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## **Project of the Month: Dudley Sq.'s 215,000 s/f Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building: Using the past to create the future**

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This winter, Boston Public Schools (BPS)- one of the oldest school departments in the United States-will be moving into new offices in Dudley Sq.'s soon-to-open Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building.

Located in Roxbury, Dudley Sq. is a mass transit hub rich with culture and history. The facility is part of former mayor Thomas Menino's Dudley Sq. Vision Project, which sought to revitalize the once-thriving urban neighborhood. Using the past to create the future, the facility preserves and incorporates the iconic Ferdinand Furniture Building, an emblem of the square's historic commercial vitality. In addition to uniting the various BPS departments-which were previously located across the city-into one building, the 215,000 s/f structure will include a green roof, state-of-the-art office space, retail, civic spaces, and community meeting space. Mayor Walsh is spearheading the development of a business incubator called The Roxbury Innovation Center, also to be housed within the building. The center aims to spur continued growth and investment in the Dudley neighborhood.

The Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building was designed Mecanoo Architecten and Sasaki Associates and built in collaboration with Shawmut Design and Construction, PMA Consultants, Boston's Property and Construction Management Department (PCMD), the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), and the city of Boston. The collaborative team brings together creative vision, building expertise, artisanal craftsmanship, community engagement leadership, and civic stewardship, the result of which is a unique, high-quality mixed-use center for Dudley Sq. and Boston at large.

From an architecture perspective, achieving the appropriate balance between the vision of the future and the historical integrity of Dudley Sq. was a critical component of the design process. In addition to the Ferdinand Furniture Building, the design incorporates the historic Curtis and Waterman buildings, which creates a triangle of historic facades connected by new construction. The restored Ferdinand, Curtis, and Waterman buildings maintain the existing feel and scale of Dudley Sq., and the building adds a powerful modern aesthetic.

Additionally, the exterior design embodies a time-honored approach to construction craft, but in a contemporary way. The facades are made of distinctive brick with reliefs that provide intricate shadows in a playful rhythm. The facade's beautiful details encompass a variety of different masonry techniques from running bond and stack bond to soldier bond; because of the vitreous properties of the brick, the tactile facade reflects the light in different ways depending on the weather conditions. The resulting masonry pattern shifts in richness of texture, with irregularly spaced windows and recessed mullions.

As for the building's interiors, the ground floor of the facility serves as a public zone, providing both community gathering space and opportunities for economic advancement through retail and dining.

The second floor is outfitted with meeting rooms to provide an interaction zone for BPS, while the sixth floor public meeting space and roof terrace will be open and accessible to all.

The new workspace designed for the BPS employees features many elements of a contemporary work environment, such as a balance of open workspaces and private offices, more access to windows and natural light, and group work spaces in open areas like kitchens and lounges. These new spaces will not only improve the working environment of BPS employees but will positively impact teachers, students, parents and the entire public school system in Boston. All of this is a significant shift from many other government office spaces around the United States, and exemplifies the modernization of outdated workspaces at the local, state and federal level.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, is the hope that the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building will not only serve to strengthen the sense of community in Dudley Sq., but also act as a catalyst for further development in the area. From job recruitment of community members to events for local businesses, residents of the area have been and will continue to be part of the neighborhood's development. Additionally, the influx of new employees to the area will support local businesses as well as lead to enhancements to the public transportation system, including new bike lanes and pedestrian crossings. It is the hope of all parties involved in the project that, one day, the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building will serve as an example of how one building can ignite the reinvigoration of an entire community.

Project team included:

- \* Project Manager: PMA Consultants
- \* Architect: Mecanoo Architecten / Sasaki Associates
- \* Construction Manager: Shawmut Design & Construction

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