



For Immediate Release

Birdair's Durable, Transparent Façade Sails Add Unique Flair to US Embassy in London

Single-layer ETFE façade sails assist with solar control while allowing uniform distribution of daylight

[Birdair, Inc.](#), the world's leading specialty contractor for custom tensile membrane structures for over 60 years, left a legacy of innovation and sustainability on the U.S. Embassy in London thanks to its cutting-edge, highly transparent façade sails. The embassy's outer envelope features approximately 399 single-layer Birdair ETFE (ethylene tetrafluoroethylene) façade sails with catenary perimeter cables supported by 180 tons of structural aluminum framing and 57 carbon steel "headmounts".

The 87,500-square-foot embassy is a transparent, crystalline cube designed to afford generous daylight and views. The embassy gives form to the core beliefs of democracy – transparency, openness and equality – in a way that is both secure and welcoming. The building also confronts the environmental challenges all nations face with leading-edge sustainable design.

"Birdair was proud to play a crucial role in the construction of the U.S. Embassy in London," said Hikaru Konno, President, Birdair. "Our façade sails offer natural light and access to London's beautiful views. They set a new standard for embassy design."

Birdair's ETFE film has been optimized to shade interiors at the embassy from east, west and south sun while admitting daylight and framing large open-view portals to the outside. Its pattern visually fragments the façade while intercepting unwanted solar gain. The façade design works vertically, horizontally and diagonally to eliminate directionality from the building's massing. Unlike the typical installation of façade systems, this construction was challenging in that it required access via ropes. This was overcome through the experienced workmanship and coordination of the high-level rope-access workers.

"ETFE film is durable, lightweight and highly transparent in comparison with glass structures," Konno said. "It is now considered the premium material for transparent cladding applications, whether in roofing or façade construction."

In addition, ETFE film is sustainable, cost-effective and recyclable, as waste from the manufacturing process or old ETFE elements can be remodeled into new ETFE products such as tubing components, wires or castings.

The embassy, designed by KieranTimberlake, is a respectful icon representing the strength of the U.S.-U.K. relationship. It stands at the center of the Nine Elms site, with the surrounding park containing a pond, walkways, seating and landscape along its edges, all open to the citizens of London. Curving walkways continue into the interior of the building with gardens on each floor that extend the spiraling movement upward, enhancing circulation and providing places to meet. The building houses 800 staff and receives approximately 1,000 visitors daily.



A full-service design-build contractor for tensile architecture, Birdair features a comprehensive range of pre-construction services including design assistance, budgeting, construction methodologies and project schedule development. Birdair's in-house capabilities include design development, engineering, fabrication, construction (installation) and service and warranty services.

For more information on Birdair's innovative roofing systems, canopies and skylights, visit Birdair.com and follow Birdair on [Facebook](#).

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About Birdair

Birdair, Inc., is the leading specialty design build contractor of custom tensile structures around the world. In addition to pre-construction services such as design assistance, budgeting, construction methodologies and project scheduling, Birdair provides design-build solutions in all aspects of project design, fabrication, installation and maintenance. The company offers a selection of architectural fabric membranes, including PTFE fiberglass, ETFE film, PVC and Tensotherm™, an insulated tensioned membrane system. Birdair, based in Buffalo, NY, is a member of the Taiyo Kogyo Group, with operations serving North and South America and other international locations. For more information about Birdair, call 1-800-622-2246 or visit www.birdair.com.

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