

Mid-Atlantic Construction

Best of 2004

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1210 Massachusetts Ave. Washington, D.C.

Project of the Year High-Rise Residential



The JBG Co.'s new 233,000-sq.-ft. 1210 Massachusetts Ave., luxury apartment building is part of the vanguard of downtown Washington's residential revitalization.

Also known as Sovereign Park, the 13-story, 144-unit building could not offer a

better location to attract the growing number of young professionals who are rediscovering urban living. The famed nightlife hubs of Dupont Circle and Adams Morgan are just blocks away, as are key District of Columbia employment centers such as Capitol Hill, the

new Washington Convention Center and the K Street corridor.

The building also provides its tenants with a variety of floor plans ranging from studios to one- and two-bedroom units, plus a small number of two-level duplex models. A collection of high-end units located on the tower's top two floors complements the stunning views of the Nation's Capital.

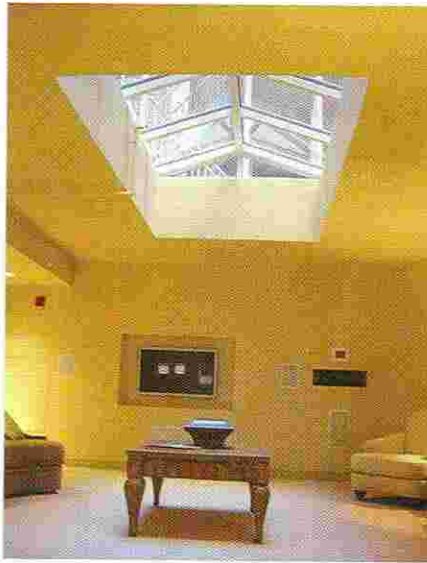
The ground floor also features 750 sq. ft. of retail space to further integrate the building into the community.

Unfortunately, convenience was in short supply for the project team, which needed to transform what was an empty parking lot and dilapidated buildings into this new landmark of luxury living. Because of the irregular shape of the one-half acre site, 1210 Massachusetts Ave. is essentially two separate structures overlapping at a central connection.

Along with the typical challenges and constraints that accompany working in a densely developed urban environment, general contractor Tompkins Builders of Washington, D.C. had to rely on only 80 ft. of frontage along L Street as the primary access point into the site. A slightly larger secondary frontage along Massachusetts Avenue could be used only sparingly because of the high volume of traffic along the roadway.

With three existing structures bordering the site, extensive underpinning was necessary during the excavation of more than 35,000 cu. yds. of rocky soil.

As Tompkins dug 40 ft. below the >>



surface to install the spread footings and partial mat foundation for the apartment building's four-level parking garage, special attention had to be given to protecting an overhanging fire escape that served the historic Swiss Inn Hotel next door. To preserve a safe evacuation route in the event of a fire, Tompkins' workers attached the fire escape to the protective underpinning.

Once construction reached street level, the project team scrapped the Swiss Inn's old fire escape in favor of a more modern replacement.

"To build anything on this site is amazing," said one judge, who added that the unusual skin for apartment building "made the process even tougher."

Indeed, the exterior of the building's reinforced structural concrete frame adds texture literally and figuratively to its urban surroundings. WDG Architecture of Washington, D.C. incorporated a

variety of bay windows, terraces and setbacks into the skin, resulting in 23 different vertical faces.

The skin also included a variety of materials that included limestone, brick, synthetic stucco and precast concrete. Because the materials were scattered across the building's skin, application and finishing had to be carefully coordinated with other construction activities.

An unexpected challenge arose during construction when citywide concerns about building waterproofing led JBG to request additional measures to safeguard the building from the potential of water intrusion. Along with eliminating fireplaces except for the upper-level units, the project team had to make substantial modifications to the already complex building skin.

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The project team's research led to the selection of a new elastomeric membrane manufactured by Sto Corp. of Atlanta behind the skin. Other waterproofing measures included encasing all mechanical and electrical penetrations in sleeves and upgrading the flashing details around windows, doorways and other surface features.

Tompkins site-specific quality-control plan, inspection programs and ongoing communication among the various subcontractors proved essential in helping the team implement the changes without disrupting what was already a de-

Key Players
Owner JBG Companies
Architect WDG Architecture
Construction Manager/General Contractor Tompkins Builders, Inc.
Shoring & Underpinning Contractor Steele Foundations, Inc.
Structural Concrete Contractor Miller & Long
Electrical Contractor The Limbach Group
Masonry Contractor Spartan Masonry
Drywall Contractor P&P Contractors

manding project schedule.

The building was completed in mid-July after 18 months of construction – more than a month ahead of the original contract completion date.

The complex project also had no lost-time accidents thanks to an innovative approach to safety. The project's safety committee included a Tompkins superintendent and designated nonsuperviso-

ry craftworkers from each trade, eliminating the "politics" sometimes involved in such oversight efforts.

Weekly meetings that included jobsite inspections complemented the spirit of open exchange between Tompkins and craftworkers. Superior safety performance was also rewarded with monthly awards and other incentives. <<