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Project of the Month: Ayr Wellness opens dispensary in Watertown - built by Connolly Brothers; designed by Scott/Griffin Architects

September 02, 2022 - Owners Developers & Managers



Watertown, MA Ayr Wellness, a growing U.S. multi-state cannabis operator, celebrated the grand opening of its new store located at 48 North Beacon St. on Friday, August 12th. Ayr's prominent brands include Kynd premium whole flower, LIT premium whole flower, Levia cannabis-infused beverages, Wicked Edibles, Entourage and Secret Orchard vapes, Origyn Extracts, and Stix Preroll Co., among others. The new store was built by Connolly Brothers Inc., a construction management firm serving private commercial, industrial, and institutional clients in New England.

"We're incredibly excited to welcome our customers and patients into this beautiful space," said Gretchen McCarthy, vice president of retail for the Northeast at Ayr. "The design of the store is welcoming and curates a great experience for all guests. We're thrilled to be members of the Watertown community and will maintain our commitment to being a great neighbor and community partner."

The new store, which was previously a floral shop, was designed by Scott/Griffin Architects, and features silver composite panels, energy-efficient windows, and mid-century modern architectural details. The interior of the dispensary building is divided between a commercial retail space on the first floor as well as a mezzanine for office and storage space. The first-floor dispensary is split between medical and retail functions, and interior design touches include a modern metal baffle ceiling, terrazzo floors, high-finish cabinetry and display cases, and contemporary lighting.

“The design challenge was to adaptively reuse the original floral shop and related workroom and transform it into a contemporary cannabis dispensary,” said Thomas Scott, principal of Scott/Griffin Architects.

The construction and renovation work on the 4,500 s/f structure involved significant site and

foundation upgrades, as well as major electrical and HVAC work to bring the 1945 building up to code, enabling it to serve as a contemporary dispensary. The project also included tearing down an adjacent building to allow room for parking atop a new porous pavement driveway to keep water on site. Limited demolition work on the previous structure not only enabled the parking area but also decreased the size and shadow impact on surrounding neighbors while introducing new bicycle parking and landscape buffer features.

“A decrease in architectural scale, the addition of open space, and a full integration of the project into the surrounding terrain had an overall beneficial impact on the neighborhood,” Scott said.

Connolly’s work also included the implementation of an intensive security system for the dispensary to ensure adherence with all Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission requirements.

“We appreciated the opportunity to foster Ayr Wellness’ growth with the construction of this beautiful new facility in Watertown,” said Jay Connolly, president of Connolly Brothers.

Ayr Wellness also recently opened a dispensary in Boston’s Back Bay at 827 Boylston St., and has received state approval for adult-use sales at Sira Naturals in Somerville, Mass., pending local approval.

“Ayr has made serving as a force for good a priority throughout Massachusetts, and our team looks forward to furthering this commitment and continuing to enact positive change throughout Massachusetts and every place where Ayr operates,” said Ayr CEO Jonathan Sandelman.

The rapidly expanding company’s products are now available in more than 500 dispensaries, with Ayr operating more than 75 dispensaries across eight U.S. states.

Ayr is an expanding vertically integrated, U.S. multi-state cannabis operator, focused on delivering the highest quality cannabis products and customer experience throughout its footprint. Based on the belief that everything starts with the quality of the plant, the company is focused on superior cultivation to grow superior branded cannabis products. Ayr strives to enrich consumers’ experience every day through the wellness and wonder of cannabis. More at ayrwellness.com.

Connolly Brothers Inc. is a construction management firm serving private commercial, industrial, and institutional clients. A five-generation family business established in 1880, Connolly is based in Beverly, Mass. and operates throughout the New England region. For more than a century, clients have turned to Connolly for all aspects of their construction projects, from planning and design to real estate development. More at connollybrothers.com.

Based in Waltham, Massachusetts, Scott/Griffin Architects is considered among the most energetic and experienced retail architectural firms in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Our retail clients extend throughout the northeastern United States. A full-service firm offering architecture and

engineering, SGA builds long-lasting relationships with clients based upon careful listening and strong communication. More at sga-architects.com.

The Project Team included:

Connolly Brothers Inc. - Construction Manager

Ayr Wellness - Owner

Vector Security - Security

Scott/Griffin Architects - Architect

Greenworks Energy Inc. - Electrical

W.L. French - Sitework

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