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Nauset Construction completes historic addition, renovation for Riverbend School

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South Natick, MA Nauset Construction has completed the renovation and conversion of the 18th Century historic Peletiah Morse Tavern, while also constructing an attached 4,200 s/f addition that provides much needed space for the middle school on the campus of the Riverbend School.

Originally built in 1748, the Morse Tavern once served as a residence, tavern and stage stop for travelers on the Old Hartford Rd., but will now house an admissions office, classrooms, multi-purpose space and a music instruction room.

Designed by Piatt Associates, the renovation included the installation of historically accurate replica windows and a hand-hewn front door, and the original wood beams were refurbished and left exposed. Original bricks from a non-working interior chimney were repurposed to build a faux chimney on the exterior that was consistent with the tavern's historic look. The wood siding, trim, and masonry of the addition were designed to reflect the style of the original building and retain its historic character. Special care was taken to restore some of the features of the original structure, including exterior moldings and the entranceway.

During the selective demolition phase, a number of historic artifacts (shoes, tools, etc.) were discovered which were turned over to the school and incorporated into a learning experience for the students.

Project challenges included the careful separation of the old addition from the adjoining tavern before dismantling it manually to make way for the new 4,200 s/f addition. Extra precautions were also taken to ensure the structural integrity of the historic tavern while excavating for the addition's foundation.

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