



# The Sheward Partnership Headquarters



## The Challenge

With a growing portfolio of more than 600 LEED® projects globally, The Sheward Partnership (TSP), one of the country's leading architectural design and sustainability consulting firms, was committed to integrating sustainability into every aspect of the design of its new Philadelphia headquarters.

"Sustainability is our brand," said Senior Associate and Sustainability Director Michael Pavelsky. "It's our mission.

It's in all the projects that we do whether we're pursuing certification from a green building rating system or not."

When designing the new 9,150-square-foot space, TSP's design team was also informed by the results of an employee survey that acoustics had been an issue in the old space. "That was probably their largest concern," said Pavelsky. "So, we were committed to improving acoustics in the new space."

## The Solution

TSP was able to address both requirements with a selection of three high-performance, sustainable ceiling systems from the Armstrong® Sustain® portfolio. By specifying products from the Sustain portfolio, the design team was assured that the ceilings met the most stringent industry sustainability compliance standards and would contribute to the LEED Platinum, WELL™ Platinum, and Living Building Challenge™ certifications they were targeting for the new space.

"We had a significant number of sustainability and energy conservation goals for the project," said Pavelsky. "We carefully balanced the embodied carbon of our product selections with the aesthetic, durability, and acoustical properties of the materials we selected for the new space."

With nearly twice the space it had in its previous quarters, the firm was able to increase the number of private offices,

expand the distance between workstations in the design studios, and add two meeting rooms, a large conference room, and a multi-purpose area.

Optima® PB (Plant-based) tegular ceiling panels dominate the new space with a total of 2,715 square feet installed above the private offices, design studios, meeting rooms, conference room and other areas. Optima panels have an NRC of 0.95, meaning they absorb 95 percent of the sound that strikes them, providing the improved acoustics the employees desired. "We chose Optima because we have always had a good experience with the product for acoustical ceilings," said Pavelsky. "It's also really good from a sustainability standpoint."

## Case Study

**Location:** Philadelphia, PA

**Product:** Optima® PB, AcoustiBuilt®, FeltWorks® Blades

**Architect:** The Sheward Partnership, LLC



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## The Solution (continued)

In the meeting rooms and large conference room, the acoustical performance provided by the Optima panels is reinforced by 476 square feet of AcoustiBuilt® seamless acoustical ceilings. With an NRC of 0.80 and a CAC of 46, AcoustiBuilt offers Total Acoustics® performance providing both sound absorption and sound blocking in the same ceiling. “The enclosed ceilings in the meeting rooms and conference room were chosen for acoustic reasons,” explained Maegan Sweeney, Lead Interior Designer and Sustainability Project Manager. “We chose a combination of Optima® PB panels to maintain ease of access for maintenance and AcoustiBuilt to improve acoustics.”

A focal point in the center of the new headquarters is the multi-purpose area, an open collaborative space where people can gather for impromptu meetings or events. To showcase the space and reduce any noise that may drift into adjacent spaces, the design team chose to suspend a FeltWorks® Blades Ebbs & Flows ceiling with an NRC of 0.70 above the 590-square-foot space. “I liked the sculptural element of the Ebbs & Flows system,” said Sweeney, “and it provided a way to demonstrate how felt could be used in a ceiling application.”

The new headquarters serves as a demonstration project, giving TSP’s Sustainability Team first-hand knowledge of how different products perform. “We use it as a living lab where we test out products that we would put into our projects,” said Pavelsky.

Working with products from the Sustain portfolio saves the Sustainability Team time researching materials, explained Pavelsky. “We are looking at materials on so many different projects every day. So, knowing there is this group of products that meet all the criteria for the green building rating systems and that the sustainability information is easily accessible on the website, that’s huge for us.”

Diverting construction waste away from landfills was another goal the Sustainability Team had for its new headquarters. By recycling the old ceilings through the Armstrong Ceiling Recycling Program, the waste contributes to TSP’s pursuit of the LEED v4 MR credit for Construction and Demolition Waste Management and the Living Building Challenge Imperative credit for Net Positive Waste. “That was included in our Construction Waste Management Plan,” said Sweeney. “The total diverted/recycled weight of old ceiling tiles to Armstrong was 1.68 tons, contributing toward the project’s overall diversion rate of 83.7 percent.”



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