

Architectural and Acoustical Design Breathes New Life into Renovated Paramount Center for Emerson College

Acentech, BOND and Elkus Manfredi Architects Collaborate on Mixed-Use Project

BOSTON and CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – February 3, 2010 – Acentech Inc., BOND and Elkus Manfredi Architects today announced that the firms jointly provided consulting, construction and design services for Emerson College's Paramount Center project in Boston's Downtown Theater District. The Paramount Center will help Emerson College advance its mission to strengthen and expand its unique and highly specialized curricula in communication and the arts.

"The opening of the Paramount Center complex marks the completion of our Boston residential campus, offering students a unique living, learning and performing venue in the heart of the Theater District," said John Walden, construction director at Emerson College. "This new facility provides Emerson College students, and the Boston arts community at large, with a new and vibrant performance space of which we should all be proud."

The Paramount Center is a mixed-use development comprising the existing and historic art deco-style Paramount Theatre, and a new building constructed on the site of the former Arcade Building on Washington Street. Built in 1932 as a 1,700-seat movie house, the Paramount Theatre was renovated and reconfigured into a 590-seat live performance venue. Historic finishes were restored, and the art deco architectural features from the original were repurposed, such as a beautifully painted rococo "fan" that once permitted organ music to waft into the movie house that now functions as an acoustical reflector above the forestage. The new theater serves students and faculty at Emerson College as well as the larger Boston community.

The Paramount Center's other program elements include a 170-seat film screening room, a black box theater with an audience capacity of 125, a sound stage, a scene/prop shop, rehearsal studios, practice rooms, classrooms, and faculty offices; 60,000 square feet of new dormitory space for housing of 260 students fill the upper four floors of the nine-story complex. In addition, the building program also includes new space for a 150-seat tenant restaurant on Washington Street, and a dedicated student cafeteria on the lower level. The Paramount Center project adds 180,000 square feet of new/renovated construction and completes a key component of Boston's Midtown Cultural District.

Expanding on a 16-year relationship and two successful collaborations on previous theater projects, Emerson College selected Elkus Manfredi Architects to develop preliminary designs for the redevelopment of the two buildings as part of the Theatre District revitalization. Elkus Manfredi worked closely with Emerson College to understand the fundamental site constraints and subsequent impact upon the

organization of the varied programmatic uses. Numerous program configurations were investigated and tested prior to arriving at the current arrangement.

Once the basic building design was established, Elkus Manfredi assisted Emerson College through the complex City and State level approval process. Collaboration with the Boston Landmarks Commission, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston Preservation Alliance and Boston Redevelopment Authority ensured the project's success. In addition, presentations were given to neighboring condominium associations and trade organizations. With the necessary approvals in place, Elkus Manfredi administered the 26-month long construction process establishing substantial completion in December of 2009.

Acentech, a nationally recognized multi-disciplinary acoustics, audiovisual systems design, and vibration consulting firm, consulted on the acoustical design of the facility, providing guidance on room acoustics, sound isolation between the stacked spaces on this tight urban site, and mechanical system noise control in the historic building.

BOND, the construction manager for The Paramount Center project, faced complex challenges preserving and renovating the theater and building on a tight urban footprint without impact to neighbors. To preserve the Arcade building's façade, BOND applied a complicated brace frame until permanent connections could be made to the building's new structural steel. The firm identified and solved a multitude of challenges, such as missing steel within the historic brick walls, supporting the hollow Washington Street sidewalk previously used as coal storage, and installing the massive scaffolding system to work on the theatre ceiling. BOND also raised the custom air-handling unit to the building's roof with a 360-ton crane, just one inch from the neighboring Opera House building and while a show was in progress. The Opera House had no impact to their venues, and construction effects were minimized for the 1,500 residences surrounding the project.

Additional project team members included Auerbach Pollock Friedlander for theater consulting and sound, video and communications systems; R. G. Vanderweil Engineers for mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection engineering; Ammann & Whitney Consulting Engineers for structural engineering; Cline Bettridge Bernstein for lighting design; Nitsch Engineering for civil engineering; and Haley & Aldrich for geotechnical engineering.

About Acentech

Acentech Inc. is a multi-disciplinary acoustics, audiovisual systems design, and vibration consulting firm providing a wide range of services to a diverse group of clients. With offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Treviso, Pennsylvania; and Westlake Village, California, the company's professional staff of more than 50 consultants has broad and deep expertise in all areas of acoustics and audiovisual systems design consulting. Having celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2008, Acentech is one of the oldest and

largest organizations of its type: an unequalled resource to engineers, architects, and designers worldwide. For more information, please visit www.acentech.com.

About BOND

BOND was founded in 1907 and has been involved in some of the region's most high-profile construction projects in both the building construction and civil and utility sectors of the construction industry. Its Building Division is focused on academic, healthcare and corporate work; the Civil & Utility Division offers energy, infrastructure, utility and special construction services throughout the region. In addition, its Facilities Asset Management Division provides specialized services to facilities owners. For more information, please visit www.bondbrothers.com.

About Elkus Manfredi Architects

Elkus Manfredi Architects, a Boston based firm with a national reach, is a full-service design firm providing architecture, master planning, urban design, interior architecture, space planning, and programming services. The firm's portfolio of work includes a rich diversity of master plans as well as building design for performing arts venues, student residential environments, research facilities, libraries, and university-sponsored commercial districts. Whether a new building, renovation, preservation, or re-use, Elkus Manfredi works closely with each client to understand the institution's long-term strategic goals and support these goals in all assignments. For more information, please visit www.elkus-manfredi.com.

#