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HÃ¶weler + Yoon selected to design new BSA headquarters at Atlantic Wharf; 15,768 s/f at 290 Congress St.; chosen from 19 designers

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The Boston Society of Architects (BSA) is leasing space at Atlantic Wharf, 290 Congress St. HÃ¶weler + Yoon Architecture has been selected to design the organization's new headquarters.

The new BSA headquarters includes 15,768 s/f of leased space and 1,550 s/f of additional BSA-controlled/managed space (ground floor concierge and exhibition space). Atlantic Wharf offers opportunities for the BSA to expand its reach: enhancing member services, creating new ways to engage the public and functioning as a forum for civic discussion about the built environment.

"Atlantic Wharf is the cornerstone of the revitalization on the channel further connecting the waterfront to the Greenway and downtown. Upon completion, this new project will not only enhance the city's skyline but will bring new retail, outdoor dining, new media, music, dance and performance art to Boston's waterfront. Atlantic Wharf's premier design and architecture will continue to draw people down to the waterfrontâ€”to live, work, visit or simply relax," said mayor Thomas Menino.

Nineteen anonymously submitted concepts from a design ideas competition were considered by the BSA designer selection panel, who chose HÃ¶weler + Yoon's design from a short list of 5 architectural firms. The other shortlisted firms were Hashim Sarkis, Merge Architects, SsD and the team of Chris and Megan Keesling and Derek Little.

One of the primary challenges for the design competition entrants was to establish a strong public interface with passersby along Congress St. "What drew the panel to the winning scheme was the design's ability to create a powerful architectural statement which reached beyond the building's faÃ§ade," said Audrey O'Hagan AIA, chair of the designer selection panel and 2011 BSA president. "Visually, it draws you into this two-story space, up a dynamic staircase and into the open, fluid interior."

O'Hagan continues, "The flexibility offered by the arrangement of the conference rooms and exhibition areas will enable the space to expand and contract to adapt to specific programmatic events as needed. The designer selection panel also was interested in HÃ¶weler + Yoon's integration of architecture and technology in an effort to blur physical and digital realities," she said.

The new BSA headquarters located in the newly constructed Waterfront Building at Atlantic Wharf will include office, exhibition, concierge and meeting spaces. The Atlantic Wharf project consists of the Waterfront Building (290 Congress St.), a 7-story, 210,000 s/f office building with 16,000 s/f of ground floor retail; the office tower (280 Congress St.), a 32-story office tower; the Russia Building (530 Atlantic Ave.), a 7-story, 86-unit residential building with 10,000 s/f of ground floor retail; a six level underground parking garage; and a park and dock facility on the Fort Point Channel.

The Rose F. Kennedy Greenway is adjacent to Atlantic Wharf; the Boston Tea Party Museum (which will re-open in the spring of 2012) and the Boston Children's Museum are directly across the

Fort Point Channel from the complex. Access to public transportation (South Station) is one block away. The BSA's estimated \$2.7 million project will likely be completed in late 2011.

"The BSA hosts some 500 events and meetings every year, and at only 5,000 s/f, our current location's space restrictions have created logistical challenges," said Eric White, interim co-director of the BSA. "Our new venue at Atlantic Wharf will allow us to better serve our membership while expanding our reach to inspire and enlighten new audiences about the significance of design. This is an exciting opportunity for our organization."

The members of the designer selection panel included:

- * Audrey O'Hagan AIA, chair
- * James Batchelor FAIA
- * Hansy Better Barraza AIA
- * John Messervy AIA
- * Audrey Matlock AIA
- * Cyndi Gerlach AIA
- * John Nunnari Assoc AIA and
- * Kairos Shen AIA.

"We are looking forward to raising awareness of architecture and enhancing the profile of architects here in New England," said O'Hagan.

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