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THE PETER SCHERRER GROUP:
ROOTED IN TRADITION, REACHING NEW HEIGHTS



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THE PETER SCHERRER GROUP: ROOTED IN TRADITION, REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

by Mark Crawford



“What is the optimal approach?”

That was the question Peter Scherrer and his daughter Leslie asked themselves in 2009 as they were starting their business. For them, the “optimal approach” included a business model that was highly adaptable to the needs of their clients and projects. It was an approach that leveraged their core skills, allowing them to customize their services and maximize value for each client. And it was structuring the business to be highly flexible and positioning it to evolve with changes in the market & their industry.

Peter had 30 years of experience in the construction industry. Leslie had worked for several development firms, specializing in acquisitions, development management, financing, investor relations, and asset management.

With so many years in the business, they knew what worked well and what didn’t. They knew where the roadblocks were. They knew how to accelerate property acquisition and financing. And, with Peter’s expertise in strategic planning, they were skilled at enabling customers to think about long-term needs.

Peter and Leslie combined these strengths to create a company that provides services for every key step in the construction process—from conception to property acquisition to construction to close-out—all under one roof.

The new company—The Peter Scherrer Group—was founded in 2009.

“Our mission is to always serve our clients with expertise, creativity, and accountability,” says Leslie Scherrer. “We structured our organization to maximize the value of our backgrounds and talents to the benefit of the customer. We are a lean company, staffed with professionals who work hands-on with our clients to deliver superior personal service.”

Diverse Markets and Services

The Peter Scherrer Group works with a variety of clients, including businesses of all size in the private sector and municipalities and school districts in smaller communities. It is truly a “one-stop” shop for any business that is interested in building a new facility (or rehabilitating an existing building).

“Our expertise in development, construction, and real estate investment management allows us to serve all stages of a project seamlessly, from

the first important decisions of how and where to build, through financing and acquisition and construction,” says Peter. “We operate in the best interest of our clients in a totally transparent manner.”

The real estate development arm of the company completes development efforts for The Peter Scherrer Group and also for clients. Through these services the company manages site selection and feasibility assessment, purchase contract negotiations, due diligence, site planning, entitlements, and acquisition. The company is also skilled in identifying and evaluating funding resources and applying for those funds. Space planning and identifying building system options (including budgeting alternative solutions) are also important steps in the development process.

One of the company’s key strengths is relationship management with owners, lenders, investors, government officials, and end-users noted Leslie. This aspect of project management is one of the most critical for delivering a project that meets the objectives of the client and that generates support from the community.

For the construction phase, The Peter Scherrer Group assembles and directs the entire project team. This includes design-build services, construction management, and general construction. “The key to the success of our projects is how connected all steps of the process are. The construction phase often commences while design tasks continue. We work with the project architectural team providing budgeting, value engineering, and constructability

reviews during the pre-construction phases,” says Scherrer.

The Peter Scherrer Group also provides real estate investment management services. “Many people want to invest in real estate, but lack the knowledge, interest, or time to proactively manage that investment,” says Leslie. “Our company maintains a proactive approach through the life of the investment to mitigate risk and meet the objectives for return. We stay on top of the market and oversee the investment, adjusting to the opportunities and risks presented, and work to position property to meet investment objectives. We also manage debt and lender relations and oversee property management and leasing in the interest of property investors.”

SELECTED PROJECTS

Burlington Parking Deck, Burlington

This three-level concrete parking structure is located in downtown Burlington. “As the owner representative, we represented the owner at all job meetings and worked with the architect, engineer, and general contractor to resolve issues and complete the project on time,” states Peter.

Preconstruction work included negotiated engineering services, monitored budget projections, and recommended scope adjustments to meet financial constraints. The team also identified potential financial impact associated with soil conditions and developed unit pricing to be incorporated in the bid process to mitigate risk.



The Coffee House at Chestnut & Pine

“Our mission is to always serve our clients with expertise, creativity, and accountability”

- Leslie Scherrer, *The Peter Scherrer Group Owner*

Lavelle Industries
Burlington, WI

The Peter Scherrer Group served as construction manager on this project. The goal was to update the exterior façade to provide a continuous and modern appearance for a building structure with more than twenty building additions. The main entrance was reconstructed to provide a welcoming space that included an ADA-compliant curved entry ramp. Sunshades were also incorporated to reduce heat gain in summer months.

“It was important that the end result be both appealing to our community and employees, as well as financially smart,” says Deborah Scheffler, CFO for Lavelle Industries. “Peter brought considerable expertise to the project



Burlington Parking Deck



Lavelle Industries

and carefully attended to details, providing seamless subcontractor management. He is one of our trusted business partners."

The Coffee House at Chestnut Pine Burlington, WI

This late-1800s building was the center of the client's vision for creating a community hub in the historic downtown area. Extensive research and planning sessions resulted in a building re-purposing that has transformed the location into a favorite gathering space in the city. In addition to the restoration, The Peter Scherrer Group also assisted the client in obtaining a façade grant for the improvements.

"The Peter Scherrer Group has

helped bring the vision of The Coffee House to life, and we are thrilled to be working with the team again on our expansion," indicates Carly Hurlley, General Manager for The Coffee House. "We're relying on their design expertise and construction knowledge throughout this entire process. We're always leaning on Peter and Leslie for their advice and they help us feel confident and excited about our design decisions, which they make seem effortless."

Cannella Response Television Burlington, WI

The Peter Scherrer Group conducted research and analysis of available properties for acquisition and remodeling for the client's new corporate office. When determined that an existing building meeting geographical constraints was not available, the team redirected to a solution that involved new construction. They negotiated site acquisition on behalf

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The Coffee House at Chestnut & Pine

of their client and obtained financing incentives tied to employment results. The new corporate office building overlooks a scenic wetland. The open floor plan features a coffee counter in the center hub that accommodates casual staff interaction. Custom-built office work stations were designed and constructed at a lower cost than the alternative of traditional partitions.

“Working with The Peter Scherrer Group was an energizing experience that got our facility built under-budget and that, three years later, the staff is still excited about,” says founder Frank Cannella. “We have an extremely efficient space that is unique and offers personal space for staff to interact. I was so happy with the final product that I hired Peter to build my new home.”

Wisconsin Vision Associates Office and Distribution Center
Burlington, WI

Brought in at the early conceptual stage, The Peter Scherrer Group helped evaluate facility needs and researched potential sites. The company negotiated the purchase on behalf of the client, securing a 26-acre site overlooking an attractive environmental corridor. An extensive entitlement process included securing government approvals from two municipalities and one county. The exterior of the building includes a



Cannella Response Television

gray-tinted/flat-finish precast concrete wall panel. Complimented with an appropriate amount of stone and wood, the building blends naturally into its surroundings.

"We were impressed by the clear competency that the entire Scherrer team possessed," says CEO Christopher Fait. "Having never done a project of this scope before, Peter and Leslie did an amazing job of allowing us to enjoy the process, and to take the time we needed, while still keeping us on track to meet the deadlines."

Colman Woods

This private residence is part executive retreat and part boat museum. Set in a 40-acre woodland, the building features a trabeated design incorporating laminated columns and beams. Green features include geothermal heat and a living roof. Among the many special features is an impressive circular stone stair tower.



"My house is extremely technical," says owner Charles Colman. "What I especially like about Peter is that, with his depth of experience, it seems like he can handle anything, especially complex design elements. He is very honest and straightforward and I had a lot of fun working with him."

Moving Ahead

Peter and Leslie will continue to

hone the optimal approach to their business. They understand that this will be an ongoing practice. They know they must remain dynamic and responsive to customer needs, as well as an evolving market. One way they do this is by maintaining their long-term relationships with clients, vendors, and associations like Associated General Contractors of Wisconsin.



“One thing I am most proud and appreciative of is our clients’ confidence in us. We will continue to evolve our service offerings while remaining true to our core values of personal responsibility and integrity.”

- Leslie Scherrer,
The Peter Scherrer Group Owner



Colman Woods

“I have personally been active in AGC my entire career,” says Peter. “We believe in supporting our industry and feel we can best do that through the AGC. The support from the organization is phenomenal. Legislative initiatives, educational programs, legal advice, safety support—AGC of Wisconsin has it all.”

Both Peter and Leslie give back to their community through involvement in education. During Peter’s term as president of AGC of Wisconsin, the first Construction Career Academy was established. “We now have six throughout the state of Wisconsin, providing stu-

dents with an effective way to learn about the construction industry,” he adds. Leslie is a regular speaker at the local high school where she relates real world experiences and demonstrates, simply by her presence, there are great opportunities for women in the construction field.

Five years ago Peter and Leslie designed a construction business model to provide the ultimate customer experience and value. Peter is pleased to note that their unique approach of partnering with their clients has been highly received, which is also deeply gratifying on a personal level.

“We have had the good fortune of having the best clients and are excited about what our future holds,” adds Leslie. “One thing I am most proud and appreciative of is our clients’ confidence in us. We will continue to evolve our service offerings while remaining true to our core values of personal responsibility and integrity.” ■

The Peter Scherrer Group has been a member of AGC of Wisconsin since 2010.