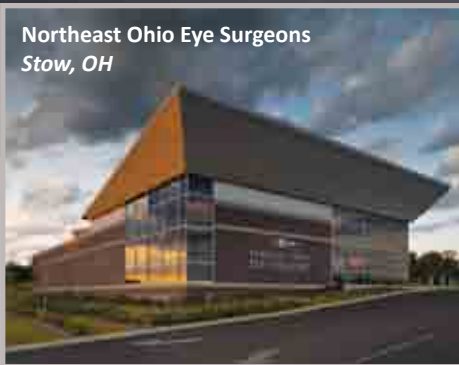


701 White Pond
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Healthy Addition to Akron Interchange

Neurology & Neuroscience Associates builds new home at I-77 and White Pond Drive

By Lou Kren | Photos by Jim Maguire

Recognizing the potential of a major under-developed interchange in Akron and the need for quality medical office space, developers Fred Zumpano and Terry Hanson have constructed 701 White Pond. The three-story 45,000-square-foot building, opened this past February, serves as the headquarters for Neurology & Neuroscience Associates Inc. A subset of the NNA physicians also owns the building and leases space to other medical providers including Summa Health System and Akron Children's Hospital.

The structure, of red brick and aluminum-glass curtainwall, features an aluminum and glass porte-cochere for access to the lobby from the 254-vehicle parking lot. Today, a third-floor conference room provides the setting as *Properties* discusses the project with Zumpano and Hanson, principals of Zumpano + Hanson, Building + Development, LLC. The conference-room windows overlook I-77, where 80,000 vehicles pass daily.

"NNA, a client of ours, was looking to consolidate its offices," says Hanson, explaining the genesis of 701 White Pond. "NNA wanted a high-visibility location that would offer easy access from the Cleveland-Akron-Canton region."

Zumpano and Hanson knew that the White Pond Drive exit from I-77 was the right location for NNA's needs. Twenty-one months later, including the 12 months needed for construction, culminated in the February 2010 grand opening. Zumpano + Hanson served as design-builder and selected TC Architects Inc., of Akron, as the building designer.

But making the identified parcel work for this building was no simple task. Ultimately, the site was created through aggregation of six land parcels, the closing of two public streets, a land swap with a neighboring property owner and the granting of a perpetual license for use of a City of Akron public right-of-way.

"When we came in, this site was shrouded with large, mature trees and contained four homes," Hanson recalls. "When I-77 was built, an overpass was constructed, which became the new White Pond Drive, running parallel to the old White Pond Drive where the four homes were located. We looked at the tax maps and realized the challenges we faced. Old White Pond Drive and another road leading to one home essentially made this site chopped up by public rights-of-way. We would have to convince the homeowners to sell and also negotiate with the City of Akron on those rights-of-way."

The negotiations concluded successfully – including relocation of one

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homeowner to another parcel of land where Zumpano + Hanson replicated the homeowner's house – and the developers could get to the business of construction. Here again, the site threw out another challenge.

“Original plans called for underground parking, but a significant peat vein, as thick as 40 feet, runs through here,” explains Hanson.

That fact eliminated underground parking as an economically feasible option and necessitated unique foundation engineering for the steel-frame building. 701 White Pond makes use of the Geopier, or Rammed Aggregate Pier system. With this system, as explained by Zumpano and Hanson, a hole is drilled in the soil and crushed rock poured down the shaft. The rock is then rammed into the bottom of the hole using a special beveled ramming tool that presses the rock laterally and vertically. This pre-stresses and pre-strains the soil below the hole bottom and forms what is referred to as a “bottom bulb.” Then layers of rock are rammed to the top of the Geopier shaft. This method spreads forces out and soil reaches resistance needed to support the building. Shallow footers lay atop the Geopier shafts.

“Four Geopiers were needed for each foundation load point and this building required about 40 load points,” says Hanson. “That meant formation of about 170 Geopiers, and all of this was completed within two weeks at a lower cost as compared to pilings.”

And, adds Hanson, all of this was completed in early 2009, a winter season complete with record snow and cold temperatures.

Structural design allowed for fast-track segmented structural-steel construction from east to west, enabling trades to follow behind.

“Segmented construction allowed us to save a lot of time in the building process,” offers Hanson, who was quick to credit TC Architects and project architect Todd Westover for an efficient and stately design.

Design ideal for healthcare

“Every market has a unique tolerance for design, and being in the Akron market and undertaking a healthcare



SUBTLE STYLE The building is designed to convey “a sense of professionalism” without going over the top, according to Terry Hanson, of Zumpano + Hanson, Building + Development, LLC.

project, our clients want to avoid going over the top with an ostentatious design,” Hanson explains. “At the same time, this is an all-medical building with regional, specialized tenants. This building has to convey to the world a sense of professionalism and the fact that it houses sophisticated services with state-of-the-art equipment.”

Given those marching orders and the need for as much square footage as possible, Westover and the team at TC Architects went to work.

“We designed a clean building with an angular structure running parallel to the highway,” Westover says. “It is a modern design – we didn’t want too much glass or the look of windows just punched into brick. Our firm specializes

in medical, education and commercial projects, and we brought that expertise to the table here.”

To take advantage of greenery surrounding the building site, and to make the structure come alive when viewed from outside, building corners are essentially glass. This design also allows light to penetrate the building, holding down energy costs in concert with light sensors and zoned HVAC.

The result is a modern medical building that highway travelers will recognize as a structure that will stand the test of time. Tenants worked with TC Architects to incorporate their own color palettes and specialized build-outs. The first-floor lobby, with elevator bank and public restrooms, leads to



CLEAR CHOICE To take advantage of greenery surrounding the building site, and to make the structure come alive when viewed from outside, building corners are essentially glass.

9,000 square feet of space for Akron Children's Hospital-Pediatrics on the right, and NNA's Advanced MRI Services on the left.

Special attention on MRI Services

Incorporating MRI space brought additional challenges to the project.

"An MRI scanner requires a copper envelope," explains Zumpano, "and a foundation that eliminates vibration that can interfere with the technology's sophisticated measuring and electronics systems.

"Vibration was of particular concern here given the MRI lab's proximity to the highway. The MRI equipment rests on five feet of foundation—two feet deeper than the foundation for the rest of the building."

As the room was constructed, crews left a section of exterior wall open to accommodate later placement of the large machinery. Timing was all-important, according to Hanson.

"The MRI magnet had to be relocated from downtown Akron to this location," he says. "The supercooled magnet only has a short amount of time to be placed or it will be damaged. So the cooling equipment here had to be installed and ready for hookup as soon as the magnet arrived."

And because the magnetic field created by the MRI can damage pacemakers and cause other problems, the corner of the building housing the MRI has an aluminum fence jutting out along the exterior to keep passersby and vehicles at a safe distance.

On the second floor, Summa Health System runs a Sleep Disorders Center, requiring after-hours building access. A lobby intercom system makes late-night access possible, allowing patients to enter the lab as other building areas remain secure.

NNA occupies the third floor, with exam rooms backed by hallway stand-up computer stations that allow quick access to medical records. To maximize space, NNA does without separate offices for each doctor, instead opting for workstations in an open layout. A third-floor conference room also can be opened up to an adjoining kitchen area.

Healthcare experience pays off


Satisfied tenants and a satisfied building owner speak to the success of this project, which is no surprise given the experience of Zumpano + Hanson Building + Development as healthcare builders and developers.

"When developing healthcare facilities, we look for those diamonds-in-the-rough building sites where there are strong underlying market characteristics, and then create a strong building design vision with a strong tenant mix that shows large in the market place," says Hanson. "We believe the right tenant mix and a building that shows well and is a strong bill board for its occupants is a winning strategy." **P**



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