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ARC/Architectural Resources Cambridge and Deerfield Academy complete Hess Center for the Arts: Daniel O'Connell's Sons is construction manager for \$24 million project

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Deerfield Academy's Hess Center for the Arts, an 80,000 s/f expansion and renovation of the school's performing and visual arts complex, officially opened during a dedication ceremonies hosted by the school's board of trustees. Designed by ARC/Architectural Resources Cambridge, the Hess Center for the Arts maintains a connection to the historic campus while transforming the arts education experience at Deerfield Academy by adding several new teaching, practice and performance spaces.

The center is expected to achieve LEED certification for sustainable design from the U.S. Green Building Council. Construction manager for the project was Daniel O'Connell's Sons.

The project team included Martin Vinik Planning for the Arts, Acentech, Boston Building Consultants, TMP Consulting Engineers, Thompson Engineering Co., Tighe & Bond and CRJA-IBI Group.

The arts center renovation adds 150 seats to the existing auditorium, providing an 800-seat theater and meeting space accommodating the entire Deerfield student body and faculty.

The auditorium includes new stage technology, lighting, acoustic upgrades, new seating and a renovated lobby. A new art gallery addition, The Von Auersperg Gallery, will showcase student work and host art exhibitions for the public. A new 160 seat, music performance space addition, the Elizabeth Wachsman Concert Hall, is one of five performance spaces on the center's main floor. A black box theater, dance studios and a recording studio are also included within the \$24 million project.

"Bringing all of the arts and performance facilities together, and integrating the new Hess Center seamlessly with the rest of the campus, provides students and faculty with exciting new opportunities for learning and creative expression," said Deerfield Academy headmaster Dr. Margarita Curtis.

ARC was selected as the architect for the Hess Center after winning a design competition. Central to the winning design proposal was an approach that created a cohesive, unified complex for all of the arts disciplines, while maintaining critical elements and connections to the history of the Memorial Building, Deerfield Academy's central gathering and community space originally designed in 1951 by the firm of Geoffrey & William Platt.

"Renewing and expanding the existing Memorial Building gave us an ideal opportunity to not only bring all the arts education elements at Deerfield Academy together, but to also create a cohesive, easy to navigate facility where each space connects with its surroundings and facilitates creative collaboration among the various arts disciplines," said Philip Laird AIA, LEED AP, president of ARC and the project's principal-in-charge.

The renovated spaces were upgraded with new technology, updated materials, and energy efficient lighting and technology. The repurposed space provides a seamless connection between the original buildings and the newly-added arts venues, resulting in an integrated, energized, and forward looking environment for the visual and performing arts.

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