

HAWORTH

Leading Sustainability and Innovation in the Construction Industry

February 2020

Customer Story
HITT Contracting Co|Lab

Location
Falls Church, Virginia

Design Firms
William McDonough
+ Partners

Dealer Partner
Price Modern

Photography
John Cole Photography





Challenge

How can a space drive innovation by embracing sustainability and collaboration?

Overview

In this era of rapidly advancing technology and focus on sustainability, much of the construction industry seems to be lagging on these fronts. While older technologies, materials, and approaches may be “tried-and-true,” who’s to say there aren’t better, more innovative solutions out there? Never content to settle for the status quo, nationwide general contractor HITT was looking to make a big impact that would help them lead construction into the future by empowering people in the industry to change the market—and the world.

Building relationships since 1937, HITT Contracting sees the inherent value in leveraging collaborative partnerships to develop innovative solutions for building technologies, processes, and products. That’s why they created Co|Lab. Designed with the future of the construction industry and the entire planet in mind, this new collaborative laboratory (hence, the name Co|Lab) is part co-working office, part hands-on research facility. Here, employees work with each other, subcontractors, materials and product suppliers, architects, designers, and other industry partners to develop, test, and share new ideas and products.

Specifications



- Stories: 2 + rooftop deck
- Area: 8,650 sq. ft.
- Occupants: 1,000+

Objective

Showcase and continuously advance HITT’s innovation leadership in the construction industry.

Solution

Create a co-working site to develop, test, and share innovative ideas, approaches, and products.

Results

An inspiring, collaborative innovation lab that showcases and drives design thinking through its own unique spaces and sustainability.

Continuously Advancing Innovation

As a general contractor, HITT coordinates the efforts of everyone involved in each project they head up. They have seen what success looks like and understand that it requires partnership among all trades and specialties. They also know that those who continually learn, evolve, and innovate are the most successful in the industry, gaining the respect of their peers, clients, and stakeholders.

To showcase and continue to advance their industry leadership, HITT decided to create a space that embraces sustainability and supports cross-functional collaboration to drive innovation. Their goal in creating Co|Lab was to construct a flexible and adaptive building with designated space to create mock ups, test products and approaches, demonstrate technology, and educate clients, team members, and tradespeople through hands-on experiences and thought leadership. They wanted to bridge gaps in communication between architects, designers, subcontractors, and clients by facilitating tough conversations and exploring better ways of doing things—together. And they wanted to do all of this with a building that itself exhibits innovative elements and aims to “create an experience” that draws visitors in, showcases capabilities, and promotes engagement.





“The construction industry has traditionally waned in its embrace of new technologies. All of that is changing. This building is meant to be a guidepost for the industry as to what’s possible and for the company to establish itself as a leader in innovation for the construction industry.”

Eric Ross
William McDonough + Partners

A Foundation of Sustainability and Well-Being

LEED v4 Platinum Certified

Co|Lab is the first building in the Washington DC metro area to be certified under version 4 of the highest level of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) by the US Green Building Council (USGBC).

HITT doesn't just promote sustainable practices, they embrace them at a foundational level. Their Co|Lab building is the first mass-timber structure in Virginia. This sustainable building practice uses a bonded structural wood, engineered to perform equal to or better than concrete or steel. Mechanical fasteners are used to connect the timber, making it easy to disassemble the entire building and reuse the wood when the building outlives its purpose.

The interior of the building is designed for energy efficiency, as well as to provide employees and visitors with an engaging indoor environment that contributes to well-being. Large windows make use of daylight to illuminate every space, while offering people a view to the outside. High-performance LED lighting provides additional illumination where needed. Wood finishes and the colors of nature are used throughout the building to create a warm, inviting atmosphere that helps to satisfy the human desire to connect with the outdoors.





1 Innovative Recycled Materials
Among the many sustainable applications used at CoLab, the 800 sq.-ft. catwalk is made from over 13,000 plastic bottles—the first commercial installation of this type of flooring.

2 Wood Structure and Finishes
Promote sustainability, beauty, and well-being of employees and visitors.

3 Abundant Daylight
Reduces energy usage for lighting and promotes well-being.

4 2,800 Sq. Ft. of Solar Panels
Provide more energy than needed for net-zero efficiency now and to offset future growth.

5 Modular Green Wall
Adds natural beauty with self-watering, -feeding, and -draining vertical flora.



Promoting Collaboration and Idea Sharing

One-third of the Co|Lab building is dedicated to co-working space that brings employees and industry professionals together for brainstorming, education, training, and meeting sessions. The space has been strategically designed to be open and shared to promote the communication, collaboration, and cross-pollination of ideas essential to innovation. There are areas for working individually, in small groups, and in large groups—offering variety and choice for any workstyle or activity.

As soon as you walk in the door, you'll find open social spaces with comfortable lounge seating and a large community table for informal gathering and collaboration. A kitchenette bar in the lobby welcomes employees and visitors, offering a refresh space that promotes the chance meetings and impromptu conversations that support connection. On the second floor, a small “huddle room” provides an area of privacy and reduced distractions for more focused group work. Moving up and out, the rooftop deck with wi-fi offers additional opportunities to collaborate, while connecting with nature. Lockers are also available, allowing people to securely store personal items while they are working or visiting Co|Lab.



Innovative Materials, Approaches, and Technology

The majority of Co|Lab houses space for hands-on, collaborative experimentation. The “maker bays” offer an opportunity for HITTT to partner with other industry innovators to create test mockups for the development of new products, approaches, and methods of construction. One maker bay is currently dedicated to a collaboration with A&D firm Hickock Cole to test and validate a new type of brick for recommendation to clients as a more sustainable solution to traditional masonry. Other testing in the maker bays has included biocontainment construction for use in hospitals, new wiring options to reduce energy usage, and 3D modeling for the estimation process and create a streamlined, collaborative project platform.

To renew enthusiasm and innovation in the construction industry, Co|Lab offers a variety of engagement opportunities for industry partners and customers. A large conference room overlooking the maker bays provides a gathering space for special events, education and training, collaboration, and idea sharing. Moveable Planes tables with power allow flexibility for this variety of activities, and Fern chairs offer maximum comfort during longer meetings or other seated events.

Industry Partnership in Action

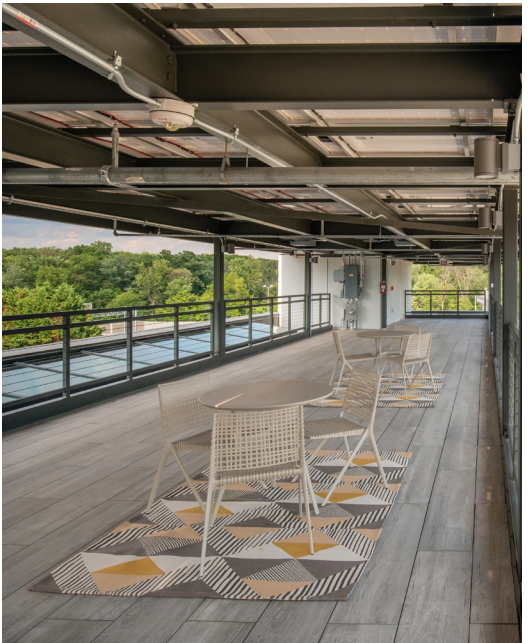
Calcium carbonate bricks “grown” from microorganisms and a nutrient solution are being tested in one of Co|Lab’s maker bays. The bricks can be made onsite in 72 hours, without high heat and energy.





“We’re definitely looking forward to the various partnerships that we’re going to be able to work towards, not just in terms of R&D opportunities, but also in driving industry change, to push those conversations forward.”

Aidan Hitt
Manager, ColLab



Driving Industry Changes

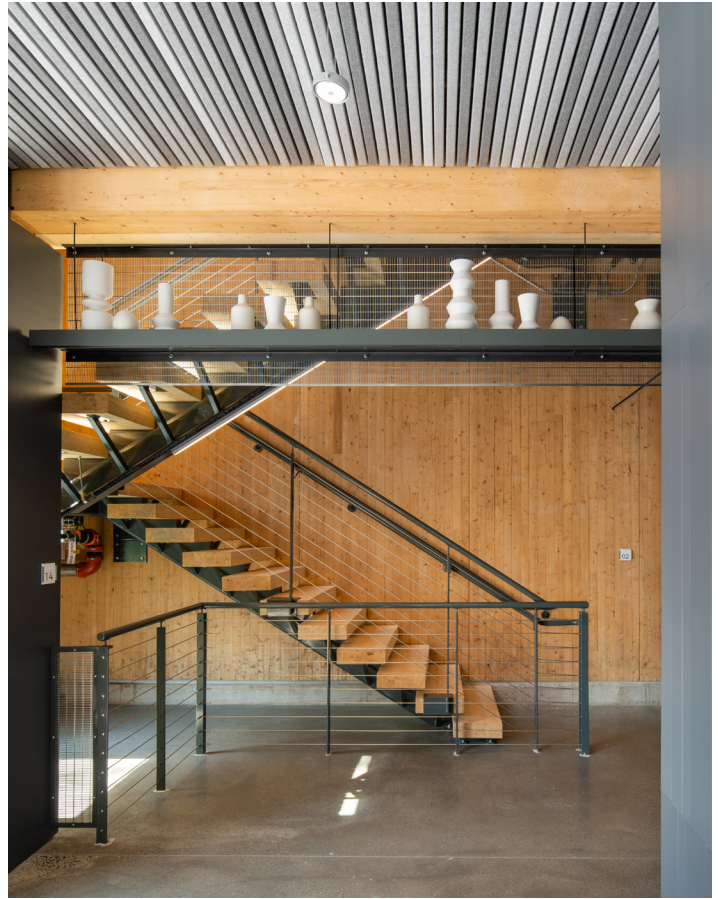
Through Co|Lab, HITT Contracting lives its dedication to setting a new standard for innovation in the construction industry. The building itself and the materials used in it represent the company's commitment to promoting a circular economy and well-being for people and the planet. For the construction industry, it's the realization of what is possible for the future of building and design.

But certainly more important for HITT as a leading-edge contractor are the activities that go on inside the Co|Lab building. The combination of co-working and maker spaces maximizes cross-functional idea-sharing for greater creativity, productivity, and efficiencies. Partnerships between employees, subcontractors, suppliers, and customers flourish at Co|Lab. Together, they take a hands-on approach to exploring and testing innovative new products, approaches, and technology—elevating the business of building, engaging the next generation of builders, and leading innovation in the industry.



“Right now, the story is about this beautiful building that’s pushing the envelope as it relates to sustainability, energy efficiency, and materials selection. But what excites me is that the future story is really about the work that happens in our maker bays and also out on jobsites around the nation. The more I see our team members and our partners ask to be involved, the more it shows how much people really want to make an impact. If we can help inspire that through this space, I think we’ve done a really great thing.”

Katie Rothenburg
HITT Contracting Vice President
Sustainability & Innovation





Customer Profile

Since its inception in 1937, HITT Contracting has grown to become an award-winning nationwide general contractor performing a wide range of work from base building shells and complete owner/tenant fit-outs to small jobs, service, and emergency work. As one of the top 50 largest general contractors in the nation, with 1,000+ team members, they deliver quality construction from coast to coast. Their success is a direct result of the relationships they've formed with clients, partners, and subcontractors, and they don't take that for granted. Never content to settle, they are continually evolving to better serve all their stakeholders. HITT may operate from 10 locations nationwide, but they have one singular motivation: to elevate the business of building.

Featured Haworth Products

- Immerse® Table
- Tate™ Stools
- Poppy™ Lounge
- Fern® Task Chair
- Planes® Tables
- X Series® Lockers
- Riverbend™ Lounge
- GAN Rugs
- Sprig™ Table
- JANUS et Cie