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ARC and Consigli Construction hold topping-out of \$50 million temple

May 31, 2012 - Owners Developers & Managers

The Wat Nawamintarachutis NMR Meditation Center, a Thai Buddhist temple designed by ARC/Architectural Resources Cambridge and constructed by Consigli Construction Co., Inc. recently celebrated a topping-out ceremony. When complete, the 110,000 s/f facility will be one of the largest Thai Buddhist temples anywhere outside of Thailand according to the design team at ARC.

Construction of the temple, which is being conducted by Consigli under the direction of the owner's project director, Paul Chapple R.E. Development, Inc., began in September 2011 and is slated for completion in May 2013. The topping-out ceremony marks the placement of one of the highest structural steel elements of the building during construction.

Abbot Phra Promwachirayan purchased the 50-acre property in 2006 and then traveled the world studying the elements of various Thai Buddhist temples. His vision of East meeting West was the driving force in the design.

"This is a big milestone for this landmark facility," said Been Wang, AIA, who is ARC's principal-in-charge of the project. "It is a great pleasure to watch as our joint vision for this incredible building comes to fruition following five years of planning and design to create one of the finest Buddhist temples in the world." In addition to Wang and the design team at ARC, associated design architects led by Wiwatchai Prangpituk and Kokiart Thongphud of Thailand are assisting with the project.

Located on approximately 50 acres of land off South St. East at the intersection of Rtes 24 and 44, the complex consists of a temple, residence halls for temple monks and a multi-purpose hall built around a central courtyard. The multi-purpose hall will be used for major Buddhist celebrations during the year, and the local community will be able to utilize the hall for meetings and lectures dedicated to the cultural traditions of Thailand.

In addition, the project includes a museum/library on the first floor dedicated to the king. The second floor will provide a large open space for meditation. The third floor consists of a 2-story temple containing a Buddha which will be imported from Thailand. Painted murals will adorn the interior walls of the temple and the ceiling will be decorated with gold leaf stars imported from Thailand.

Clustering of the building's many multi-tiered roof gables reduces the massiveness of the structure and is characteristic of both traditional temples in Thailand and rural New England architecture. The design expresses a simple elegance throughout so that the whole complex can be understood as a sum of the elements. The exterior materials are architectural concrete and limestone with decorative roof shingles, which will be durable in the New England climate. Special attention has been given to the roof details to incorporate elements of Thai culture.

The centerpiece and most prominent feature of the complex is the 3-story temple, topped by a Chedi, or steeple, which pays tribute to Buddha. It will be painted gold and reach a soaring height of

185 feet.

The complex will be dedicated to the life of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rama IX, the king of Thailand, who was born at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge in December of 1927 while his parents were students at Harvard Medical School and Simmons College. The king is the world's longest-serving current head of state and the longest-reigning monarch in Thai history.

Founded in 1969, ARC/Architectural Resources Cambridge is one of the nation's leading architectural, planning and interior design firms specializing in educational, sports, science and corporate facilities. With an emphasis on innovative and sustainable design, the firm has garnered more than 70 awards from a wide range of professional organizations and publications. College and university clients include Tufts, Boston College, Boston University, Duke, Harvard, Johnson & Wales, MIT, Princeton and UMass, among others. ARC also has extensive corporate experience for clients such as Genzyme, Millipore, Abbott Laboratories and VMware.

Since 1997, Paul Chapple has represented lab, healthcare, office and retail owners for construction and development projects. Having founded his own company in 2008, he has represented among others MIT, Children's Hospital, Boston, Cambridge Innovation Center and the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Paul Chapple was engaged in December, 2010 by the temple owner, Abbot Phra Promwachirayan to oversee all aspects of the project.

Consigli, a fourth generation family-owned business, established in 1905, is a full-service construction manager and general contractor serving academic, healthcare, institutional, corporate, landmark restoration and federal clients throughout New England and New York State. A leader in sustainable construction practices, Consigli is consistently ranked in the national Top 100 Green Contractors by Engineering News-Record Magazine. With offices in Massachusetts, Maine, New York and Connecticut, Consigli has been recognized as one of the best places to work by The Boston Globe, Boston Business Journal and MaineBiz.

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