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Project of the Month: BW Kennedy & Co. completes construction of Aspen Aerogels' 59,000 s/f center – designed by Ci Design

November 17, 2023 - Construction Design & Engineering



Photo credit: Carly Gillis Photography

Marlborough, MA Houston-based real estate investment and development company, McCord Development, Inc., hired BW Kennedy & Co. and Ci Design to transform an existing 59,000 s/f former retail building into an R&D property for tenant Aspen Aerogels, a technology leader in aerogel-based sustainability and electrification solutions.

The project posed inherent challenges as the existing building was a former box store that had remained vacant for some 20 years. Transforming the building into an industrial manufacturing facility housing cutting-edge technology and materials required detailed planning and ingenuity. To see that transformation was remarkable.

Photo credit: Carly Gillis Photography

BW Kennedy utilized a design-build mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection (MEP/FP)

approach with Ci Design, who provided architectural, lab & manufacturing, and interior design services to develop this physical science facility that will house Aspen Aerogels' next generation of thermal runaway solutions. The project converted the existing building into an R&D facility featuring a rapid prototyping area, quality control space and an applications lab. Supporting spaces include a reception, a large cafe, gathering spaces, a customer engagement center, offices, and a large meeting room. Exterior improvements were made to the façade of the building and entries. These updates transformed the look and feel to align with the Aspen Aerogels brand.

Photo credit: Carly Gillis Photography

The design team worked collaboratively with the Aspen Aerogels team to define the necessary program requirements for the project and initiated a concept layout with required specific program adjacencies. Once program adjacencies were defined, the team performed a process analysis and ultimately created a process flow diagram taking their product from point A to completion.

Aspen Aerogels' program drove the need for an electrical and gas service upgrade for the site. BW Kennedy installed EV stations as part of this project. We reviewed the project with Aspen Aerogels with sustainability in mind including the various finish products, anything from Low VOC paint to recycled products. This was a big part of the project as Aspen Aerogels as a company is very environmentally conscious, and sustainability is key to them.

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Located in the Metrowest, the new facility provides easy access to Boston and points beyond supporting Aspen Aerogels' desire to collaborate with industry partners, academia, and customers to create transformative solutions that will shape the future of thermal management.

The project team included:

Aspen Aerogels, McCord Development, Inc. - Owner
BW Kennedy & Co. - Construction Manager
Ci Design - Architect
Black Bear Coatings & Concrete - Flooring
Highpoint Engineering - Civil Engineer
J&M Professional Painting Corp. - Painting

Terracon - Geotechnical
Quiet Star Industries - Acoustics
Tim's Fabricators, Inc. - Structural Steel & Misc. Metals
Hancock Appliance - Appliances
Chamberlain Cos., Inc. - Architectural Woodwork & Casework
Expose Signs - Signage
Environmental Systems - Mechanical
Nappa Electrical Contractors - Electrical
North Shore Mechanical Contractors - Plumbing
Impact Fire Services - Fire Protection
Summit Engineering - Structural Engineer

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