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Insulating One of the Largest Residential Projects in Seattle

An insulation contractor overcomes challenging logistics to successfully complete one of the largest residential projects in Seattle's history.

CHALLENGE

A very large mixed-use project, with a challenging location and unexpected specifications – that's what Commercial Insulation Service, LLC (CIS) got when they won the bid to perform insulation work in the historic South Lake Union neighborhood of Seattle, Washington. Even though there were many challenging elements, the finished project is something to be proud of.

The project at 1120 Denny Way features two 42-story towers, a 12-story podium, both with retail spaces, two outdoor pools, an indoor recreation center, plus multiple rooftop decks, greenspace gardens and a large underground parking garage. The insulation specifications called for spray foam insulation, both by itself and as part of a hybrid system with fiberglass batts, which is unusual for a high-rise building.

CIS is a veteran-owned business based out of Tumwater, Washington, owned by Army Veteran George Drabner and his partner John Saari, and focuses primarily on commercial projects. The mixed-use Denny Way project was one of the largest and most complex that CIS has taken on. Because the site is located in the middle of the busiest downtown Seattle neighborhood, there were additional hurdles in receiving and storing supplies on site.

"The logistics of this project were challenging," confirmed Drabner. "There was limited space on-site. And getting materials up to the floors of the two towers was difficult." Plus, construction occurred during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and staff needed to socially distance while working.

PRODUCT

Johns Manville Corbond®

LOCATION

1120 Denny Way, Seattle, WA

INSTALLER

Commercial Insulation Service,
Tumwater, WA → 98501

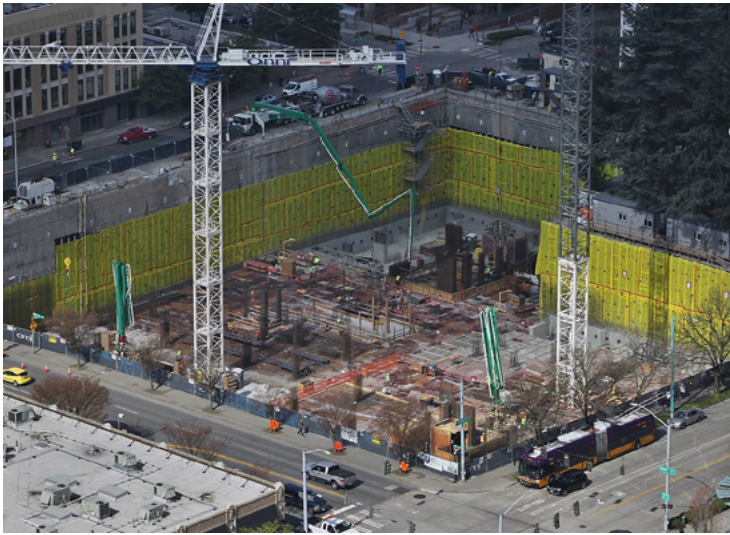
SUPPLIER

Specialty Products and Insulation
Inc., Tukwila, WA, 98188

DEVELOPER

Onni Group, Vancouver, B.C.





SOLUTION

The architect on the project had specified spray foam insulation for the project, both by itself and in a hybrid system with fiberglass batts. Spray foam insulation is not typically used in high-rise buildings like this, but it's a great product for this type of application because it provides air sealing properties, high R-values and a vapor barrier. CIS worked with Specialty Products Inc., a JM distributor based in Tukwila, Washington, to source the insulation from Johns Manville. Special Products supplied 300 sets of JM Corbond® closed-cell spray foam insulation along with five trucks of mixed fiberglass batts to CIS.

The CIS crew faced a challenge of installing spray foam in confined spaces in all 3 towers and the parking garage, since typical spray foam installation machines were too large. JM's spray foam parts and equipment field technical specialist worked with Drabner's team to build three portable spray foam machines. The new E30 spray foam machines are 3 feet wide, 7 feet long and no taller than 6.5 feet so that they could fit through traditional doorframes. The machines ran off power boxes, provided on each floor by the general contractor.

CIS installed Corbond® spray foam alone on the upper floors and 3 inches of Corbond® spray foam plus R-19 batts and a vapor barrier in the garage. The company also installed a hybrid system in the gym. After installing the insulation, CIS easily passed the density test performed by inspectors, which is used to confirm that the insulation is providing the anticipated R-value.

By using this hybrid method, CIS was able to save on installation cost while still meeting requirements and passing inspection. The crew used a thinner pass of the JM Corbond, and when coupled with the R-19 batts, the project met R-value and air barrier requirements.

After successfully completing the 1120 Denny Way project, CIS is regularly receiving invitations to bid on larger projects.

SUPPORT FROM JM TECHCONNECT

During the project, CIS took advantage of support from the JM TechConnect team, who had some tips for equipment maintenance.

"We love the JM Corbond spray foam," says Drabner. "Everyone loves the foam and there was no issue with the foam whatsoever."

A JM Technical Specialist worked with the CIS crew for eight days during the two-year Denny Way project, helping to establish a robust onsite preventative maintenance program for the spray foam machines. With the large amounts of SPF used and extensive areas to cover, it was important to keep the machines and spray foam guns in top shape. The TechConnect team provided advice on lubrication, cleaning filters, how to proficiently clean and service the SPF guns and more.

For CIS, in the past, when a spray foam rig had downtime, the A-side would crystallize and would have to be cleaned before it could be used. JM's team worked with CIS to ensure all of the machines are thoroughly cleaned and that equipment is stored properly. Drabner estimated that CIS has spent thousands of dollars on parts and maintenance in the past and expects with the robust maintenance program that JM and CIS implemented, those costs will come way down.

"We had such great technical support from JM," he said.

To learn more about JM Corbond Closed-Cell foam, visit:

<https://www.jm.com/en/building-insulation/residential/spray-foam/jm-corbond-iii/>



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