

Friends Center

An environmental witness for peace, integrity, equality, simplicity

PRESS RELEASE

HISTORIC “FRIENDS CENTER” BUILDINGS NAMED GREENEST IN PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter will present the US Green Building Council’s LEED Platinum certification plaque to the Friends Center Corporation at a ceremony on Monday, February 22nd at 12:15 pm. The renovation of the Friends’ office building (ca. 1974) and historic Race Street Meetinghouse (ca. 1856) will be celebrated as another milestone in Philadelphia’s quest to become “the greenest city in America.”

The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System is the best known standard by which green building and operations are measured. The Friends’ Office Building renovation achieved 57 LEED points, the highest number for any project to date in the state of Pennsylvania.

Located at 15th and Cherry Streets, The Friends Center has been a locus of activity for work for peace and justice, as well as a community gathering place since 1856. It is not surprising to find the Quakers setting the pace for environmental concern. According to Patricia McBee, Interim Executive Director of Friends Center, "We want to be a model for other property owners and building professionals to come here, kick the tires, learn that (sustainable design strategies) work, that they're cost-effective, they're beautiful, there's nothing you're really sacrificing and it's worth doing."

The Friends Center offices and Meetinghouse are fossil-fuel free and produce zero carbon emissions. The project also was designed to protect the watershed from excessive stormwater runoff. Recycled materials were incorporated throughout and nearly 90% of all construction waste was diverted from landfills. Additionally, 96% of the existing building envelope and structural components were retained.

The fact that this level of sustainability was achieved in an existing building and that the historic Meetinghouse was renovated to the same high standard is exciting news for an established city like Philadelphia.

The 93,000-SF sustainable renovation of Friends Center is an expression of Quakers’ commitment to a responsible relationship with the Earth and all of its inhabitants. The project is also a demonstration of historic, cultural and natural resource preservation that provides a healthy and productive work environment.

While the primary use of the Friends Center is office and worship space for Quaker and related nonprofit organizations; it is quickly filling a new role as an educational model of optimizing green building strategies!

The Philadelphia Friends Center design and construction team included UJMN Architects + Designers, Architect; AKF Engineers, Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Engineers; Keast & Hood Co., Structural Engineers; Clemens Construction Co., Inc., General Contractor; The McGee Company, Owner’s Representative; Consilience LLC and Re:Vision Architecture, Sustainability Consultants/Green Charrette Facilitation.

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See attached “Project Facts.”

Project Facts:

One of the most innovative sustainable design features is a field of seven 8” geothermal wells used for heating and cooling. The wells extend from 650’ to 1500’ below the sidewalk on 15th Street and are the first standing column geothermal wells in urban Philadelphia.

Other sustainable strategies implemented include: a vegetated or “green roof” to capture rainwater and improve water quality; installation of a 10-kW photovoltaic array to provide electricity; a rainwater harvesting and storage system to provide water for toilet flushing; a “Plug Load Policy” to control energy consumption; and use of “daylight harvesting” strategies to reduce the need for area lighting and unnecessary cooling loads. As a result, occupants now enjoy a more pleasant and much healthier work environment with generous daylighting and views, improved ventilation and low-VOC construction materials and finishes.

Office Building Renovation Statistics:

- 96% of the building’s existing envelope and structural components were retained.
- 90% of the waste generated during construction was recycled and diverted from landfills.
- 29% of the total project materials cost employed reused materials.
- 15% of the project materials contain recycled content.
- 47% of the project materials were locally extracted or manufactured.
- 5.6% of the project materials are from rapidly renewable sources.
- 66% of all wood used on the project is FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified.
- 42% of the project site is permeable (e.g., vegetated roof and planted areas), greatly reducing the volume of stormwater discharged into the City’s combined sewer system.

The project also received a Stormwater Best Management Practices Award from the Villanova/Temple Universities Urban Stormwater Partnership and the GBCA’s (General Building Contractors Association) Construction Excellence Award for Green Building. The project team acknowledges the assistance of the Philadelphia Water Department in the development of stormwater management strategies.

Project Team:

Owner:	Friends Center Corporation
Architect:	UJMN Architects + Designers
MEP Engineer:	AKF Engineers
Structural Engineer:	Keast & Hood Co.
General Contractor:	Clemens Construction Co., Inc.
Owner’s Representative:	The McGee Company
Sustainable Design Consultants:	Consilience, LLC/ Re:Vision Architecture
Green Charrette Facilitation:	Consilience, LLC/ Re:Vision Architecture
Energy Modeling:	7group
PV Panels Design:	SunTechnics
Vegetated Roof Design:	Roofscapes, Inc.
Commissioning Agent:	Bala Consulting Engineers
Stormwater Consultant:	Meliora Environmental Design, LLC
Well Drilling:	Wm. Stofhoff Well Drilling