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DSH Design Group completes 200,000 s/f extreme makeover - 1950s Westmeadow Plaza modernized

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When DSH Design Group was asked to come up with a way to renovate the existing Westmeadow Plaza, the design team knew the goal would be not simply updating its dated facade to today's standards but also achieving a timeless appeal that could grab the attention of neighborhood as well as fast moving auto traffic on Rt. 9 between Boston and Worcester.

The site of the existing Westmeadow Plaza, a 200,000 s/f shopping center with 1,000 feet of frontage, was originally built in the 1950s, at the intersection of Rte. 9 and 135. The center, occupied by national retailers since its opening, experienced a setback in recent years by tenants relocating to newly opened or upgraded shopping centers in the area.

DSH Design Group at the outset conducted thorough due diligence and exploratory sightline studies of the building's position in relation to surrounding infrastructure and landscaping revealing the challenges of the project.

Principal elements under consideration besides its old and outdated look were that the complex was hidden from major roads and had a lack of strong architectural character. The center needed a distinctive feature to enable it to stand out and have a presence. "A delicate composition of verticals and horizontals were introduced to create an iconic character for the building," said Davood Shahin, architect and founder and president of DSH Design Group. "The horizontal bands along the building facade, interrupted by entry towers and engaging with two semi circular iconic glass towers logistically located along the 1,000 foot long elevation. The visual impact of the new design will bring the project closer to the surrounding area while exhibiting the scale of the center to fast-moving commuters."

Good Design Is Good Business

"The results of the planned facade upgrades to the property were critical in securing new retailers such as Ann & Hope and Dollar Tree stores and have generated heightened interest in the remaining 22,000 s/f available space. The feedback from tenants and brokers has been very positive," said Mary Powers, the founder and principal of Powers & Company.

Saving The Existing -

Reducing Time, Cost And Waste

A due diligence study of the existing condition of the building enabled the design team to retain and use 99% of the existing without any major reinforcement; significantly reducing the construction time, cost and waste created by demolishing the existing front.

DSH Design Group met the aggressive schedule and completed the design and construction documents within three months and Tenacity Construction Inc. of North Reading, Mass., selected through a competitive bid process, met the three-month construction schedule for the main facade. The final phase of the project is scheduled to be completed by mid-July.

The success of the design in improving the center's image and attracting new retailers and shoppers is another testimonial toward the proposition that good design works.

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