

Partners in Excellence



Carson Helicopters

By Jon Otto



Interior view of Carson's manufacturing facility showing a helicopter being built for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

In 1958 Frank Carson finished his stint in the US Army at the Fort Rucker Alabama Helicopter Training Center. Frank left the Army with a passion for helicopters and enough money to purchase, with his parents, a 25 acre farm in Perkasio, PA. It was there that Frank started Carson Helicopters with an assemblage of Bell Helicopter parts that he purchased after leaving the Army.

In an unheated barn on the property, Frank assembled those Bell parts into a finished helicopter which he sold for a tidy profit. Those funds were the seed money for what became an FAA approved Helicopter Repair station for the overhaul, repair and manufacturing of all major model helicopters. Repairs and improvements remain the cornerstones of Carson's business to this day.

In 1963 Carson moved into the industrial lifting business and became a preferred contractor around the world. Carson's ability to adapt the S61 for firefighting took

Carson S61's all over the US, Canada and Australia.

Always a leader in innovation, Carson holds 35 STCs for improvements and modifications to rotor wing aircraft. Most of these relate to the Sikorsky S61 which is the helicopter on which Carson currently does the



The unheated barn where Carson started



35,000 square foot addition for Carson's manufacturing building completed in 2012

preponderance of its work. Most notable among these improvements is the Carson Composite Main Rotor Blade which is FAA certified and is used by Governments and contractors around the world. This remarkable blade allows the S61 to carry 20% more payload and to fly faster and farther using the same horsepower. This rotor blade is in use on Marine One, the helicopter used by the President of the United States.

We were off site for one year when Frank summoned me to his office for a meeting. He started by telling me how pleased he was with everything we had done, he then said "You only did one thing wrong, the building is not big



Exterior view of the front of Carson's warehouse facility and office

In 2008 the Vice President of Operations at Carson, Jeff Hill and Frank Carson approached Penn Valley Constructors to design and build a 42,000 square foot pre-engineered steel warehouse to house their many S61 parts and fuselages. In August of 2009 we started site work. Working through the winter we finished the project in March of 2010. This building, which covers near an acre, has only 7 interior columns.

"We selected Penn Valley ... based on their experience ... and their professionalism. We recommend Penn Valley to anyone considering a design-build project - Frank Carson, President



20,000 square foot warehouse addition also completed in 2012. Original 42,000 square foot warehouse building completed in 2010.



Erection of steel for warehouse addition



Interior view of warehouse

enough!" We started immediately to work with Estelle Eberhardt of Irick, Eberhardt and Mientes to initiate the civil plans and with architect Steven Tiberio to prepare permit drawings. We were halfway into this process



Crane

when I was summoned a second time. This time to evaluate an addition to the Hangar building built in the 1970s.

In March of 2011 we started the design and by August we had started site work. The new project consisted of a 20,000 square foot addition to the warehouse, a 35,000 square foot addition to the hangar and a fire suppression system for the hangar which entailed construction of a

70,000 gallon cistern and a pump house to contain a 75 horsepower diesel fire pump. The hangar building includes a number of interesting features including a 135' clear span, Fabcon insulated precast concrete panels and an 80' wide fabric roll-up door.

The project was completed in April of 2012 leaving Carson Helicopters nearly 200% larger than they were before we arrived in 2008.

When I visited Carson Helicopters in June of this year it was clear that they are flourishing in their expanded quarters. Additional innovations to the S61 are nearing completion, including new Composite Tail Rotor Blades, a Cobham Glass Cockpit, Autopilot, Landing Gear enhancements and a new improved transmission which will accommodate larger engines for the S61. It was also clear that Frank Carson has not lost any of his passion for helicopters.

For further information, visit:

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Aerial view of Carson facilities. Inset: Office building addition completed in 2011 located on the face of the warehouse building

Cedar Grove Christian Academy

By Steve Pfau



Interior view of Cedar Grove Academy's state-of-the-art new facility

In October of 2012 we completed an addition of a multi-purpose gymnasium and kitchen/cafeteria for Cedar Grove Christian Academy in Northeast Philadelphia.

The 5,000 square foot addition abuts to the former Lawndale Elementary school building which is listed on the Philadelphia Registry of Historic Structures.

Along with architect Steven C. Tiberio and the school building committee, we designed and developed plans to meet the needs of the school and the approval of the City of Philadelphia.

The building features energy efficient T-8 lighting. However, skylights and windows provide enough natural lighting during most days saving additional power.

The kitchen/cafeteria meets the City of Philadelphia's standards for food and preparation service facilities replacing the school's old, non-conforming cafeteria. In addition, eight fold down tables open to sixteen feet in length providing an area for students to enjoy lunch.



Exterior view

The side and end walls were designed and constructed so the CMU and steel sheeting finished flush to the existing building.

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Connecting the old with the new

An ADA approved ramp and rails were constructed to join the two buildings together.