

Sustainable Project

SAM NUNN ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER, GA

Award-winning roofing project reuses material, includes sustainable roofs.

Two of the four buildings comprising the distinctive Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center, the Midrise and the restored Rich's Department Store (built in 1924), were recently slated to have a vegetated roof system installed over 60,000 square feet.

The renovation's goals, consistent with the General Services Administration's (GSA) roofing program, were to provide thermal and moisture protection; conserve energy and the environment; reduce utility costs; and help attain energy security by meeting Energy Independence and Security Act requirements. National Building Contractors (NBC), which has a long-term Design Build contract with the GSA's Sun Belt Region, was awarded the project. NBC's team including Michael E. Clark, PE, RRC (MEC&A); Tremco Roofing Senior Field Advisor Jim Lohmann, RRC, RRO, GRP; and Tremco Roofing's on-staff horticulturist, Mary Ann Uhlmann.

In testing the roofs' structural integrity, it was determined that the Rich's portion, approximately 10,000 square feet, could not support a vegetated roof; it was changed to a white, 60 mil, fleece back Thermoplastic Polyolefin (TPO) roof membrane "Cool Roof" over polyisocyanurate insulation (R-20 value). The remaining 50,000 square feet overlaid the existing, self-adhered waterproofing membrane with the TPO membrane set in Tremlar LRM fluid applied polyurethane adhesive. The overburden on these sections consists of 30,000 square feet of engineered growing medium and plants for the vegetated roof, and 20,000 square feet that reused the existing pavers and ballast for the vegetation-free zones.

Things worked out beautifully, both literally and figuratively. The two vegetated roofs are highlights of the buildings, with more than 75,000 colorful sedums in a planting plan designed by Tremco Roofing's Uhlmann. The combination of roofing systems are meeting the project goals as well, providing such benefits as a lower installed cost than planned, cutting heating and cooling costs, reducing storm water runoff by more than 600,000 gallons, and reducing the strain on rooftop HVAC equipment. A 20-year roof membrane warranty and separate Plant Establishment Warranty will enable the plants to thrive while helping protect the roofs.

The collaborative efforts of the NBC team and the GSA designed a vegetated roof system that not only reduced greenhouse gas emissions but also recycled 80% of the existing roof material. This sustainable project has even received national recognition, winning an inaugural RoofPoint™ Award from the Center of Environmental Innovation in Roofing for "Excellence in Life Cycle Management".



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