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KEEPING SCHOOL FACILITIES DRY FOR STUDENTS: W. R. MEADOWS Helps Repair Eastern Michigan University's Quirk Hall



Eastern Michigan University, based in Ypsilanti, Michigan, was founded in 1849 and is widely known throughout the state, as well as in the Midwest, as a comprehensive, co-ed public university. Located just outside of Detroit and within miles of Ann Arbor, the institution attracts a wide variety of both American and international students and is recognized for its reputation as one of the top colleges in Michigan.

On campus is the Quirk-Sponberg Theater—also known as Quirk Hall. Built in 1958, the structure initially faced some renovations and expansions in 1985. The building houses the Communication, Fine Arts, and Theater programs for the University and is an important centerpiece of the cultural efforts promoted by the School.

However, it was in April 2018 where school administrators realized that Quirk Hall had a problem that needed addressing—and fast. The 1,500 square foot building had a leak in the basement, and because of this, important property belonging to the Theater department and used by students was put at risk. Housing sewing rooms as well as areas for wardrobe and theater prop storage, every time the Ypsilanti area experienced a heavy rain, standing water would accumulate in the basement of Quirk Hall, sometimes in the inches.

As summer vacation was about to happen at the school, Eastern Michigan University administrators made the decision to reach out to Southfield, Michigan based architectural firm DiClemente Siegel Design, Inc. They contracted the firm for assistance and began working with Senior Associate, John Ritchie.

A Small but Important Project

Mr. Ritchie has been with DiClemente Design for over a decade. The firm works heavily in campus infrastructure, both in higher education and for automotive companies. When he began considering the issue that EMU's Quirk Hall was facing, he had initially gone out to the campus to complete a survey and walk the grounds. It was obvious from the outset that the grade of the land was actually sloping back toward the walls of the building. Trying to find a solution to the problem, Mr. Ritchie first recommended a few actions be taken, including a re-grading of the land. Unfortunately, this did not solve the problem and leaking continued. Mr. Ritchie realized that they would need to install new waterproofing—and to do this the basement foundation would have to be exposed and other steps taken. Mr. Ritchie headed back to his office to brainstorm.

Surfing W. R. MEADOWS' website, Mr. Ritchie found himself intrigued with a new product that was introduced in 2017 called CLAY-TITE™, a dual layer waterproofing consisting of virgin HDPE (20 mil), sodium bentonite, and a protective layer comprising of a non-woven polypropylene. The HDPE provides the first layer of waterproofing, while the bentonite's self-sealing capabilities ensure positive puncture protection under hydrostatic conditions. The polypropylene fabric protects the bentonite from direct installation of shotcrete. This sounded positive to Mr. Ritchie as he believed that it would be best to handle this issue by addressing the outside of the building, instead of doing epoxy injections from the inside.





“I reached out to W. R. MEADOWS and was put in touch with salesperson Jason Everhart. Jason listened to all that we were facing with Quirk Hall and I told him about my interest in the CLAY-TITE bentonite waterproofing product. Jason agreed to meet with me on site to take a look and get a feel for what we would be dealing with,” stated Mr. Ritchie. “I personally believe that bentonite products, while they may be a little more expensive on the front end are worth it in the long run as they are good at preventing future issues from occurring.”

Heading out to Ypsilanti, Everhart and Ritchie went to the job site and did a bit of digging; however, they were unable to determine what type of waterproofing was already there. They knew that it was a below grade waterproofing remediation, but few other factors were obvious.

“This is a big factor that goes into play,” commented Mr. Ritchie. “You need to know what the existing waterproofing looks like, whether it needs to be removed, as well as if it is compatible with what you might be considering installing.”

Mr. Everhart expanded further, “I did believe that we saw a bit of the existing waterproofing—it was some sort of asphalt or tar. However, I knew it wasn’t coal tar, because if this were the case, we wouldn’t have been able to put W.R. Meadows products over it. In this particular situation, I did have a couple of options in mind and I was eager to earn DiClemente’s business. While this was a small project, it was an important one for W. R. MEADOWS. It had been the first time that DiClemente had ever reached out to us for assistance.”

Ultimately, CLAY-TITE, CLAY-TITE MASTIC, a polymer-modified bentonite paste used in pipe penetrations, inside corners, concrete voids, and tieback cover details, as well as MEL-DRAIN™ 5035, a series of geocomposite drainage products, were all recommended

by Mr. Everhart—and Mr. Ritchie made the decision to partner with W. R. MEADOWS on this project.

The Installation

Once product decisions had been made, it was Industrial Services, Inc., based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and owned by Pat Hulswitt, that was contracted to handle the installation of the waterproofing solution. Nate Desjardin was the installer-in-charge who operated on site, and while the firm had long been familiar with W. R. MEADOWS products, this was the first time that Mr. Desjardin had ever worked with the Clay-Tite product.

“I’ve worked with Industrial Services since 2012, and I have been in the trades for over 20 years. In that time, I have worked with W. R. MEADOWS multiple times and have come to know Jason Everhart well. I have used a variety of W. R. MEADOWS products including their below grade waterproofing products, an above ground air barrier, fluid applied air barriers, and more. I have always been pleased,” stated Mr. Desjardin. “Even though I had never used Clay-Tite before, I wasn’t worried, I have trusted W. R. MEADOWS for years and have no issues using or trying their new products.”

As work began in August 2018, Industrial Services realized what needed to be done. Once the basement foundation was exposed, the walls were cleaned, the waterproofing was applied, and new drain tile was then placed. When they finished this process, they ensured that the land grade was properly sloped away from the building so that water would be prevented from collecting against the wall in the future.

“The whole process was very quick—literally a matter of weeks,” explained Mr. Desjardin. “And we didn’t run into many issues. If we did, CLAY-TITE handled it. Even though we had to dig everything up and we weren’t sure what we were going to find below ground, there wasn’t an issue. CLAY-TITE, I discovered, is a very forgiving product and it works well with a variety of other materials that are usually present when you are dealing with an established build site and existing conditions. The waterproofing that was there didn’t need to be removed, just cleaned.”

A Standalone Product with Superior Customer Service

“For the Quirk Hall project, I would like it to be known that we didn’t consider any other products except for W.R. Meadows,” commented Mr. Ritchie. “I had requested W. R. MEADOWS in the project specifications—and they were able to meet our needs with CLAY-TITE.”

Indeed, both DiClemente Design and Industrial Services were pleased with the CLAY-TITE product as well as the customer service and support that they received from W. R. MEADOWS and Mr. Everhart.

“Their products are very installer friendly and their support staff is great. From the technical components to the site visits, we had help at all phases, and this is always consistent,” explained Mr. Desjardin. “No matter if it is establishing what products are needed on the front end or if you need assistance during the project, W. R. MEADOWS is there. With the Quirk Hall project, I was quite thankful for Jason’s assistance on site. He was always around.”

Additionally, both installer and architect feel confident that Eastern Michigan University will be satisfied with their investment for quite a long time. The leaking had been stopped when the CLAY-TITE material was implemented.

“It took care of the issue and will give EMU a dry basement for a long time,” said Mr. Desjardin.

Mr. Ritchie agrees with this.

“I followed up with EMU representatives since the completion of this project and found them to be quite happy. The leaking issues have stopped, and the building re-

mains dry. It was painless from beginning to end and was solved before the new academic year started. I am very satisfied with W. R. MEADOWS. Their products are durable, they are easy to work with, and the support provided is second to none.”

PROJECT SPECS

Architect: DiClemente Siegel Design, Inc.

Contractor: Industrial Services, Inc.

Salesperson: Jason Everhart

Products:

CLAY-TITE

CLAY-TITE MASTIC

MEL-DRAIN

Scope: 2,000 square feet

Curious to Receive More Information?

Contact W. R. MEADOWS and learn more about CLAY-TITE and how it was used in the Eastern Michigan University Quirk Hall project. Or, reach out today to be connected with your local sales representative. We are eager to serve you! Receive immediate assistance by calling (800) 342-5976 or by clicking here.



About W. R. MEADOWS

Since 1926, W. R. MEADOWS has been a leader in developing products that protect structures from moisture infiltration. From below-grade installations to rooftops and in-between, issue-specific products target and prevent potential, costly problems. Today, patented technologies enable more environmentally effective, efficient designs, and many of our products contribute LEED-certification "green" credits. With nine manufacturing facilities throughout the U.S. and Canada, the materials you need are within easy reach. For additional information, call 800.342.5976 or visit www.wrmeadows.com.



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