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**REUSING AND REVITALIZING
THE ALEXANDER COMPANY**

**ADAPTING TO CHALLENGES
THERRIEN WADDELL**

**GROWING IN INNOVATION
RYAN & ASSOCIATES**

**BUILDING TO LAST
SALIBA CONSTRUCTION**

THE MAGAZINE FOR CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES

Therrien Waddell Construction Group

Adapting to Challenges

Produced by Hanim Samara & Written by Shelley Seyler

The story of Therrien Waddell begins in 1972 with the meeting of Jerry Therrien and Donnie Waddell. For over 35 years, the two have worked side-by-side in the construction industry, their careers peaking in the company they currently own, Therrien Waddell Construction Group.

In 1987, the pair joined Williamson Group Construction, Inc., a development and construction company based in Montgomery County, Maryland. In January 2005, the principles were looking to wind down their involvement with the business which gave Donnie and Jerry the opportunity to buy the company. They bought the construction

operations and name of Williamson Group Construction, Inc., later changing it to Therrien Waddell, Inc.

Today, Therrien Waddell has 25 employees and an annual revenue of \$25 million. As a general contractor and construction manager, the company relies on relationships with a substantial subcontractor base for all its work. Their services stretch from their headquarters in Gaithersburg, Maryland to Washington, DC, Baltimore, southern Pennsylvania, northern Virginia, and southern Maryland. With a focus on the commercial sector, 80 percent of their projects are negotiated and relationship driven. Taking advantage of relationships and prior



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experience working with clients, Therrien Waddell gets involved at the inception of projects, working closely with design teams and their clients throughout the entire construction process to completion.

Projects

Thanks to their knowledge of the surrounding areas and their reputation in the communities in which they work, Therrien Waddell was asked to become involved in the construction of a new Porsche-Audi dealership in Rockville, Maryland, just outside our nation's capitol. This 33,760 square-foot project consisted of a prototype model of high tech modern design and included service bays, parts area, high end sales and show rooms, office, and conference facilities. The exterior is designed with a combination of glass, composite metal panels, masonry, and EIFS. Construction involved an extensive underground storm water storage system, requiring auger boring under an adjacent country club entrance, and over 500 linear feet of 40 foot tall, self supporting retaining walls.

One of the company's most recent projects in Gaithersburg, Maryland, is a perfect example of their

partnership thinking. In East Montgomery Village, the Community Services for Autistic Adults and Children (CSAAC) wanted to create a center that would serve as a model for the rest of the country. The brand-new, 36,000 square-foot building consolidated the association's real estate, which was historically stretched among three buildings, into one headquarters. With this one location, the center is better able to cater to the needs of its service community.

The CSAAC project is a prime example of Therrien Waddell's early involvement in a project that assists a nonprofit service organization in achieving its corporate goals. The building was specially constructed to create space that is conducive for educating and supporting those suffering from autism. The expansive windows allow sun light to warm the rooms; open space promotes a calm environment; and even the color schemes cater to an autism-friendly environment - with Therrien Waddell working closely with the center to accomplish construction best suited for its patients.

Continuing their pattern of catering to their clients' unique needs, Therrien Waddell completed the first



commercial “green roof” in northern Montgomery County, Maryland, prompting a press conference to discuss the innovative project with community leaders. Because of the novelty of this the project, local government officials watched the progression of the installation so they could understand how it was completed. TW spent several years researching the systems that were to be installed, “But it was well worth it,” said Dan Coffey, vice president of business development.

The construction of this green roof has many benefits for the environment and for building managers. It diminishes the need for on- or off-site storm water facilities, the roof acting as a natural storm water management system. Not only was this installation promoted by government incentives, but the system also controls run-off, retains water, and filters run-off before entering drainage systems. The life span for green roofs, at least for models seen in Europe, can span an impressive 50 to 60 years compared with the 20 to 30 years for a conventional roof.

Other equally important benefit of green roofs are the amount of carbon dioxide converted into oxygen by just a



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single roof, thus improving air quality through the processing of toxins as well as reducing air pollution, and the heat island effect that can arise from dark impervious surfaces.

Setting the Trend

As many as 30 years ago, Therrien Waddell recognized the benefits of environmentally-friendly technologies for their buildings. From hydronic heat pumps to ground source water systems, solar adaptations, and energy management systems, Therrien Waddell remains greatly involved in helping their clients determine the best ways to save energy, focusing on broad building needs as well as the importance in the details.

As a USGBC member, they continue to explore new green technology and are becoming increasingly involved with LEED programs and sustainable projects. Though they work in the private sector and many of their clients are not yet required to complete LEED certified projects, there are increasingly more benefits for including green aspects in their construction projects: tax benefits and development concessions are only two.

Therrien Waddell has project managers who are Green



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Advantage and LEED accredited professionals, as well as others seeking their accreditation. TW realizes that sustainable construction is “not a thing of the future; it is here. It is fast becoming the fabric of our communities and development projects. This process will soon not be an option and TW intends to be prepared to integrate and respond to these requirements.”

Incorporating green concepts into every aspect of each project “is a natural one for us,” said Jerry. As a general contractor, Therrien Waddell pride themselves on their ability to be problem solvers, building partnerships with everyone involved in the project and working as a team throughout the development process. They listen to input from their subcontractors to solve problems that arise and meet the needs of the client. As green concepts evolve and are tested, and technology improves, they believe that cooperation with a contractor will be essential.

Readapting

Therrien Waddell is a bit of a chameleon, readapting their strategies and goals as the economic landscape changes

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and, as is the case today, spirals downward. They have noticed more caution in their clients' decision making, with more analysis and questions before jumping into new projects. These changes are far from the economic doom and gloom some are discussing. The company is adapting to the current marketplace with a backlog of projects to continue their business for the foreseeable future.

"We all need to keep our heads out of the hole, look to the horizon, and make the best of what we have. We have a long range vision. Of course, we are cautious about adding more expenses, but you have to look down the road a little further and stay in touch with the big picture," advised Coffey.

With this level-headed leadership, Therrien Waddell is sure to propel the company into the future, maneuvering through the challenges and coming out a little wiser and stronger than before.



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