

THE MAGAZINE FOR LEADING CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES

USBuildersReview

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Building a Community

Robert A. Aird Inc.

Over 35 Years of Quality Exterior Construction

Produced by Chuck McKenna & Written by Jeanee Dudley

Robert “Rob” Aird founded Robert A. Aird Inc. (RAA) in 1976 as a growing contractor, specializing in unique exterior construction. The company works with a number of innovative materials to install durable, protective surfaces on buildings ranging in size. Clients come from a number of backgrounds in the commercial and public sectors. Aird’s team of over 100 works in Maryland, Washington, D.C., as well as Virginia, providing safe and efficient service.

Attention to detail and safety are the priorities at RAA. Each of the company’s foremen is trained in CPR and First Aid and carries OSHA training certification for safe scaffold building, as training and quality of work set the business apart from other enclosure specialists. The RAA team is trained and licensed with a number of manufacturers for leading practice and efficient materials usage for a range of different exterior types. Historically, all of the company’s employees are in-



house, hourly workers. According to Aird, this keeps better control over the work product and safety and service than if the company was to subcontract or piecework business.

Reputable Work and Happy Customers

The team performs new and restorative plaster and stucco installation, acoustic insulation and spray polyurethane insulation installation, exterior insulated finish systems (EIFS), as well as secondary weather-resistant barrier installation.

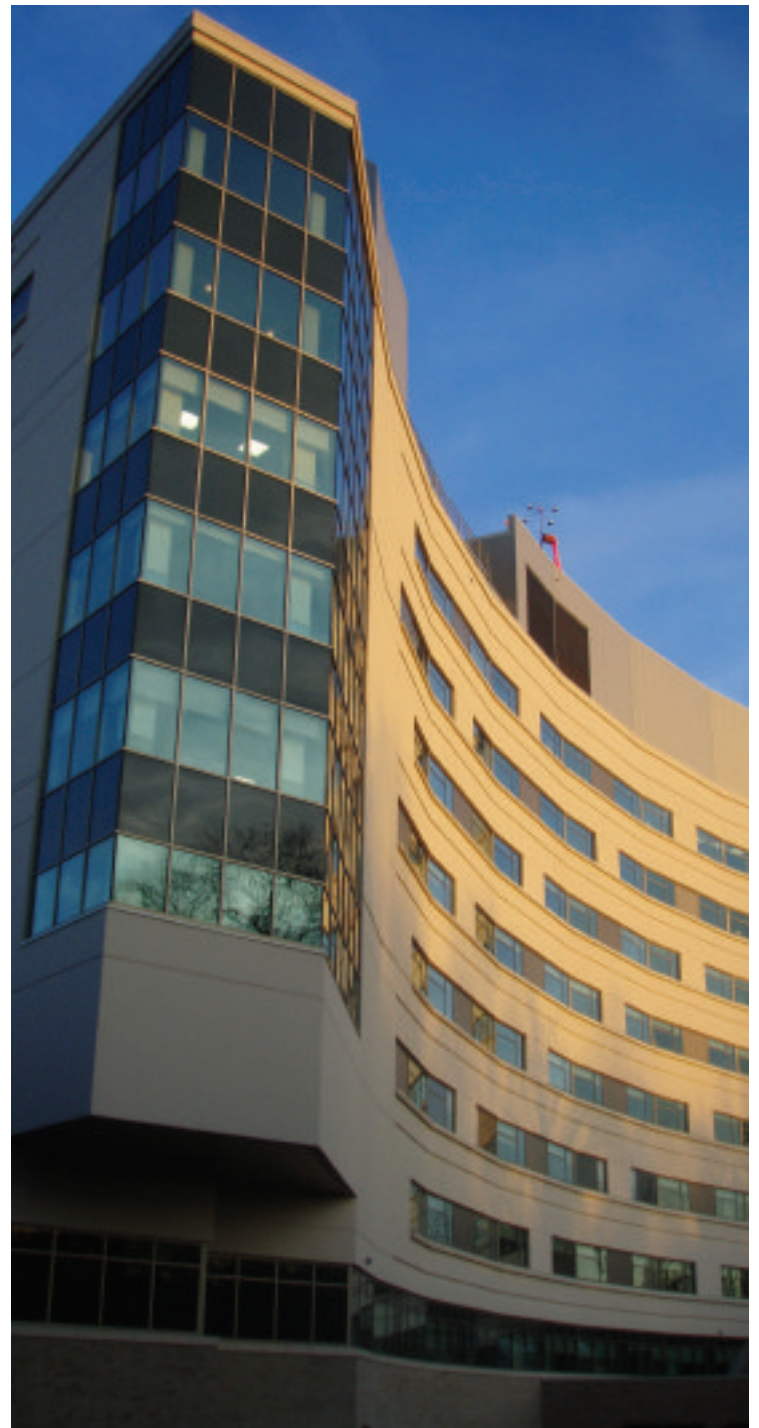
“We do residential and commercial work,” Aird explains. “We have clients in hospitality, government, churches and other sectors. We typically work in the Mid-Atlantic region, performing projects in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. But sometimes we get called to farther away work – out of state and even out of the country. We completed work on a large project in Guayaquil, Ecuador, this year and are actively engaged in one in Grand Cayman now.”

RAA has been busy in recent years and the crew is racking up an impressive portfolio. Recently, the company completed work on the Rouse Building in Columbia, Md. “The Howard Hughes Foundation owns the building,” Aird explains. “We did major renovation work on it. We removed 42,000 square feet of exterior stucco and replaced it with a water-managed EIFS.”

The EIFS technology is gaining popularity for durability and limitless design capability. This exterior cladding offers extra insulation to help manage temperatures in a building. Clients can opt for built-in weather protection barriers, which can extend the benefits of these systems, as well as the lifetime of a building’s exterior.

In 2011, the team completed a full interior and exterior renovation of the Howard Theatre in Washington, D.C. “We did Portland cement plaster, exterior stucco and interior acrylic finish, as well as gypsum plaster repairs,” Aird notes. “That was a really unusual project. We won the Washington Building Council Craftsmanship Award for our work there.”

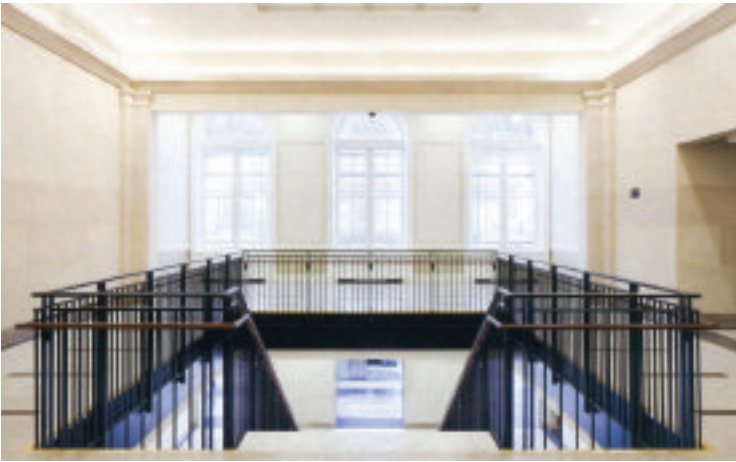
The company’s other recent projects include acoustic insulation and renovations for the Hay Adams Hotel in D.C., as well as a complete interior plaster restoration of the D.C. Court Appeals building. “We did an interior and exterior renovation there,” Aird elaborates. “We got a glowing letter from the Architect of Record. We also performed the stucco and plaster restoration on the last four wedges of the Pentagon Renovation project.”



All of us at Parex USA would like to congratulate Robert A. Aird, Inc. on many years of success. We are very proud to team with Robert A. Aird on a variety of projects over the past years. Robert A. Aird, Inc. is a forward-thinking and innovative organization that always delivers quality workmanship. They are a true leader in the EIFS and Stucco markets. Parex USA looks forward to continually delivering high-quality products to the Robert A. Aird team.

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Surviving a Changing Market

The team is busy now, but Aird notes that his business faced some major challenges throughout the recession. “When the downturn hit, we saw its effect on the residential sector,” he explains. “We got out of that for the most part. To deal with this market change, we expanded our product lines, including European manufacturers Baswaphon and StarSilent. We downsized, but we have been introducing new technologies and maintaining our certifications.”

Aird goes on to note that the market seems to be doing well; however, there are new challenges for the company. “Right now, our greatest trial is the labor force,” he says. “We are losing expertise as senior staff retires. That removes candidates from the pool with the leadership capabilities and experience we need.”

A labor shortage has hit many sections of the construction industry. While unemployment continues to be a problem, people are simply not trained or educated for this kind of work. Many trades are shrinking as a generation of senior craftspeople retires. To fight this trend, businesses have begun teaming up with trade schools and offering training in-house.

Aird adds that he has been teaching the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industry EIFS Doing It Right course throughout the country since 2007 and now also in Mexico. Aird’s bilingual capability has been a huge asset in communicating with the largely Hispanic workforce.

Regardless of the challenges, Aird and his team have a lot to look forward to as the company moves into the new year. And the future looks bright, as the company is booked well into 2014 on a number of complex interior and exterior projects. “We have work through the beginning of 2015,” Aird says. “Renovations continue to make up a large portion of our work and about 25 percent of our business is finishing, fixing or tearing off and replacing the work of others after another contractor has done a job poorly.”

The accredited contractor continues to offer leading service years after its founding. RAA continues to attract repeat customers and the team has proven itself time and again on complicated projects. Aird and his crew abide by safe, efficient practices, leaving behind quality work, attractive and energy efficient buildings, as well as happy customers. With a full schedule ahead, Robert A. Aird Inc. continues to grow, building upon a trusted name in the industry. •

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