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Tishman Const. restores four of New England Conservatory's historic landmark buildings

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Some of Boston's most famous historic buildings are located on the New England Conservatory campus. Founded in 1867, the Conservatory is the oldest independent school of music in the United States. Jordan Hall, the centerpiece of the school and three other buildings underwent an exterior renovation managed by Tishman Construction Corp. of New England. The project, for which Wessling Architects of Quincy served as architect, began in April 2009.

To complete the project, Tishman directed the labor of 150 trades people in the school's buildings, which had to remain operational for students and faculty while the project progressed.

The four buildings that were restored and protected are:

- * Jordan Hall (290 Huntington Ave.) - This 1,013-seat hall, with extraordinary acoustics, has been central to the musical life of New England since 1903. The design and shop drawings for the building's restoration were reviewed by the Mass. Historic Commission to be sure they were in compliance with the National Historic Landmarks program.
- * 295 Huntington Ave. - This building is on the National Register of Historic Places. Tishman removed and replaced the slate roof, added snow rails, and removed deteriorated wooden windows and replaced them with new energy-efficient, insulated aluminum windows with historic character.
- * 241 St. Botolph St. - Tishman restored the original masonry and removed old wooden windows and replaced them with new energy-efficient, insulated aluminum windows with historic character. Similar to 295 Huntington Ave., this building is also on the National Register of Historic Places.
- * 33 Gainsborough St. - Tishman repaired the original brick and stucco facade.

During the planning stages early last spring, Tishman conducted sound mock-ups to allow the project team to coordinate the construction activities around New England Conservatory's active events and recording arts schedule. This ensured that the sounds of construction would have minimal impact on the musicians and on daily life at the school.

One of the biggest challenges was finding marble to match the original marble columns and rosette medallions on Jordan Hall's facade, which after 100 years were beginning to crumble. The original marble had been imported from Africa, but similar marble was no longer available from those quarries. After months of research, Tishman and its masonry subcontractor, NER, found marble with similar grain and variation of color in marble imported from Italy. Matthew Wessling, senior project manager for the architect, and the Mass. Historical Commission approved the marble before installation. Once shipped, the marble was specially fabricated and installed.

In addition, the top three feet of terra cotta trim, with cornices, was removed and replaced with terra cotta manufactured in California. Tishman and Wessling visited the fabricator to verify the casting process and to personally inspect the material for quality before shipment. Tishman also managed the replacement of damaged limestone, and the entire facade was cleaned to remove 100 years of

grime. All of the masonry joints on the façades were either cut and repointed or given new sealants. Wooden window replacement on Jordan Hall was another challenge. Windows located on the public façades facing Huntington Ave. and Gainsborough St. were restored in accordance with U.S. Secretary of the Interior/National Parks standards, which required them to be removed, restored, and reinstalled - not replaced with new windows. Tishman managed the windows' removal and put up temporary sheeting to protect the interior while the windows were restored offsite.

Tishman also managed the replacement of the roof with an energy-efficient white roofing system. Currently, Tishman is continuing to provide construction services for upgrades to the New England Conservatory campus. Throughout the winter, Tishman has worked with the Conservatory on the addition of a new recording studio in 241 St. Botolph St., as well as renovations and improvements to various performance spaces, offices, and public spaces across the campus.

Tishman and Wessling collaborated on speeding up the shop drawing approval process and seeking ways to save the Conservatory time and money. All of these efforts have resulted in revitalized buildings ready for the next century.

"New England Conservatory's decision to restore façades and replace roofs was a very wise capital improvements investment," said Tom Erickson, Tishman Construction senior vice president.

"We applied our extensive knowledge of historic renovation in urban settings to restore these important buildings, which have now been revitalized and protected to ensure many more decades of use and enjoyment," said Erickson.

Officials at New England Conservatory commended Tishman for a job well done. "We chose Tishman because of their depth of experience in the restoration of historic performance spaces, and our decision paid off," said Tony Woodcock, president of the Conservatory. "We are thrilled with the results of this project. While there has been no change to the design of the buildings - the key attribute of a successful historic restoration - they have been refreshed and improved. Everybody has been saying, 'We didn't realize just how beautiful our historic buildings are.' The Tishman team managed the many details of historic restoration work with minimal impact on school operations and with thorough commitment to the safety of our students, faculty, and campus visitors. With Tishman's help, we protected these historic buildings, our most important asset, for the future. Tishman managed the project skillfully, with minimal interruption to our day-to-day work of training musicians from around the world and leading the concert life of New England."

Tishman's past historic renovations in the northeast include the Wang Theatre (also known as the Citi Performing Arts Center), built in Boston in 1925, and Portland City Hall Auditorium, built in Maine in 1912. Tishman also managed the renovation and restoration of Carnegie Hall in New York City, and the construction of the Judy and Arthur Zankel Hall, a three-story performance space Tishman carved out of bedrock below the existing Carnegie Hall while it was operating.

Nationally, Tishman is also known as a leader in the building of new performance arts spaces. For example, Tishman provided project management services for the design and construction of the Strathmore Music Center, a 1,976-seat world-class theater and arts education building in Montgomery County, Maryland.