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RODE Architects and Kaplan Construction working on \$8.6 million Bornstein and Pearl Food Production Center

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RODE Architects and Kaplan Construction have been selected to design and build the Bornstein and Pearl Food Production Small Business Center, a redevelopment project in the Grove Hall neighborhood. Led by Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corp.(DBEDC), the project will revitalize the vacant former Pearl Meats manufacturing facility and adjacent land into a 35,000 s/f multi-tenant, light industrial business center with a focus on small-scale food production.

The developer selected RODE and Kaplan Const. to build the project based on their experience rehabilitating historic structures. With an \$8.6 million budget and close to 15% of the space pre-leased, the project will begin this summer.

The master lease will be held by CropCircle Kitchen, which operates a similar facility in Jamaica Plain and is Boston's only non-profit shared commercial kitchen and business incubator. The company will operate a shared-use kitchen and commissary on site, and will be responsible for property management services and technical assistance for 40 to 60 small food producers. Projected tenants include a salsa maker, sushi provider and dessert wholesaler. Additionally the commissary will provide service to five food trucks.

RODE's design for the new center will create energy and an environment of interaction for the many small businesses within. Based on an aesthetic that complements the existing industrial structure, RODE will use wood siding to create warmth in the interior, install and specify skylights to introduce natural light into the space, and use specialty fixtures to bring even more brightness into the core of the building.

"There is a huge demand in Boston for small food production spaces, and this will be a big job center," said Jeanne DuBois, executive director of DBEDC. "By co-locating multiple food producers, we will be able to create opportunities for cross-marketing, bulk purchasing, and sharing of office, staff, and expensive equipment like blast freezers, and maximize efficiency across multiple tenant spaces.

"Our design for the former Pearl Meats property converts old meat smokers into compact conference spaces that add some whimsy to the common space adjacent to the main entrance, as well as an area for tenants to host tastings and events," said RODE Architects principal Eric Robinson. "These features will cue visitors to the site's new identity, reflecting the entrepreneurial spirit and fresh food mission of the project."

Kaplan's renovations to the existing single-story masonry building will include a new roof, structural repairs, extensive site work, the addition of a parking lot, and new utilities. Communal specialty equipment will be rehabilitated or installed, and all of the spaces will provide heating, ventilation, easy-to-clean surfaces, floor drains, grease traps, and shared loading docks. Vehicular circulation around the site has already been modified to minimize traffic coming through the residential

neighborhood.

The Bornstein and Pearl Food Production Small Business Center project is a key part of a broad community effort that will redevelop more than four acres of blighted land, generate close to 80 jobs in the first three years, and bring more than \$70 million of investment in affordable housing, commercial development, job training, and youth arts programming to the area. The project will also employ a significant number of construction workers from the local neighborhood, in addition to minority- and women-owned sub-consultants from the Greater Boston region.

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