

Meyer Adopts Advanced Equity and Sustainability Approach in Construction of New Portland Headquarters

The Skanner News

October 22, 2020

Values-driven real estate developer, project^, Meyer Memorial Trust and award-winning design firm, LEVER Architecture, has announced the completion and official opening of the new Meyer headquarters in Portland. Underscoring the brand values of each partner, the 14-month project has embraced a unique and ambitious approach that prioritizes equity across its workforce and an unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability.

The new headquarters featuring mass timber is located at 2045 North Vancouver Avenue within Historic Albina, long home to Portland's Black communities. The \$10.8 million, 19,829 sq. ft. building includes a three-story office structure that stems from an equity-centered design approach with a focus on collaborative office space.

Foundation 'places a premium on equity'

"Investing in a permanent space is a commitment as an Oregon-serving foundation, we wanted to deepen our connection to Historic Albina and use our new building as a resource to further support and invest in communities across the state," said Michelle J. DePass, Meyer's president and CEO.

"Typically, architecture in philanthropy is hierarchical, with the best spaces reserved for executives.

"But as a justice foundation that places a premium on equity, it was important to give every employee access to windows and natural light and to make the most desirable office space accessible to everyone."

Reflecting a deep commitment to diverse representation and equitable outcomes across its workforce, the project team developed rigorous minority and women-owned business participation goals to ensure every aspect of Meyer's new headquarters reflected the most robust goals for the Portland business community.



Building exterior and public entry.

(PHOTO BY JEREMY BITTERMAN, COURTESY OF MEYER MEMORIAL TRUST)



View of the Center for Great Purposes from the Kwánsəm Yakwá Garden.

(PHOTO BY JEREMY BITTERMAN, COURTESY OF MEYER MEMORIAL TRUST)



The building's street presence is transparent and welcoming.

(PHOTO BY JEREMY BITTERMAN, COURTESY OF MEYER MEMORIAL TRUST)

project^ and LEVER joined forces with a collective of strong industry expertise to drive the project's success and reflect the core equity and sustainability values. The expanded team included O'Neill/Walsh Community Builders, 2.ink Studio, KPFF Consulting Engineers, Glumac, Standridge Design and Ditroën.

In addition to the diverse team leading the build, 47% of the Meyer headquarters construction budget went to women- and minority-owned subcontractors, while 30% of the journey people and apprentice hours were filled by minorities and 10% of the hours were filled by women. Additionally, 80% of the subcontractors on the site were either women- and/or minority-owned businesses; with 20% being "stretch" opportunities to give smaller companies the opportunity to grow and expand their portfolio.

To foster greater collaboration with the community it serves, Meyer's ground floor houses the "Center for Great Purposes," a convening space that accommodates up to 100 people. Envisioned as a welcoming hub for partners across Oregon and beyond, the center showcases Mass Plywood Panels (MPP) sourced from a central Oregon timber manufacturer, making it one of the first buildings in the country to use this next-generation wood product.

Art honors Oregon's diverse people

A re-envisioned art collection and branded story moments are featured throughout the building with accent pieces that represent Meyer's commitment to all Oregonians while honoring the diverse histories, people, and communities of the region. The "Mission Library" features inspirational quotes from leaders, including Fred Meyer, and showcases a curated collection of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and scholarship that touch on aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion.

A former industrial tow lot, the site covers 24,937 sq. ft. and was reimagined to include an outdoor plaza, eco roof, and the Kwánssem Yakwá Garden, a healing garden and fountain. The landscape design acknowledges local ecology, community history and regional identity and serves as an educational setting for staff and visitors. Indigenous plant species were selected due to their historical significance as a primary food, medicinal, or commodity resource for Columbia River tribes.

In pursuit of the team's ambitious goals around energy efficiency and building innovation, the building is targeting LEED Platinum certification and is enrolled in the Energy Trust of Oregon's Path to Net Zero program. The headquarters employs a number of strategies for achieving this status, including a unique roofline specifically designed to maximize energy production from a 50kW rooftop solar array.



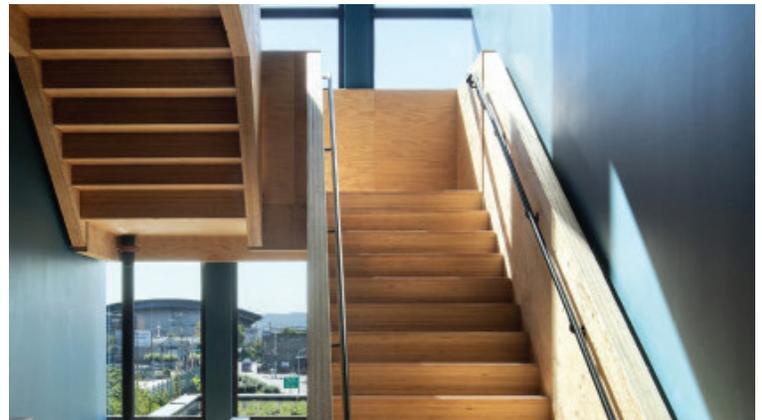
Front Desk Reception featuring custom artwork "Mother and Child" by Natalie Ball. (PHOTO CREDIT: SHAWN RECORDS)



Welcome Area featuring artwork "Veiled Prophet/Profit" by Addoley Dzegede. (PHOTO CREDIT: SHAWN RECORDS)



The Center for Great Purposes is a convening space made from Mass Plywood Panels. (PHOTO CREDIT: JEREMY BITTERMANN)



Mass Plywood staircase. (PHOTO CREDIT: JEREMY BITTERMANN)



Lunchroom and Roof Garden Terrace featuring custom mural "Kapasháayat Tkwalá" by artist Toma Villa. (PHOTO CREDIT: JEREMY BITTERMANN)

“The inclusive design process included input and decision-making from staff at all levels of the organization,” said Anyeley Hallová, partner at project^.

“Our work has focused on realizing a building that is the embodiment of Meyer’s leadership in the equity and environmental space and is conscientious in its sourcing and construction to realize urban and rural economic benefit.”

Local, environmentally sustainable materials used

Given Meyer’s strong commitment to environmental sustainability and social equity, the foundation partnered with nonprofit Sustainable Northwest to develop a holistic, hyper-local wood sourcing approach. They jointly established specific criteria for the wood used in the building’s construction with a focus on wood innovation, regionally harvested and locally manufactured materials, and wood sourced from intentionally managed forests.

As a result, the project team contracted with six minority and women-owned businesses and seven small family-owned wood products companies to achieve a “Sustainable Wood” classification for 85% of the wood used in the building.

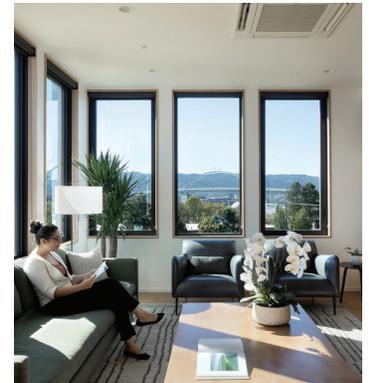
“The main design driver for the Meyer project was to create a welcoming campus that enables staff to do their best work, connects to the neighborhood in a meaningful way, and creates opportunities to engage with all Oregonians,” said Chandra Robinson, project director, LEVER Architecture. “The building design is a reflection of Oregon through regionally harvested and locally manufactured materials, including mass plywood — a pioneering, next-generation timber product.”



Mass Plywood Construction. (PHOTO CREDIT: SHAWN RECORDS)



Kimberly Wilson, Communication Director in an Office/Meeting Room. (PHOTO CREDIT: JEREMY BITTERMANN)



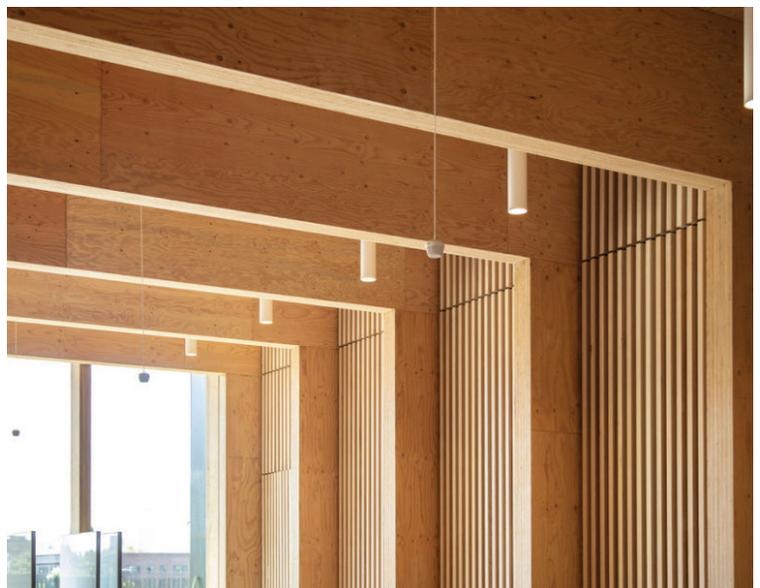
Mission Library. (PHOTO CREDIT: JEREMY BITTERMANN)



Workspaces have equal access to daylight and views. (PHOTO CREDIT: SHAWN RECORDS)



Bust of Fred G. Meyer. (PHOTO CREDIT: SHAWN RECORDS)



Mass Plywood Detail. (PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY LEVER ARCHITECTURE)

About Meyer Memorial Trust

One of the largest private funders in Oregon, Meyer Memorial Trust commits its position, resources, and energies to dismantling barriers to equity and improving community conditions so that all Oregonians can reach their full potential.

Established in 1982 from the estate of Fred G. Meyer, Meyer has awarded grants and program-related investments in excess of \$834 million to more than 3,432 organizations. With current assets of approximately \$840 million, Meyer focuses on work in Oregon in four areas Oregonians have identified as crucial to making the state better for all its residents: housing, education, the environment, and building stronger communities.

Meyer also funds ongoing work to buttress education policy, research and engagement by the Chalkboard Project. Meyer is a founding member of the Oregon Immigrant and Refugee Funders Collaborative, which addresses crucial and time-sensitive issues facing immigrants and refugees across the state. In July 2020, Meyer launched Justice Oregon for Black Lives — a five-year, \$25 million investment in Black leadership, Black-serving organizations, and systems-level change. These efforts and those on the horizon, support Meyer’s vision of a flourishing and equitable Oregon. Learn more about Meyer at <https://mmt.org/meyerhq>.



Construction team member from O’Neill Construction Group; 30 percent of journey people and apprentice hours were completed by minorities and 10 percent by women. (PHOTO CREDIT: FRED JOE)



Construction team member from Bridgeport Interiors. (PHOTO CREDIT: FRED JOE)

About project^

Project^ is a values-driven real estate developer providing resources, practices and stewardship for their partners. They maximize environmental, social and economic benefits inherent in meaningful places and create opportunity, buildings and legacies through sound business and ecological practices. Project^ has a broad portfolio of experience, having planned, financed and executed more than 20 projects. Notable work includes the Oregon Conservation Center and the research and development for Framework, an award-winning project nationally and locally in recognition of its innovative, sustainable design and pioneering research. For more information visit <http://projectpdx.com>.

About LEVER Architecture

LEVER Architecture is a 30-person design practice based in Portland, Oregon. The firm is widely recognized for material innovation and for pioneering work with mass timber construction. Their projects encompass first-of-their-kind wood buildings for clients such as The Nature Conservancy and Adidas and include more than \$1M in research to develop and test timber building assemblies. LEVER was recently recognized by Fast Company as one of the world’s most innovative architecture firms. For more information, visit <http://leverarchitecture.com>.



Michelle J. DePass, President and CEO of Meyer Memorial Trust, on video call with Phoebe O’Leary, Director of Business Systems and Operations, in the Eva & Fred G. Meyer Boardroom. (PHOTO CREDIT: JEREMY BITTERMANN)



Project Leadership (left-to-right): Michelle J. DePass, President and CEO of Meyer; Toya Fick, Chair of Meyer’s Board of Trustees; Anyeley Hallova, Partner at project^; Chandra Robinson, Project Director at LEVER; and Maurice Rahming, Principal in Charge at O’Neill/Walsh Community Builders. (PHOTO CREDIT: FRED JOE)