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BUILDING A STANDOUT EDUCATION FACILITY

The Construction of the McCausland Lower School & Commons



In the middle of 2018, Springside Chestnut Hill (SCH) Academy, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, announced plans for an ambitious new building project. The school's Board of Trustees, alongside members of the SCH community and the sponsoring McCausland family, broke ground on a \$34 million project that would eventually serve students spanning grades Pre-K to 4th grade. Featuring a new building, an outdoor green space, and a common area, the project was created to act as the centerpiece of a multi-year capital campaign pursued by the school. It would become one of the largest initiatives within the Northwest corner of Philadelphia.

Targeting the youngest members of the school's community, the design of the space was centered upon creating a nurturing, positive environment where sound learning could thrive. Great focus was placed on ensuring that best practices within architecture and engineering were included. Additionally, it was a goal to remain friendly to the environment when creating the space.

W. R. MEADOWS turned out to be an ideal resource on this very important project.

A Transformative Space — Built for Children

Designed to promote opportunity for the next generation of Philadelphians, the architect on the project was Wallace Roberts & Todd. The general contractor was Intech and the installer in charge of the waterproofing and air barrier was EDA Contractors.

Tim Durso was the salesperson representing W. R. MEADOWS on the McCausland project. AIR-SHIELD ALUMINUM SHEET MEMBRANE is a self-adhering air/vapor and liquid moisture barrier, and it is part of a total W. R. MEADOWS system used in completing a building envelope. It is a roll-type product that is nominally 40 mils thick, and the membrane's controlled thickness is fabricated from aluminum bonded to specially modified asphalt.

Durso thought that it would be key for EDA to approach decision makers with a single source building envelope as opposed to using multiple products from multiple manufacturers. As such, he recommended MEL-ROL as the waterproofing





product on the project. Not only would it provide for an easy and efficient installation and seamless transitions, but it would also give the building owner the advantage of a single warranty via W. R. MEADOWS.

EDA concurred and then the architect and the general contractor agreed on all points proposed. Waterproofing officially began in the summer of 2018 with the air barrier application commencing in fall of the same year.

A Long-Standing Relationship Gets the Job Done

As assistant project manager for EDA Contractors, Steve Christina, has long been familiar with W. R. MEADOWS products—and in close communication with Tim Durso.

“I have worked for EDA since 2012, and before that I was in the field as well. I know deeply how W. R. MEADOWS products work. They are easy to use and always keep the project moving along at a good place. Plus, I have a long relationship with Tim,” noted Christina.

Christina was part of the decision-making team at EDA to recommend using W. R. MEADOWS products for both waterproofing and the air barrier.

“The project manager in charge and I decided it would be in our best interests, as well as the best interests of the owner, to use W. R. MEADOWS from top to bottom. And we were also aware that the masons assigned to the job were using the AIR-SHIELD LSR on their part of the project. It just made good sense.”

The project itself was on a sloped site. All of the below-grade waterproofing was applied first to the foundation with the damp proofing being implemented as the shell was completed. From there, the air barrier was applied.

And through it all, Durso was on site. While the project didn't face any major challenges or roadblocks, small issues did arise occasionally.

EDA was also very aware of ensuring small details were addressed from the start—from working with W. R. MEADOWS on lead times needed for products down to remaining vigilant of what was happening when they were making connections to other elements of the building. As the project was quite large, there was demolition going on while the addition was being constructed. Plus, landscaping was happening to connect different parts of the project to each other.

“All in all, it was a pretty smooth project. We remained cognizant of lead times needed for the AIR-SHIELD ALUMINUM SHEET MEMBRANE



product, so nothing worked against project flow. Tim helped with everything else,” said Christina.

For instance, there was a situation that came about when some below-grade waterproofing met the damp proofing. The installers were at an impasse, so they reached out to Durso.

“He came back to us with a detail that worked perfectly,” commended Christian. “He was responsive. Tim was there when we needed him. We would call him up and he would answer. He was a resource. Throughout it all, Tim was out at the site making sure everything was done right and the products were easy to work with.”

Positive Outcomes — For Everyone Involved

As school was in session during the project's timeline, much care was taken by all parties not to disrupt the school's operations. All teams were mindful and conscious not to distract students or take them away from their learning.

“The communication on this project from the architect on down to the inspector was good,” said Christina. “I recommend W. R. MEADOWS. For the price and installation process, W. R. MEADOWS stands above the rest. Everyone was happy with how this turned out—and were aware of the role that W. R. MEADOWS played in it.”

While Intech, the general contractor, was not available to be interviewed for the sake of this case study, Durso notes his pleasure at the fact that the results of W. R. MEADOWS products in this project have led to deeper and more meaningful conversations with Intech over possible involvement in future projects.

Through it all, we are happy to report that in the end it's the students who stood to benefit from a project well done. The McCausland Lower School & Commons at Springside Chestnut Hill Academy opened its doors to the student body on September 3, 2019.

PROJECT SPECS

Architect:	Wallace Roberts & Todd
Contractor:	Intech
Subcontractors:	EDA Contractors Dan Lepore & Sons
Salesperson:	Tim Durso
Products:	AIR-SHIELD ALUMINUM SHEET MEMBRANE AIR-SHIELD LIQUID FLASHING AIR-SHIELD LSR BEM MEL-ROL MEL-DRAIN
Scope:	37,000 square feet



About W. R. MEADOWS

Since 1926, W. R. MEADOWS has been a leader in developing products that protect structures from moisture infiltration. From below-grade installations to rooftops and in-between, issue-specific products target and prevent potential, costly problems. Today, patented technologies enable more environmentally effective, efficient designs, and many of our products contribute LEED-certification “green” credits. With nine manufacturing facilities throughout the U.S. and Canada, the materials you need are within easy reach. For additional information, call 800.342.5976 or visit www.wrmeadows.com.

