



Block 20: Portland Rain and 22 Stories



Challenge

A city known for constant rains, dramatic shifts in climate throughout the year, and perpetual moisture, Portland, Oregon provides unique challenges for any construction project. When Hoyt Realty Group hired Bora Architects to design the expansive, 246-foot-tall Block 20 Condominium Tower in downtown Portland, it was clear that novel solutions would be needed if the project was to be completed on time and within budget.

Modern Thinking for Modern Designs

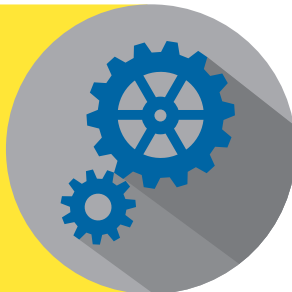
For the building envelope installation, Bora turned to Andersen Construction, who tapped local

contractor, Western Partitions Inc. Willing to embrace new technologies in the quest for a better way of doing business, Western Partitions Inc. believed the ideal solution lie in the unique capabilities of the DensElement™ Barrier System with AquaKOR™ Technology. Featuring a proprietary formulation that integrates the gypsum core and the fiberglass mat to form a hydrophobic, monolithic surface that blocks bulk water but allows vapor to pass through, the DensElement™ Barrier System eliminates the need for an external WRB-AB. That translates to optimal performance with simplified installation, saving time and money, and reducing potential risks. Still, Western Partitions Inc. Project Manager John Quintrell knew he needed strong arguments and hard evidence to convince his collaborators and the property owners of the value of this relatively new product.

“[It took] four or five months, a lot of hard negotiating, a lot of good professional support from Georgia-Pacific and a very uphill battle to be quite frank with you,” Quintrell revealed. “We would not let it go. We know the potential of this product. We reached out and found out that this product was being used all across United States, not in great volumes, but on enough projects

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– Brad Nile, Andersen Construction



Component Quantities:

80,000 MSF of
DensElement™ sheathing

Key Companies:

Owner:
Hoyt Realty Group

Architect:
Bora Architects

General Contractor:
Andersen Construction

Sub Contractor:
Western Partitions Inc.

that it was time that the Northwest had this product come to them.”

Fortunately for Quintrell, he wasn't the only one who saw the potential of the DensElement™ Barrier System. “We are always looking for innovations and ways to build faster, ways to build smarter,” said Andersen Construction Project Executive Brad Nile. “And, it just made sense to us. To have the weather resistive barrier integrated into it was exactly what we need. And, it seemed like an inevitable progression for type one construction.”



With Andersen Construction on board, all that was left was convincing Bora Architects and the owners at Hoyt Realty Group. For that, a stress test was devised that would push the DensElement™ Barrier System and its direct competitors to the breaking point. “It outperformed both other products in the end, and when that testing doesn't lie, I think the fears subsided,” Quintrell proudly added. “Then, the benefits came in.”

The Answer to Unpredictable Weather

Especially valuable for the Block 20 Condominium Tower is the DensElement™ Barrier System's ability to negate the impact of rainy conditions during installation. As it only requires sealing joints, fasteners, openings, penetrations, and transitions with PROSOCO R-Guard® FastFlash®, a flashing membrane that can be applied to damp surfaces, excess moisture does little to slow progress. That helped to keep weather delays to a minimum and allowed Western Partitions Inc. to make significant progress in conditions that would've otherwise impacted the project schedule.

“We often times are challenged on a project this size to be performing that scope of work for eight, ten, twelve months. All the weather conditions change,” said Quintrell. “DensElement™ Barrier System can be installed at any time during those 12 months and in any weather conditions. That's not the case for other systems.”

“I believe we started installing this project, the DensElement™ Barrier System, about six months ago,” he estimated. “We've installed it in, again, sunny weather, cold weather, heavy rain. We've had zero impact on the install with the DensElement™ Barrier System. We've had very little impact on the PROSOCO product. Again, it's a win-win situation with both of those products.”

Brad Nile, meanwhile, was impressed by the rapid installation made possible by the DensElement™ Barrier System. “As soon as the DensElement™ Barrier System is in and FastFlash® is applied, we're right there installing

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windows,” Nile pointed out. “And, it's worked well. It's absolutely kept us on track. We're gonna be 22 months from ground break to turn over and that's moving at a quick pace for a project of this scale: 350,000 square feet.”

From Skeptics to Believers

While initially intrigued by the DensElement™ Barrier System, first-hand experience using it on a project like the Block 20 Condominium Tower has turned once wary builders into true believers. “We have branches in Seattle, Eugene, Spokane, and Reno with our home office here in Portland, Oregon,” Quintrell pointed out. “All four of our divisions outside of Portland, as well as Portland, are looking to use this product on every single project we have. That's how much we're standing behind the future of DensElement™ Barrier System and GP.”

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