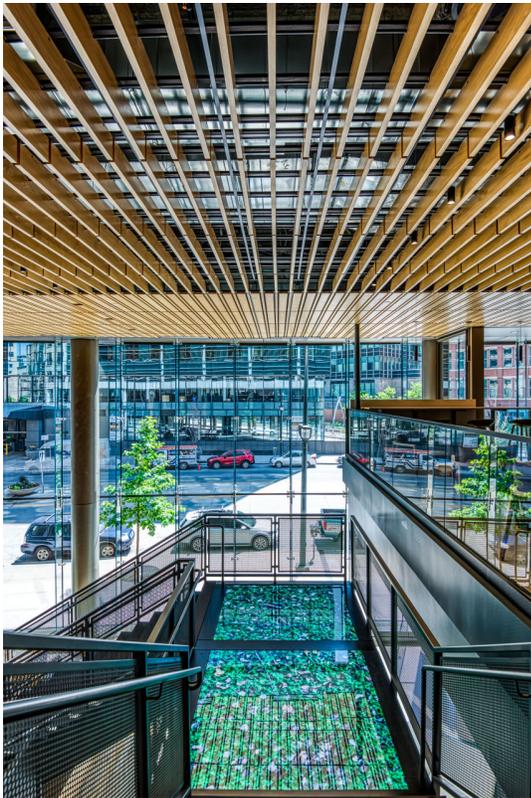
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VF Corp: Photo 4



VF Corp: Photo 5



VF Corp: Photo 6



VF Corp: Photo 7



VF Corp: Photo 8



VF Corp: Photo 9



VF Corp: Photo 10

