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Finegold Alexander + Associates breaks ground on Holyoke Library expansion

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Finegold Alexander + Associates, Inc. has broken ground on an expansion project for the public library in downtown. Finegold Alexander will oversee the 18-month project requiring restoration, selective demolition and new construction to create additional space for increased programming while incorporating sustainable design for resource efficiency and healthy spaces.

Built in 1902, the building was designed in the Greek Revival style of architecture. The façade consists of Indiana limestone and glazed white brick set behind six Ionic columns. The library is a popular destination in downtown, with over 100,000 library visits a year and growing. Recognizing a need to increase programming and community gathering spaces, Holyoke Library selected Finegold Alexander to design a modern 18,000 s/f addition while restoring the existing 24,000 s/f library. Finegold Alexander has extensive experience with library renovations, beginning in 1969 with an expansion of the Avon Public Library in Avon. Since then, the firm has overseen renovations and expansions to numerous facilities, including the Newburyport Public Library and the Fletcher Free Library in Burlington, Vt.

The owner's project manager is D.A. Sullivan & Sons, Inc. of Northampton, Mass., and Fontaine Brothers of Springfield is the project's general contractor. The project's consulting team includes Boston Building Consultants, BLW Engineers, Stefura Associates Inc., Marc Mazzarelli Associates, VHB and Building Conservation Associates.

The team will also work with the city to remove and reinstall canvas murals following an off-site restoration. The \$14.5 million project is being funded by a \$4.4 million grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, the Holyoke Public Library Corp. and the city.

The project requires the removal of the rear section of the existing building which contains the library's stacks. A new monumental stair and glazed reading rooms will connect the new addition with the original front portion of the building, while also drawing in natural daylighting and offering outdoor views of the neighboring park. The addition will make it possible to expand the children's room and create a young adult area while adding space for additional computers and other technology. The original building will be restored, bringing the brick and limestone façade back to its original glory. Finegold Alexander plans to reinstall three skylights that were roofed over and restore the original interior, much of which has remained untouched since 1902.

"This project will preserve Holyoke Library's community focus while revitalizing a historic downtown location," said Maria Pagan, library director. "Finegold Alexander + Associates has created a vision for the library that supports our interests in enhancing programming and continuing to serve as a resource for all residents of Holyoke."

By understanding the building's original design intent, Finegold Alexander is demonstrating how

existing structures can be modernized and expanded for extended life. High-efficiency equipment, natural daylighting and preserving as much of the original building's footprint as possible all contribute to a LEED-certifiable design. Finegold Alexander principals Pat Morss and Tony Hsiao and senior associate Ellen Anselone have extensive experience with both library projects and working within historic contexts, and each has brought their expertise to this project.

"As a firm, Finegold Alexander understands the role libraries play in uniting the fabric of a community," said Jim Alexander, FAIA, LEED AP, principal of Finegold Alexander + Associates.

"The Holyoke Library has been a civic resource since 1902, and we are grateful for the opportunity to demonstrate how our appreciation of historic structures can create a modern, sustainable facility that preserves the past while looking towards the future."

About Finegold Alexander + Associates, Inc.

Sharing a collective sense of what is possible, the firm designs projects that exceed client expectations, are environmentally responsible and are integrated into their context. A basic tenant is that good design is the result of an interactive and iterative process involving all stakeholders. Rooted in Boston, the historic environment inspired Finegold Alexander's leadership role in historic preservation and adaptive use while shaping its thoughtful and innovative design philosophy.

Shown (from left) are: Matt Blumenfeld (Financial Development Agency); Bill Fuqua (general superintendent, Department of Public Works, city of Holyoke); Patience Jackson (Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners); Jim Alexander (principal of Finegold Alexander + Associates); Tony Hsiao (principal, Finegold Alexander + Associates); and Ellen Moriarty (Holyoke Public Library board of directors).

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