

Case Study

UL Collaborates with Brandywine to Prioritize Indoor Environmental Quality in Cira Centre



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UL Verified Healthy Building Verification promotes confidence in healthy indoor air in the midst of the pandemic

The Cira Centre is a high-rise office tower in West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a thriving neighborhood gleaming with optimism, diversity and a flourishing business, medical and education community. Developer Brandywine Realty Trust, one of the largest, publicly traded, full-service integrated real estate companies in the U.S., is committed to ensuring the Cira Centre offers class A office space that is optimized for human health and productivity. To this end, Brandywine turned to global safety science leader UL Solutions for their expertise in testing, certification, Verification and advisory services to assist them in achieving superior, third-party Verified indoor air quality (IAQ), sustainability and wellness performance of the Cira Centre.

“Brandywine is firmly committed to offering the very best in urban buildings. Understanding that the purpose of buildings is to provide spaces that support human health, safety and wellness, we consider ourselves somewhat of a pioneer of healthy indoor spaces,” said Ron Becker, senior vice president of operations and sustainability at Brandywine.

Brandywine has always focused heavily on the intersection between sustainability and human health and wellness, working to reduce its environmental impact while positively impacting the building occupants. When the COVID-19 pandemic reached the U.S., Brandywine wanted to elevate its commitment at Cira Centre — and across all its properties — with an emphasis on indoor air quality. UL Solutions was there to support these efforts.

Pandemic amplifies awareness of IAQ; Brandywine takes action

Brandywine’s efforts to prioritize indoor air and environmental quality were already securely established when the pandemic occurred. Suddenly, indoor air quality catapulted to the forefront of the conversation. With a strong IAQ foundation and years of data collected by UL Solutions, Brandywine had an in-depth understanding of their metrics and best practices as it related to indoor air quality. In light of the pandemic, Brandywine’s operations team took immediate action to further elevate its IAQ efforts at Cira Centre. For example, they increased filtration to a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) of 13 or better wherever possible while monitoring heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to ensure these measures would not damage the equipment. In cases where preferred measures were not possible, Brandywine used alternative tactics, such as introducing outdoor intake during nonoperational hours, to flush the building with fresh outdoor air.



Cira Centre in University City, Philadelphia, PA

“UL Solutions is a strong partner with a wealth of industry experience. They provided us with meaningful insights based on scientific data, and their reliability and expertise are second to none.”

*- Ron Beckner,
Senior VP of operations and sustainability, Brandywine*



The lobby of Cira Centre is designed for occupant comfort and wellbeing.

Alex Grella, general manager, University City at Brandywine said, “Our spaces host essential businesses and workers, and it was our goal from the beginning to provide safe spaces that could support operations throughout the pandemic. We were resolute in our efforts to maintain the availability of the building for those who needed it, and the doors of the Cira Centre stayed open during the entire pandemic for our own employees located in that building as well as essential businesses.”

UL Verified Healthy Buildings Verification, the next logical step to advance IAQ

UL Solutions announced the creation of the UL Verified Healthy Buildings for Indoor Air program during the COVID-19 pandemic. Brandywine knew this was a logical step to demonstrate their commitment to excellent indoor air quality and to pave the way towards further advancement in indoor environmental quality.

“The process was smooth from start to finish,” said Greg Squassi, assistant property manager at Cira Centre. “Inspectors were extremely knowledgeable and delivered a detailed report that documented the benefits of our

IAQ efforts to date and outlined recommendations for areas where we could make improvements.”

“Since the pandemic, we’ve seen a growing number of questions about IAQ from tenants and prospective tenants. UL Solutions’ trusted name on the Verified Healthy Building for Indoor Air Mark clearly signals our commitment to good IAQ, which is particularly important as people return to work after the pandemic,” Grella said.

“Brandywine’s long-term commitment to tenant health and healthy indoor spaces is evident through their long history of initiatives and accomplishments. Their achievement of the UL Verified Healthy Buildings for Indoor Air Mark at Cira Centre sets the bar for Brandywine’s portfolio of properties,” said Sean McCrady, director of assets and sustainability in UL Solutions’ Real Estate and Properties group.

The UL Verified Healthy Building Mark is proudly displayed on the front door of the Cira Centre, communicating to anyone who enters the building that Brandywine has taken action to ensure healthy indoor air quality. This helps tenants feel comfortable and safe in the building. The response has been very positive, and Brandywine is eager to continue promoting their accomplishments and is committed to the continued advancement of IAQ.

Learn more at [UL.com/services/verified-healthy-buildings](https://ul.com/services/verified-healthy-buildings).



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